CHAPTER II

EARLY BRITISH ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY
As a consequence of the defeat of the nominal Mughal emperor Shah Alam II and his allies Mir Kasim, the deposed Nauab of Bengal and Shuja-ud-daula, the Nauab of Oudh in the Battle of Buxar of 22 October 1764, the British East India Company assumed the administration of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa through the grant of the Deuani by the emperor. The emperor had repeatedly offered the Company the revenues of the three provinces but it was not till Robert Clive's second term as Governor of Fort William in Bengal that the offer was accepted and a treaty signed on 12 August 1765. It secured for the Company the superintendence of all lands and the collection of all revenues of the three provinces.

Impact of Deuani:

This very significant treaty, apart from its other effects brought the British into direct relations with the Garos, the Khasis and the Daintias on the north-east frontier of Bengal. British authority was, however, limited to the territory of Bengal and these hills not being part of Bengal under normal circumstances, the British could not interfere in the affairs.

of these tribes. Nevertheless, two consequences naturally followed British assumption of the Deuani that subsequently influenced the British development in these areas. The British came in the place of the Mughal to inherit the former Mughal system of administration. The tributary estates on the Garo frontier, Susung, Sherpur, Karaibari, Kalumalupara and Habraghat and the outposts on the Khasi-Daintia frontier such as Bulagunj and Theriaoghat came under British administration. Secondly, even before the accession to the Deuani, the Company was interested in the promotion of trade and commerce with Assam and the adjacent hills. It had no intention to extend its political dominion further into the north-east at this stage. Despite frequent raids into the plains, and the head hunting habits of the Garos in particular, the East India Company continued the Mughal policy of non-interference vis-a-vis these tribes. They maintained the defence of the frontier through proxy by converting the former Mughal feudatories into their own feudatories. The Zamindars of the Garo frontier estates were vested the defence of Rangpur and Mymensingh districts and were allowed to retain their bands of mercenary barkandaz which was strengthened by western musketry. On the Sylhet frontier the British themselves assumed the responsibility of defence when normal administration was established at Dacca.

Mercantile Interests;

Early British interest in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills was


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limited to trade in limestone. So important was this commodity for Bengal that an agreement was made between Kir Kasim and the Company on 10 Duly 1763, that for a period of five years the Mauab represented by his fauzdar and the Company's gomastahs "shall jointly prepare Chunam, of which each shall defray half the expenses; and half of the Chunam so made, shall be given to the Company, and the other half shall be for my use." During the Collectorate of U.A. Thackeray, grandfather of the famous novelist, two European contractors, Richardson and Gallauay were appointed to work the limestone in the Laur hills to the north-west of Pandua. Since limestone trade was not a Company monopoly Armenians, Greeks and "Lou Europeans" took advantage of this lucrative business, "but to a trifling extent only." It may be assumed that these traders and contractors had secured the necessary permission to work the limestone quarries from the Khasi chiefs in whose territory they were located.

The French were also interested in the trade of Sylhet. A N. Dechampigny came to Sylhet in 1786 with letters of introduction from M. Uilton, the French Commissary. Robert Lindsay, the Collector of Sylhet informed the Governor-General that no obstacle would be placed before the Frenchman as long as he conducted himself as a private trader, At the same time he pointed out that as the French had never had an agent in Sylhet Dechampigny's coming to the district came under suspect. He

10. Lord Lindsay, op.cit., p.176.
hinted pretty plainly that the French agent's actions in a
turbulent and frontier district should call for careful attention
from Government.\textsuperscript{11} True enough, during John Uilles' Collectorate
Dechampigny attempted to establish political relations with the
Khasis to which the Company reacted with the strongest possible
objection. Records and silent about the ultimate fate of
Dechamptgny. He probably left the country on the outbreak of war
between Britain and France in 1804. The Greeks were mainly
engaged in the salt trade.\textsuperscript{13}

By far the most interesting account of the limestone
trade was when Robert Lindsay, the third Collector of Sylhet
entered and practically captured the entire trade. He writes,
"I contemplated with delight the wide field of commercial
speculation opening before me; my pay as resident did not exceed
5001 per annum, so that fortunecu Id only be acquired by my own
industry."\textsuperscript{14} Lindsay was given permission to collect the whole
of the cowries in Sylhet in the shape of revenue at a certain
given price. He used this vast sum of money (before its conversion
to bullion) to speculate in the limestone trade. He secured
the agreement of the Cherra Syiem for a lease of the limestone
quarries to the north of Pandua with access by boat to cart the
limestone. On an escorted first visit to the quarries he describes
what he saw:

\begin{quote}
We now approached the \textit{chunam} or lime-rock.
\end{quote}
\textsuperscript{11} B.C. Allen, \textit{Assam District Gazetteers}, Vol. 11, pp. 51-52.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{14} Lord Lindsay, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 174.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 175-176
washed by the rapid stream - a magnificent cataract was seen rolling over the adjoining precipice - the scenery altogether was truely sublime. The mountain was composed of the purest alabaster lime, and appeared, in quantity, equal to the supply of the whole world. When the canoes were loaded at the bottom of the hill, they appeared to descend the rapids with the rapidity of lightening; indeed it is often attended with danger, and even loss of life, when bringing down the stones.16

Having made the necessary arrangements in the hills, he appointed British agents at Calcutta and elsewhere to relieve him of the laborious part of the trade. So successful was his trade in limestone that in little time he had to keep five to six hundred men in constant employ.17 On a projecting point above Pandua Lindsay constructed a small, strong cottage which he hoped would serve as "an excellent blockhouse or place of defence, until reinforcements could be furnished from Sylhet, distant about twenty five miles.18 Lindsay was taking precaution as he did not preclude danger of Khasi ferocity.

Private trade in Rangpur and Nymensingh also promised lucrative returns, British and French merchants began in these frontier districts and Assam around the middle of the 18 century, but the defeat of the French and the capture of their fort in Chandernagore resulted in the discontinuation of French trade ill these quarters. Of the British traders on this frontier the most prominent were John Robinson, the agent of Johnstone, Hay and Bolts of Calcutta, and Hugh Baillie, the agent of Henry Vansittart, 19

Governor of Fort William in Bengal. The British in Bengal had

16. Ibid., p.179.
18. Ibid., p.179.
19. S.K.Bhuyan, Anglo-Assamese Relations, p.65,
hoped that Mir Kasim would be a more agreeable Nauab than Mir-Dafar, but to their dismay Mir Kasim in a series of meetings with the Calcutta Council and in numerous letters, pointed out that the imperial **farman** of 1717 only entitled the Company to an exemption from the customary duties only with regard to their foreign trade, implying, therefore, that the Company's servants private trade was subject to the ordinary internal tolls. The Company's servants claimed the privilege extended to their internal trade. In 1757 Clive had obtained from Mir Jafar the practical exemption of duties on Company's servants private trade, thereby giving them an undue advantage over the trade by Indian merchants.

Prominent in the dispute between Mir Kasim and the Calcutta Council was the references to the trade on the north-east frontier of Bengal. The **Nawab** particularly noted that while earlier he was receiving from Karaibari, Kalumalupara and adjoining lands an annual revenue of te.40,000 from trade in salt, timber and other articles carried on by his representatives, the oppressive conduct of M.Chavalier had put a stop to the trade in these parts. Interestingly, mention is made in the **Nawab's** objections to the growing interests of the Frenchman in the Garo Hills. In reply to the **Nawab's** allegations, Vansittart instructed the qomastah at Goalpara be strictly charged to carry

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22. Ibid., p.222. Chavalier had traded in Goalpara and Assam for the French East India Company till its trade was discontinued. He remained to take up the salt trade of Johnstone, Hay and Bolts, S.K.Bhuyan, *op.cit.*. pp.64-65.
on their commercial business as formerly and not to trade with
the Garos, but to make all their purchases through the darogah
of the sircar. Lansonart even deputed one Gangaram Metre to
Rangamati in Goalpara to enquire into the alleged abuses of
private trade.

Hansittart was never a man who could work with his
associates. In November 1762, Robinson at Goalpara complained of
the obstacles in the way of trade of the difficulties he worked
under and the threats of the fauzdar of Rangamati. He particularly
objected to the appointment of Gangaram Metre as inquisitor to
the proceedings of English merchants. Another complaint came
from John Cartier, Chief of the Dacca Council, asserting that
"the Mauab, or his fougedar of Rangamett can have no more right
to regulate the terms of our commerce with the natives of that
country than with those of China." He was opposed to the idea of
throwing the whole trade of Assam and Rangamati into the hands of
the fauzdar of Rangamati. Johnstone, Hay and Bolts had reasons
to believe that Vansittart wanted to restrain the other private
traders so that it would procure him the more profit. Dustifying
his stand, the Governor informed the Calcutta Council that some
of his own boats carrying salt had been detained at Kutua,
implying, therefore, that his orders were observed in general by
the native officials.

Early in 1762 Vansittart agreed to an ad valorem duty
at 9 per cent, on European traders private goods as against a
duty of 40 per cent, for others. The Calcutta Council reacted by reducing the duty to 2% per cent, on salt only and rejected the Governor's proposal that the Nauab's officers have the right to interfere in disputes. So incensed was the Council of Vansittart's compromise with the Nauab that they had him removed, and ousted Mir Kasim and restored Mir 3afar as Nauab of Bengal. To "redress" the injuries on the trade in Goalpara, a party of sepoys was sent to Rangamati to seize the fauzdar and free the business which was stopped.

By a treaty signed on 10 July 1763, Mir Jafar agreed to reimpose the inland duties on the country merchants which had been abolished by his predecessor, and to exempt the Company's servants in their inland trade, excepting the duty of 7\% per cent. on salt. The oppression of the Company's servants and their qomastahs continued. The Court of Directors realizing the enormity of the abuses sent an order on 8 February 1764 prohibiting private internal trade, but it had become so established that its continuation appears in the treaty with Mir Oafar's son and successor Nauab Namj-ud-daula of 20 February 1765.

Clive "the poacher turned gameskeeper" set himself to reform the abuses which had crept into the Company's service in Bengal. He found that the duty-free inland trade of the Company's servants had thrown the entire trade of Bengal into their hands. He, therefore, proposed to the Court of Directors the abolition of the private inland trade in salt, betel nut and

tobacco by the Company's servants. But, as the Court of Directors urged the continuance of this trade under some limitations, Clive formed an exclusive Society of Trade to trade in the above mentioned commodities. The shares of the Society were distributed among the Company's senior servants as a compensation for not taking part in private trade. Three of the eleven agents of the Society were posted in the district of Rangpur, Hugh Baillie at Goalpara, Tom Lewis at Rangpur and Hargreave at Chilmari. Of the monopoly trade, only salt fetched a market as the Garo, Khasi and Daintia Hills did not produce any salt. Tobacco and betel nut were grown in ample quantity for consumption in the hills. Clive's Society of Trade, however, had a short life as administrative inconvenience in employing European agents, the disapproval of the Court of Directors in the monopoly trade and the small returns in revenue that Government received were prime factors for the abolition of the Society in October 1768. Inland trade was then opened to all Indian and European merchants.  

**Frontier Problems:**

With the establishment of direct British administration in Sylhet the Company took the responsibility of defence on this frontier. John Sumner was appointed Supervisor in 1770. This arrangement was inadequate and in 1772, with a view to establish a regular administration in Sylhet and to look after the limestone trade, William M.Thackeray was appointed Sylhet's first Collector, under the supervision of the Dacca Council. Reference has been

mads that the Daintia Raj and certain of the Khasi states on the southern fringe possessed lands in the Sylhet plains. These states were independent of Company rule and their independence was recognized by the British. Problems arose over the control of the foothills which was a natural extension of the Bengal plains. As the boundary between British possessions and those of the Khasi-Oaintia states was not well defined, it encouraged the hillmen to make raids into the Sylhet plains almost immediately after the Company became the Dewan.

The British had first to turn their attention to Daintia. The Raja Chatra Singh was accustomed to levy tolls on all boats plying on the upper reaches of the river Surma. There were frequent depredations on merchants using the waterway. Thackeray complained to the Dacca Council of the Raja's control of the Surma and urged for vigorous measures against him. Richard Barwell, Chief of the Dacca Council, believed that the Raja was the aggressor and that he had been invited by some of the Sylhet people. Barwell was of the opinion that Thackeray did not have any intention to inflame the situation as it was to the Collector's interest to be on good terms with the Raja. On his own accord Barwell despatched Ensign Leake and a contingent of 50 sepoys of the Dacca militia to the Sylhet frontier. Realizing the irregularity in not having received the prior sanction of the Calcutta Council, the Dacca Chief justified his orders "from the emergency of the occasion" as the conduct of the

Daintia Raja merited "chastisement," Baruell suggested that Chatra Singh be compelled to pay the expenses of the troops and that he should pay an indemnity to compensate the damages done. He thought that by taking control of the land between the foothills and the Surma the Raja would come to terms. The object of the Calcutta Council was not conquest. This was communicated by Baruell to Thackeray with instructions to be careful in the reduction of Daintia. Thackeray was to get the Raja's compliance to pay Rs.25,000 for the expenses incurred by the expedition, a sum equivalent to any loss incurred in revenue and the free navigation of the Surma. Ensign Leake was placed under the command of Captain E. Ellerker who was given the complete charge of the Daintia campaign.

Proceeding from Sylhet on 24 March 1774 with three companies of sepoys, Ellerker marched straight for Daintiapur and reached the Raja's capital five days later. There was one small skirmish on the route and a sharp engagement at Daintiapur before the Raja fled to the hills. On receiving information of the capture of Daintiapur Baruell requested Ellerker to make peace with Chatra Singh, but since there was no indication that the Raja would come to terms Baruell suggested that the plains portion of the Daintia Raja might be given to Achmet Riza, the

40. Ibid., Nb.13.
41. Ibid., f*.15.
42. Ibid., No.18 A, Confusion has been worse confounded concerning the name of the officer in charge of the Daintia campaign. Official correspondence gives the name as Elliker, Pemberton and B.C. Allen changed it to Henniker. The correct spelling is Ellerker as pointed out by Firminger., S.D.R., Vol.1, p.16.
43. P.N. Dutta, op. cit., p.31.
thannadar of Sylhet, though he preferred the Raja to continue administering the loulands "as he (Chatra Singh) may undoubtedly prove himself a natural and strong barrier to the incursions of his Hill neighbours."Apparently, Thackeray objected to transferring the loulands to Achmet Riza as he was contemplating the removal of the thannadar. Peace was eventually made when the Saintia Raja signed a treaty on 12 June 1774, providing to pay to the Company £15,000 as compensation for the cost of the expedition and that there should be a free and unimpeded navigation of the river Surma. Territory was annexed by the British.

Following the short engagement in Daintiapur came a more serious and protracted one with the Khasis, Robert Lindsay could say with authority that during his eleven years residence in Sylhet the hill Khasis only entered the district twice in retaliation to the death of some of their people. Their raids were organized as the Khasis usually combined into one confederacy for such occasions. Despite a constant alarm of their impending raids, Lindsay believed that "they are a good set of people with principles far superior to the inhabitants upon the low lands," He, however, did not have much appreciation for their neighbours in the foothills who were a mixed race of Bengalis and Khasis, "a most degenerate people with the views of both united." Dohn Uilles who called these people "Bengalee Cosseahs" had the same opinion of them as his predecessor. Lindsay found them so

45. Ibid. 'Wo.22.
46. P.N.Dutta, op.cit., p.32.
48. Ibid.
insolent as to encamp upon the banks of the rivers and plunder every boat that passed to, or from Sylhet. Experience showed him that the only way to retaliate the "Bengalee Cosseahs" was to immediately follow them back to the hills to keep them within bounds, "This policy was never attempted during the Mogul.' Government, but I found it attended with every good effect I wished for," 50 When raids into Sylhet became frequent it was believed that "Bengalee Cosseahs" had been encouraged to adopt an offensive attitude by the conduct of some "low Europeans" who had treated them with undue difference. The first British defence of Sylhet did not exceed a detachment of 100 men, chiefly recruited from the Upper Provinces. The climate of the hills and its water were so pernicious to their health that large numbers died and the party was in consequence withdrawn. Lindsay proposed to the Board of Revenue that he be given permission to raise a native militia at a cost much lower than the first establishment. This was readily agreed to, and the command of the force that was raised remained with the Collector during his term of office in Sylhet, 52 Lindsay also constructed a small fort at Pandua to protect traders and their interests. 53 To prevent raids the Khasi chiefs were given rent free lands in the plains with the sole intention that they would act as deterrents against raids by their own people. Holland who followed Thackeray as Collector granted such lands called tunkhwahs among others, to Oboo Singh of Mawsmai.

51. B.C.Allen, op.cit.; p.34.
52. Lord Lindsay, op.cit.; pp.180-181.
53. B.C. Allen, op.cit.; p.34.
and Soubu Singh of Cherrapunji, Lindsay appointed a Bengali-Khasit Baroo, Choudhury over a small parqana of Sham Nagar and put under him several small ghats between Sollegur and Chattack to protect that part of the river Surna.  

The first serious outbreak of the Khasis occurred in 1783 when they demanded the head of a havildar whom they charged had treated them with contempt. The Pandua thana was attacked and there was considerable loss on both sides. Lindsay's own lime works were destroyed and his servants killed. The Khasis were accustomed to collect tolls from the markets on the foothills. The havildar who had got the wrath of the Khasis was enforcing an order of the local authorities prohibiting the collection of the toll. That the British recognized the collection of market tolls by the Khasi chiefs is evident in the advice of Uilles that markets should not be set up "close to the hills where Cosseahs collect musool."  

Four years later in 1787 the Bengali-Khasis joined forces with the hill chiefs and ravaged the parqanas of Atgram, Selbaras, Bangsikunda, Ramdiga and Betal and put to death upwards of 300 people. Troops were despatched without delay under Lieutenant Dames Davidson to the foot of the hills, but they found that the raiders had already retreated into the hills. The principal leader of this raid was Ganga Singh, Syiem of Sheila, also styled Raja of Barrakeah - Barrakeah being his

55. Ibid., No.119.
56. B.C.Allen, op.cit., p.34.
58* S.D.R., Vol.11, to.271.
59, Ibid., No.281.; B.C.Allen, op.cit., p.34.
The origin of the hostility between the Bengali-Khasis and the Company is obscure as British records only give but one explanation, Raitt Inglis a British lime merchant in Chattach traced this problem to a dispute between Ganga Singh and Baroo Choudhury over the control of Barrakeah, in which some other Khasi chiefs were also involved. At one stage Baroo Choudhury took control of Barrakeah and Ganga Singh then a child and rightful owner of Barrakeah, was taken into the hills by his mother. Coming of age, Ganga Singh laid claim over the disputed land and had the Choudhury murdered in 1786. Not content with this, Ganga Singh had Baroo Choudhury's whole family put to death two years later. The death of the Choudhury and his family came as a result of the Choudhury's collaboration with the British in pursuing Khasi raiders into the hills, the British patronising him in return for his services and the long standing dispute over Barrakeah. The problem posed by Ganga Singh, the Khasi chiefs and Bengali-Khasis who joined forces with him was all the more difficult to settle so they were independent in the hills and though nominally under the British in Sylhet were assuming an increasing attitude of independence.

Uilles suggested to Government the immediate punishment of the recalcitrant Ganga Singh and the Bengali-Khasis involved in the outrages "as our lenity on this occasion will be construed into weakness." He wanted the boundary to be "closely defined within which we should not admit the Hill Rajahs to exercise the..."
smallest authority, though we might cultivate their friendship, and give every possible encouragement to their people to come amongst us unarmed, and settle as subjects and ryotts,"  The policy Uilles wished Government would adopt is to be found in a letter he wrote to Cornwallis, the Governor-General:

I think the policy to be pursued with all these hill people is first to establish the several limits, and then whenever the occasion comes to support our own authority within our own territories, and not, as at present, having lands nominally the Company's partly subject to us and partly subject to the Cosseah, in which they exert authority and claim a liberty of encountering one another, and in which your Collector is afraid to act lest he may have the discredit of involving the Company in a dispute about a trifling revenue...... though his submission on these occasions establishes a further right on the part of the hill people and leads to endless encroachments.  

The disturbances took a more serious turn when Oboo Singh and Soubu Singh joined Ganga Singh in hostilities in the plains. The Pandua outpost was again attacked in June 1789 resulting in the death of the thanadar and sepoys. The provocation was the confinement of a Bengali supporter of the Khasi chiefs who held unkhwah land in the plains. Uilles reported the incident to Colonel A. Ross in Calcutta. He expressed a fear that more of the Sylhet plains would be plundered, and cautioned that if measures were not taken against the Khasis, the British might be altogether expelled from the district. The Collector was, however, reluctant to take any decision on his own, and in a regular despatch of letters to Cornwallis and the Board

63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid., Mo.146.; B.C.Allen, op.cit., p.35.
66. Ibid.
of Revenue urged for firm action against the Khasis. The existing military force under Lieutenant St. George Ashe remained in Sylhet for some months to prevent the further escalation of an already tense situation as 137 villages were in open revolt. With Ganga Singh and Soubu Singh retiring to the hills Oobo Singh was left alone to continue the operations. Uilles' execution of a policy to prevent rice and salt from going up into the hills had alienated the latter as it had resulted in a dearness of the commodities. Nb military action could be effective at this stage as communication was virtually impossible with the onset of the monsoons.

**Nature of the Disturbance:**

The private trade in Sylhet was in part responsible for the Khasi incursions into the plains. Armenian, Greek, Bengali and other European traders though living under the Company's protection had courted the Khasis for permission to trade in the foothills and secured leases of the limestone quarries by presenting them guns and had frequently been their guides and instructors in the attacks on the Company's lands. The local authorities at Sylhet seemed to have particularly suspected the intrigues of the Greeks, whom they were convinced intended to establish a colony in the Khasi hills "without the limits of the Company's authority," and that the French "might establish a protectorate on our frontier which might be a perpetual source of danger and annoyance."

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67. *ibid.* No.148-149.  
68. *ibid.* No.149.  
69. *ibid.* No.172.  
70. *ibid.* No.146.  
British control of this frontier district was at stake from without and within.

There is no explanation as to why the Governor-General and the Calcutta authorities waited till December 1789 to send a strong force to curb the disturbances, lieutenant Ashe was replaced by Lieutenant Dames Cheape who was instructed to pursue and apprehend Ganga Singh. Overrunning Barrakeah, Cheape followed Ganga Singh to his village in Sheila and had him arrested on the assurance of his personal safety. The Syjem was sent to Sylhet and then to Plussihabad to stand trial in the ‘Nizamat Adalat’ where he probably died in gaol. The disturbances continued unabated but with the principal leader in chains and the organised offensive under Cheape, the Collector could report in 1799 that order had been restored.

The Khasi disturbances referred above, necessitated a more firm control over the foothills and the framing of a policy to direct the Company's interests in Sylhet vis-a-vis the Khasis and the trade in the district. On the recommendations of Willes, the Governor-General-in-Council instructed that the hill Khasis should not be permitted to hold any lands in the plains within the Company's limits, either as proprietors or farmers of under any tenure whatsoever. The Khasis were to be allowed a free intercourse with Sylhet for the purpose of trade provided they descended unarmed and conducted themselves peaceably towards the

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74. Ibid., No.248.
75. F^LDutt a, op. cit., p.42.
76. B.C.Allen, op.cit., p.36.
people of the plains. Sylhet was declared a Frontier District and was provided with a number of thanas on the frontier. Gun boats began to ply the river Surma to keep its passage free for commercial activities. To regulate the trade in Sylhet by a Regulation of 1790 all British subjects, Armenians and Greeks residing in the district for trade and those intending to go therein were required to take a licence from Government. No non-native was permitted to go beyond the north-nest of the Surma, Tor natives there was no licence restrictions provided they refrained the supplying arms and ammunition to the Khasis, No barkandaz or sepoys were permitted to pass Laur and places north-west of the Surma. As a further insurance against Khasi incursions it was proposed in 1799 to survey the submontane parganas of Sylhet to demarcate the border with the Khasi hills.

The policy of non-interference with the Khasi was tacitly violated by European merchants. The expectation was that the Khasis would work their own limestone quarries and cart the limestone to the foothills. The Khasis, however, did not work the quarries, but continued to lease them to traders in Sylhet, Subsequently, the Regulation of 1799 while confirming the earlier Regulation of 1790, opened trade to all interested parties, thus breaking the monopoly of European traders. The apparent loophole

79. Ibid., Mo.292.
81. B.C.Allen, op.cit., pp.36-37.
82. P.N.Dutta, op.cit., p.43.
in this Regulation was that though the Company desired a continuation and opening of limestone trade from the earlier monopoly, it prevented Europeans from entering the hills. Turning a blind eye to the restrictions, and strengthened with paruanas from the Collector, a number of European traders, principal of whom were Raitt Inglis and Dames Stark entered the hills and secured leases to work limestone and the newly discovered deposits of coal.\(^8^3\)

**Caro Frontier:**

The conflict was not limited to Sylhet district alone, for further quest in Mymensingh and Rangpur districts, the Garos lived in a state of constant internecine warfare with the inhabitants of the plains. While the Garo clans in the interior of the hills were independent of one another and of any outside control, those on the border areas were under the nominal control of the Zamindars of the estates bordering the hills. These estates were Karaibari, Kalumalupara, Mechpara and Habrghat in Rangpur district and Susung and Sherpur in Mymensingh district. Under the Mughal Government these Zamindars paid a nominal tribute to the emperor's fauzdar at Rangamati of a certain number of elephants, agar wood, cotton and contribution towards the maintenance of the Dacca artillery, as acknowledgement of their fealty, but they were to all intents independent. The only revenue they paid was from sayer or miscellaneous revenues. The internal management of the estates was left almost entirely

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\(^8^3\) Ibid., pp.44-45. In 1814 coal was discovered to be abundant in the Laur hills and was soon transported to Calcutta for the use of the arsenal. U*Hamilton, The East-India Gazetteer, Vol.11., p.553.
to the Zamindars who were treated rather as tributaries than as subjects* "This must have arisen partly from the very wild and uncultivated state of the country which would not have admitted a regular assessment, and partly from an adherence to a favourite maxim of Mogul policy, to conciliate the goodwill of those who might possess local influence on distant frontiers." 84 A further consideration which rendered it sound policy of the Mughal Government not to bear hard on the Zamindars was the latter's influence over the Garos in restraining them from eruptions into the plains. 85 These estates, therefore, served as buffers between the Garo hills and Mughal Bengal* 86

There were reasons to believe that the fauzdar at Rangamati profited from his office as he was wont to advance capital to the Zamindars for Garo cotton. Little profit accruing from this trade ever found its way into the Mughal treasury. Garo cotton trade in the Bengal plains must have been considerable as it was sufficient to pay what was required of the fauzdar to maintain the artillery at Dacca and certain thanadary establishments. The fauzdar's accounts were in all probability never called upon for scrutiny as these assignments were always liquidated in time. 87 The Zamindars established markets or hats in the passes close to the plains and were in the habit of collecting duties in kind on all articles which the Garos brought for sale which formed one of the main sources of

84. B.3.C.C., 25 April 1815, No.17.
86. B.3.C.C., 25 April 1815, No.17.
87. Ibid.
income. It appears that Zamindars did not attempt to secure any definite control in the hills except perhaps the outlaying and lower spurs which intersected their estates. The Garos in the interior only came down annually to trade and often took back with them hostages from the plains to work as smiths for making weapons. The frequent Garo raids necessitated the upkeep of an armed force of barkandaz to maintain law and order, to prevent raids, to enforce the collection of duties and to protect the merchants. When the Garos sallied into the plains for the purpose of conflagration and massacre the Zamindars in whose estate the outrages occurred collected his barkandaz and went into the hills retaliating those involved and even massacred the innocent. These occasions though they might have reached the knowledge of the Rangamati fauzdar had no effect on his intervention as the end justified the means.

Garo raids sprang from the extortions of the Zamindars and their officials and from Bengali traders who, taxed by the feudal Zamindars in turn extorted high sums for the articles the Garos purchased.

This state of affairs continued for some time when the East India Company was granted the Dewani of Bengal. One of the early changes was the appointment of sezwals who annually entered into engagements with the Zamindars for the payment of public revenue. These officers had their private understanding

88. Ibid.
89. A. Mackenzie, History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-Eastern Frontier of Bengal, p. 246.
90. B.3.C.C., 25 April 1815, No. 17.
with the Zamindars who as before retained the internal management of their estates. The Zamindars were therefore as independent as before. Till 1787-88 the revenues of the estates was always paid in cotton. The Company continued the Mughal policy of "cautious indifference" towards the Zamindars as trade was their first concern, Moreover, this newly acquired frontier posed much less a problem than the already grave problem of the Marathas to the south-west of Bengal.

The patronage by the Company and business acumen of European traders gave them a distinct advantage over the Indian merchants. The two main commodities of trade were the purchase of salt by the Garos and their export of cotton. British mercantile capital could not penetrate into the Garo hills as the Zamindars though their officials had captured the entire two way trade. One result of the increasing trade in cotton was that the Zamindars became more assertive and pressed for more control over the Garos living on the foothills. Despite the abolition of sayer duties in 1788, and the compensation the Zamindars received from Government, the former continued to levy duties they formerly received from Garos visiting the border hats. Reference may here be made to two expeditions in the hills. In 1775-76 the Zamindars of Karaibari and Mechpara collected considerable numbers of barkandaz, and wantonly invaded the hills bordering their estates in consequence of some Garo raids of more than usual

94. B.3.C.C., 25 April 1815, No.17.
severity. The Garo disturbances into these estates had their origin in the spirit of revenge, particularly against the Karaibari Zamindar for a long series of continued oppression and cruelty combined with an anxiety to throw off the yoke of subjection. The Zamindars remained in the hills for several years during which time they eventually succeeded in subduing the Garo clans. The subjected Garos were made to pay to the Zamindars certain quantities of produce on the Hindu festivals, which probably did not involve any great burden on the former, but they lost their independence to the latter and became easy victims of future rapacity.* The Karaibari Zamindar was more brutal in his oppression for he not only imposed fines but frequently mutilated the limbs of Garos. One of the leading Garo Mokmas, Renghta, whose influence extended to the borders of Sherpur and Karaibari was reduced to submission by the Karaibari Zamindar. This, however, brought Mahendranarayan, the Karaibari Zamindar into conflict with his counterparts in Sherpur and Susung for Renghta's people usually traded with the two estates in Nymensingh. Not a man to brook Sherpur interference, Mahendranarayan built forts in the passes on the Nymensingh side to stop Garo trade with the aim of eventually monopolising the entire Garo trade.  

The Garo Nokmas, therefore, appeared to Government that they should be taken under Government's protection by becoming ryots of the Company. Eventually on the request of Dohn Eliot, Baillie, the Registrar of the Nizam at Adalat used his authority over the

95. Ibid.
96. A. Plackenzie, op. cit.. p.246.
Zamindar of Karaibari for the release of Renghta, who immediately on his release requested Government that he should be made a Zamindar. Eliot quite favoured the request of Renghta as, if implemented Garo raids on the Mymensingh frontier would cease and the Garo cotton trade would expand.97

When the sayer duties were abolished it was made applicable to only the estates of Sherpur and Susung in Mymensingh. In these estates the land revenue was assessed as elsewhere in Bengal and the Zamindars were compensated for the losses in their revenue. But the estates of Karaibari, Mechpara, Kalumalupara and Habraghat in Rangpur continued to levy the sayer duties as no revenue settlement was made in these estates due to the prevalent disturbances. The only means of protecting the ryots and people in the plains adjoining the Garo hills in these estates was the use of barkandaz maintained by their respective Zamindars. The sayer duties levied on the border hats paid for this armed establishment. The objective of the abolition of the sayer duties was to prevent Garo inroads and the malpractices of the Zamindars, but in the absence of direct Company administration in these estates the duties continued to be levied to support the peculiar manner of defence of this frontier.98

Since the Nymensingh frontier was more settled than that of Rangpur, Government deputed John Eliot, Joint Magistrate of Nymensingh in September 1788 to investigate the duties collected on the Garo hats in Nymensingh and Rangpur and to open negotiations to conciliate the goodwill of the Garos who had had

98. B.R.C., 30 September 1789, No.27.
no intercourse with the British. Eliot undertook an extensive tour in the hills for several months and met a number of Garo communities. While his account to the Asiatic Society of Bengal gives a graphic description of Garo society, his report to Government has a dismal picture of the continued oppression of the Garos by the Zamindars. It was while Eliot was on deputation that Mahendranarayan arrested and later released Renghta. In his report Eliot made three proposals, that measures be adopted for the abolition of the duties imposed by the Zamindars; that Renghta be made a Company Zamindar and that the Zamindar of Karaibari be prevented from molesting the Garos. Acting on Eliot's recommendations, the Board of Revenue called upon Douglas, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar to report on the nature of the relations between Renghta and Mahendranarayan. In his reply Douglas reported that Renghta "is so far dependent on the Currybarry Zamindar that he is obliged to bring all the cotton which is produced in his country to the market in Currybarry." He was of the opinion that Mahendranarayan had no right to compel the Garos to trade with him at all, but that the conduct of trade had existed for upwards of forty years.

Government approved Eliot's recommendations and instructed the Collector of Mymensingh to accept Renghta as a Zamindar under the Company over the lands he controlled.

100. B.D.C.C., 25 April 1815, l\b.17.
101. B.R.C., 30 September 1789, Nos.29-30.
instructed the Collector and Commissioner of Cooch Behar to prohibited Mahendranarayan from compelling Garos to sell cotton in his markets and to offer the Zamindar a remission of revenue if he would be unable to pay the Government demand in consequence of the new arrangement which deprived him of his income from the hills. Before the decisions could take shape Mahendranarayan "had the audacity" to arrest the messenger sent to make the arrangements with Rengta. He further expelled the Company's officers from his estate, stopped the payment of revenue to Government and blockaded all passes leading to Clymensingh. The implementation by Government of Eliot's suggestions fell through in large part due to the actions of Mahendranarayan but also due to Government's failure to pursue the matter. The adamant Zamindar of Karaibari was once forced to pay his revenues when Government sent troops in 1792 to realize arrears of revenue. In 1794 and again in 1805 he even invaded Sherpur. Mahendranarayan ceased to be a problem when his estate was sold in 1809 for long arrears of revenue. He continued to claim free of revenue the greater part of his estate in the plains. It was not till April 1815 that he was arrested.

Consequent on these reports and developments the Board of Revenue which had earlier exempted the estates in Rangpur from the abolition of the sayar duties applicable to Sherpur and Susung, revised its decision as there was no substantial reasons for this exemption. The Board moreover considered the arguments for this exemption. The Board moreover considered the arguments

103. Ibid.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid., A.Mackenzie, op.cit., p.247.
of Digby, the Collector of Rangpur in favour of continuing the sayer duties to be entirely unfounded as it appeared that the barkandaz maintained by the Zamindars was only necessary for the collection of duties from the Garos and not so much for the defence of the estates. The Board believed that the disturbances had arisen from the oppression of the Zamindars. The Board, therefore, wrote to Digby: "it would appear ........ that the enmity of the Garrous was not directed against the person of the Zamindars against whom they complained for having endeavoured to increase the duty on the cotton brought by them." It then suggested that the sayer duties should be completely discontinued and that the Zamindars be compensated. To prevent the loss from the snail assets of the estates, it was further proposed to instruct the Collector to deduct the amount of jumma from the sum to be allowed as sayer compensation.

That the Zamindars were responsible for the border incursions was only partly so, as raids and head-hunting was customary to the Garos. That there was no references to Garo raids into the plains in the pre-colonial period would not indicate that raids did not occur then. It is certain, however, that Garo raids and Zamindar retaliation took alarming proportions during the early years of British rule in Bengal. The Zamindars who were practically independent of Mughal control found little reason to exact duties from the Garos as the tribute they paid to Flurshidabad was nominal and hence their demand on the hillmen was

106. B.R.C., 14 November 1812, No.8.
107. Ibid., 14 October 1812, No.9.
108. B.R.C., No.14 November 1812, No.B.
moderate. With British control over Bengal the Zamindars were pressed with high revenue demands which could only be met by exploiting Garo trade.

So concerned was Government of the Garo-Zamindar relationship that Thomas Sisson, Joint Magistrate of Rangpur was asked to submit a report on the border issue. His lengthy report after reviewing the Garo-Zamindar trade relations suggested that the duties which the latter had in former times collected in the border hats, and which was discontinued by Government, be re-inforced under proper restrictions, Sisson was convinced that if Zamindars were deprived of all emoluments resulting from the trade they would have no interest in keeping the peace on the border. If they were to have no benefits from trade, Sisson foresaw "the markets will soon be deserted, and the Garrous from want of vend for their staple produce and by the loss of their customary supplies of food and other necessities will be driven to disposition, the awful consequence of which it is not difficult to foresee." He suggested to Government that a competent officer be deputed to investigate on the spot the extent of the trade on the Rangpur frontier.

**Quest for a Model:**

For the tranquility of the frontier Sisson suggested that a system of internal administration should be introduced on the lines of the Bhagalpur system. The Wal Paharias of the Rajmahai Hills in Bhagalpur district had a rude indigenous system of Government which worked in moderate accord with the

111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
Zamindars of the plains bordering on the hills. The hills was divided into a number of tuppahs and subdivided into villages. The head of the villages known as Manjhee were subordinate to a Sardar Manjhee. The Sardar Manjhees received from the Zamindars allotments of land in the plains on jagir or service tenure in return for which they were made responsible for the preservation and detection of crime among the hill people. Besides this, the passes leading from the hills into the plains were guarded by outposts of Mai Paharias, whose duty it was to stop any of their own people from making raids upon the plains and to give warning of impending inroads. For further security the Zamindars themselves maintained at the foot of the hills a chain of chaukies or police outposts which were independent of the Mai Paharia guardians of the passes in the hills. For a time this system kept crimes within bounds and promoted good feelings between the two peoples. But about the middle of the 18th century a show of independence on the part of the Mai Paharias was resented by the Zamindars. The Zamindars invited the Flal Paharia leaders to a feast, filled them with liquor and when intoxicated butchered the hillmen. On this the Flal Paharias give up the guardianship of the passes and commenced a series of depredations which were held in check by the forces of the Zamindars. The famine of 1770 offered to the Mai Paharias, comparatively untouched by it, an opportunity for raiding and looting on a larger scale than usual when the police

114. Ibid.; D.H. Hutton Collection, Microfilm 2407, Nb.8, Typescript, Account of the effects of western contact upon the primitive tribes of India, pp.4-5.
outposts in the plains were abandoned. The Bengal Government intervened at this stage by deputing an officer to punish the offenders and maintain order. Captain Robert Brook who took command of the area in 1772 first introduced a large measure of order. While sternly repressing marauders he adopted conciliatory measures. He induced many of the hillmen to settle in the more cultivable lands in the foothills.

On Brook's resignation in July 1774, Captain Dames Browne took charge of the district till 1778. He was faced with troublesome outbreaks which he had to suppress, but not content with the mere submission of disorder, he made a careful study of the Mai Paharias and early in 1778 submitted an elaborate plan for their administration which met with the entire approval of the Council at Calcutta. He suggested that the Sardar flan-ihees should be restored to their original position as chiefs of the tribes, receiving formal sanads of appointment from Government in turn entering into engagements renewable annually. He also suggested that intercourse with the inhabitants of the plains should be encouraged by establishing markets on the outskirts of the hills. Finally he wanted the old choukles to be re-established under the control of Government. Before the end of the year this scheme was partially implemented at a low cost of £ 100. 

115. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
Little is known of the work of Barton who was Collector between his illustrious predecessor Browne and the more reknoun Augustus Cleveland who took charge in 1780. Uilliam Hodges, an English traveller and artist who toured the hill areas of Bhagalpur tells us that it was the humanity of Cleveland added to the desire of improving the revenue of the district for the Company's benefit that induced him to venture into the hills alone and unarmed, where he met some of the Plan^hees who in turn met him at his residence in Bhagalpur. By "little presents and acts of personal kindness he so subdued their ferocious spirit that they promised to desist entirely from their usual depredations," By degrees Cleveland brought forward his measures. He presented medals to the chiefs as a mark of his friendship and as a reward of their improving civilization. When he found them prepared for the accomplishment of his plans, he set up a local militia complete with uniforms, firelocks and drill. The express purpose of preventing raids was therefore accomplished by the very raiders preserving order. Cleveland also instituted courts called the Hill Assembly comprised of Sardars and Sardar Wanjhees over which he presided. This was done in consideration of the uncivilized state of the Plal Paharias and their ignorance of the language, law and customs of their neighbours, the Hindus and Muslims. The hillmen were not to be subject to the ordinary

119, Uilliam Hodges, Travels in India during the years 1780-1783. p.89.
120. rEId\
tribunals, but that all crimes should be tried by the assembly under the superintendence of the District Magistrate. The rules of Cleveland's Hill Assembly were subsequently incorporated in Regulation I of 1796,\textsuperscript{121}

Hodges tended to over-emphasize that it was "the ingenuity, address and humanity of one man (Cleveland) affected in the span of little more than two years, more than could have been hoped for from the utmost exertions of military severity."\textsuperscript{122} Great as were the achievements of Cleveland, much of the credit that has fallen on him was really due to Brook and Browne, and more especially the latter who initiated many of the reforms which Cleveland afterwards elaborated.\textsuperscript{123}

Thomas Sisson found that the situation on the Garo frontier was similar to that in Bhagalpur. He suggested that the judicious and applicable parts of the Bhagalpur system with little modifications could be introduced on the Garo frontier. He thought it particularly expedient to appoint an officer with one* or more deputies to the local superintendence of the whole range of hills, and that a local corps to be raised from the Heches, Hajongs, Kochs, Rajbanshis and similar tribes who were accustomed to the climate of the Garo hills,. He further suggested that an experienced officer be deputed to collect information necessary for the formulation of a schema for the

\textsuperscript{122} U.Hodges, \textit{op.cit.}, p.90.
\textsuperscript{123} C.E.A.U.Oldham, \textit{op.cit.} p.233.
security of the frontier. The Government accepted Sisson's report and accordingly appointed Maxwell, the Joint Magistrate of Mymensingh to carry on the proposed investigation, but on his transfer to Dinajpur, David Scott, Magistrate of Rangpur was entrusted the work of making the recommendations for a first stage of a system of administration of this frontier.

Birth of Non-Regulation:

As Magistrate of Rangpur Scott had occasion to deal with the Garos. He first brought to the attention of Government that in the absence of more rigorous measures the closing of the border hats would have a considerable effect on the Garos as it would reduce them to the greatest distress. Not realizing that he would later take charge of the investigation he pointed out to Government that it should consider whether the ordinary course of law should be suspended and a more efficacious and summary mode be introduced. The manner in which Scott had dealt with the Garos brought to the notice of the authorities that he could be entrusted the final pacification of the tribe and the introduction of a system of administration. On 16 February 1816, he was relieved of charge of the district of

124. B.3.C.C., 25 April 1815, No.17. It is interesting to note that earlier to Sisson's report, Lord Cornwallis had expressed his opinion that the Bhagalpur system "ought to be attempted as far as possible by the Collector of Sylhet in respect to the inhabitants of the tract of low country, ...." S.D.R., Vol.II., No.303.
125. B.3.C.C., 16 February 1816, Nos. 15-16.
126. Ibid., No.16.
Rangpur, and retaining his post as Magistrate took personal control as Government's agent to the east of the Brahmaputra, Scott was authorized to use his discretion to continue the economic blockade that was introduced a year earlier and was given the liberty to relax the trade prohibitions whenever he deemed it convenient. 127 To support the effective execution of the measures, a small section of the Sylhet Light Infantry under Lieutenant Davidson was placed under his command, Scott was further instructed to work out a plan that Government had framed. He was first to recommend a pattern of internal management in the Garo frontier corresponding to the Bhagalpur system introduced by Cleveland, subject to modifications which local circumstances would suggest; secondly, the establishment of a small local corps to consist of inhabitants of the hills and to be stationed at convenient passes and hats; thirdly, the appointment of a local officer vested with civil and criminal powers throughout the tract of land to the east of the Brahmaputra; and lastly the regulation of trade and commerce with the Garos and other hill tribes to encourage and promote commercial intercourse on the frontier. 128

Scott was a prolific writer with a keen eye for detail. His lengthy report merits a close discussion for in it is to be found the state of affairs on the Garo frontier and his recommendations for the administration of the area. After giving a general account of the land, people, customs and agriculture

127. Ibid., No,18.
128. Ibid.
he came to the causes of the Garo inroads into the Zamindar estates. In Karaibari the vigorous measures adopted by the former Zamindars, in total disregard of the authority of the British Government, and the character of the means by which they affected the purpose enabled them to reduce the greater part of the Garos of the estate to the condition of ryots. While a feu of the tributary chiefs — he mentions Renghta and his son Agund — remained in a kind of tributary state, they were subject to providing cotton on terms highly favourable to the Zamindar. With the sale of the estate the tributary Garos had re-established their independence. 129

The control of the Kalumalupara Zamindar over the Garos on his frontier was insignificant. The Garos had for some time remained in a tributary state but in consequence of the sale of the estate and the various irruptions of the hillmen, the purchaser of the estate had lost authority on them though some chiefs still took money advances and delivered small quantity of cotton. 130 In Mechpara, despite the earlier conquests in the hills, no effective control could continue as a minor had succeeded to the Zamindari. In this estate, Government authority was more firmly established and this probably prevented him from having recourse to reducing the Garos. The tributary chiefs were only required to deliver a certain quantity of cotton and to submit to his occasional interference as their criminal judge. 131

129. B.3.C.C., 27 September 1816, Nb.47.
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid.
Rangpur, the Zamindar appeared to have followed a better policy. There were no tributaries as the Garos on the first range of hills had been reduced to "unconditional subjection" to the laws and regulations of Bengal and Garo Sardars had been transformed into Jagirdars for the defence of the passes. The Garos in the interior were independent of the Zamindar's control except for the usual duties which they paid when visiting the hsfs.\[132\]

Scott found that the cause of the Garo raids had been, that in spite of the abolition of the sayer duties the Zamindars had continued to levy it on the border jhats, their occasional imposition of fines for criminal offences, the seizure and imprisonment of Garos on the Zamindars on the same grounds and the unfair price the Zamindars gave for Garo cotton for about one-sixth of its real value.\[133\] Scott's findings confirmed what Francis Buchanan had learned some years earlier that the Zamindars were encroaching on the Garo territories.\[134\]

Scott gave two options to Government to decide on the policy to be followed. He first suggested that if the authorities were of the opinion that the existing situation was insufficient to constitute any right of sovereignty over the the tributary Garos, and if it was determined that the character of the Garo institutions was not of a dangerous nature as to afford grounds for reducing them by forcible means, nothing remained to be done than to ascertain the proper

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132. Ibid.
133. Ibid.
boundary and to declare all the Garos beyond it completely independent. The Garo independence would, however, require steps to prevent zamindar interference. The second suggestion was that Government should recognize the tributary Garos as part of the British dominions, Scott recommended that with the exception of Habraghat, the rest of the Garo villages over which the zamindars had exercised authority should be separated from the estates and that the zamindars should be given an adequate deduction from the revenue demands as compensation. He further proposed that the tracts of country should be placed under the immediate superintendence of an officer appointed to take charge of the police and that these Garos should be subjected to a small revenue. He pointed out that the interference should be extremely limited leaving the expediency of the introduction of any system of law, for the benefit of the Garos for future consideration, when from further acquaintance with that people, we may be better able to devise a plan calculated to ameliorate their conditions; at the same time that the Garcows themselves by an intercourse with our officers at the haths and a comparison of the justice and regularity, which will mark the administration of Government, with the rapacity and caprice of the zemindars will also be rendered more capable of appreciating our character.135

This policy was to be reinforced by extracting from the Garo chiefs an undertaking before being permitted to trade in the hats, to pay an annual tribute in cotton in acknowledgement of Company supremacy; to refrain from any outrages; to appear in the hats without arms; to inform all plots and

135. B.3.C.C.. 27 September 1816, No .47.
and conspiracies against the Company's ryots under penalty of fine and that should they resist the authority of Government in executing the conditions, their houses and property would be confiscated. Scott proposed that all the hats be closed for one year and that this measure should be supported by a military force until the Garos submit to tems. 136 It was felt that it was absolutely necessary for the efficiency of the proposed plan that there should be a naib darogah in each of the thanas of Dhubri and Goalpara to perform the duties of darogah in the absence of the superintendent. 137 For the working of the Garo hats Scott suggested that they be placed in the hands of police darogahs. He suggested that there should be eleven to twelve hats formed into four divisions, and that the charge of each division consisting of two to three hats should be entrusted to a police muharrir under the police darogah, having under him four barkandaz, one interpreter and a havildar party from the local corps. It would be the duty of the police muharrir to be present at every hat and to maintain the peace between the Garo and plainsmen. 138 To further regulate the border trade, Scott suggested that Government should purchase 50 acres of land from the Zamindars at each border market to be used for the purposes of hats and warehouses. The charges for the warehouses and the sales tax of 12 annas per raaund of cotton would cover the cost of managing the markets.

136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
138. Ibid.
and sufficient to meet the expenses of a native judicial establishment, a local corps and a Garo native police. But the total receipts would fall short if an European Officer were appointed to superintend the policing and the collection of tax, Scott, therefore suggested that the tract should be placed under the charge of the Cooch Behar Commissioner and that the officer should be required to spend four months in the year on tour for visiting the Garo frontier.

Scott did not think that a version of the Bhagalpur system would work among the Garos. Differing from Sisso's recommendations, Scott pointed out that at the time of the introduction of British rule in Bhagalpur, the inhabitants appeared to have been governed by a regular gradation of chiefs whose authority was undisputed, and who had been taught to respect the British authority by repeated and severe chastisement for their inroads upon the plains. The Mai Paharias had been induced to accept British authority for they were "neady to the extreme" by generous subsidies. The Garos by contrast were rich and individually free to such an extent that they compared their country to a "crab which they affirm has no head." The policy of granting subsidies would, therefore, not un the Garos to forsake their habits of raids. Coercive

139. Ibid. Scott estimated the total annual receipt in the Garo frontier trade as Rs.30,000. The expenditure he estimated at: Judicial Establishment Rs. 5000
Garo Police and Presents Rs. 3880
Collection of Duties Rs. 3000
Local Corps Rs.14400

Rs.26280

140. Ibid.
measures of display of armed force and the occasional closing of hats would only bring them to accept the Company's authority.

The Government was impressed with Scott's report and recommendations. What better person could implement the measures that Scott had suggested than the very man who had made such a detailed and interesting report. David Scott was accordingly relieved of his duties as Magistrate of Rangpur and appointed Commissioner of Cooch Behar and Joint Magistrate of Rangpur with independent charge of the district east of the Brahmaputra and between that river and Cooch Behar. The new administration was to consist of the thanas of Dhubri, Nagesuari, Goalpara and Karaibari.143

The authorities at Calcutta agreed with Scott of the unpracticability of introducing the Bhagalpur system in the Garo hills. It instructed that the tributary Garos should pay a small revenue in acknowledgement of the supremacy of Government and that the existing regulations be declared not to extend to these tract but that they should be subject to such rules for internal management as might be conformable to their traditional system, "with the view of providing in the first instance for the security of our other subjects and eventually for the improvement of the Garrows themselves."144 It was hoped that the tributary Garos would more readily acknowledge themselves to be subjects of the British Government.

141. Ibid.
142. B.J.C.C., 27 September, No.52.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid.
when they would be informed of the principles by which Government proposed to regulate its conduct towards them, Scott's plan for the collection of duties and the management of the hats received the full sanction of Government. Scott was, however, informed that the arrangement was to be regarded as an experiment as it would be premature to sanction the proposal by legislative enactment till a more accurate knowledge of the tract and the result of the measures showed successful working. Further, the Commissioner was vested the discretion of disbursing a sum not exceeding Rs,1000 annually for turbans and feasts for the Garo Sardars and was authorised to raise a local corps of 140 sepoys of local inhabitants.

The Garo hills was divided into three sections. The Khas Mahals formally under the Zamindars were separated from their respective estates and managed by Government for the Zamindars. The income from these tracts was charged to meet the expenditure incurred for their administration and the balance credited to the Zamindars. The tributary Garo Sardars in the Nazzarana Plahals who owed nominal allegiance to the Zamindars were confirmed in their respective positions and made responsible for the maintenance of peace within their tracts. The Laskars or chiefs of the passes were entrusted the collection of the public revenue from the Sardars in return for rewards in cash and kind annually from Government. Above

145. Ibid.
146. Ibid.
148. B.J.C.C., 5 April 1817, No.16.
the Laskars was placed a Sarbarakar who was responsible for the supervision of the Garo chiefs. Further into the hills were the Bemula Garos who were independent of Zamindar and Government control.

The newly appointed Commissioner first entered into engagements with the tributary Garos of Tikree Duar, a pass in Nechpara. One of the twelve Sardars agreed to pay a fine of 2,800; that they would refrain from violence upon the Company's subjects and that they would deliver to the Government any one of their people guilty of such offences. They agreed to settle their disputes in conformance with their customs failing which the Magistrate could intervene. They further consented to the terms which Scott had earlier suggested to Government, that armed Garos should not be allowed access to the border hats. This agreement became the model for subsequent agreements with the tributary Garos. Where such Garos failed to come to agreement, Scott used coercive measures of burning their villages to compel them to come to terms.

These arrangements in and on the borders of British Bengal necessitated definite legislative measures. Government instructed Scott not to scruple in the separation of the Garos in the estates and to treat them exactly as the tributary Garos, though it would be ultimately necessary formally to

150. Ibid.
151. Ibid., pp.231-232.
152. B.D.C.C., 2 May 1817, No.26.
recognize arrangements in the settled estates by a legislative enactment. In reply Scott wrote that the existing regulations "are evidently inapplicable to the existing state of society amongst them, a people in general entirely ignorant of the Bengal language or any other dialect understood in our courts." He was not willing to bring the Zamindars into the proposed arrangement as the Mughal system of Government was "regardless of the means by which its objects were affected" and because the Zamindars were divorced of principles and very indolent and incapable, Moreover, he felt that the absentee Zamindars had no real concern for the Garos. Scott could not agree to the full application to the Garos of Regulation 1 of 1796 introduced in the Bhagalpur Hills.

Scott, therefore, drafted a regulation in which he proposed the appointment of a Special Commissioner by the Governor-General-in-Council to be vested with the administration of civil and criminal justice, the collection of revenue, the superintendence of police and every other branch of administration within the tract. The Commissioner was to function as Magistrate, guided by the Bengal regulations for the Bengali speaking subjects to whom the new regulation would be applicable. For the Garos, Scott suggested a pattern of internal management under the charge of the Commissioner. Cases were to be tried by the officer alone or with the aid of Garo assessors. The

154. B. ZJ.C.C., 28 December 1821, No.88.  
155. Ibid.
draft regulation provided for the recognition of the existing Sardars as heads of the villages and of Laskars as chief of the local division and for the nomination of fit persons to such posts where none existed. These Garo chiefs should be responsible for the maintenance of peace in their respective areas and further responsible for the security of the lowlands adjoining their villages and for preventing raids into the plains. To assist them in preserving order, the Mandals or village officers in the plain should be obliged to report all crimes committed by the Garos both to the police officers and to the nearest Garo Sardar. In return for these services the Garo chiefs were to be given a salary. Since the recognition of the Garo chiefs would come from Government there was a provision in the draft regulation that in case of misconduct they would be removed from office by the Commissioner.

For administration of justice the draft rules provided that Sardars and Laskars be empowered to take cognizance of civil disputes in their own jurisdictions. A panchayat consisting of the leading men should aid the chiefs in the administration of justice. Where a decision had to be enforced it should be first referred to the Commissioner. Petty criminal offences should be treated as civil cases and settled according to customs. Scott proposed that police darogahs should be appointed with the usual powers at convenient stations in the lowlands but that they should take cognizance
only of murder, homicide, robbery, theft, burglary and affrays attended with homicide or wounding, in the hills. These duties were to be attended with the aid of the Garo Sardars and Laskars and of their barkandaz in apprehending the offenders.

Finally, Scott proposed that in the trial of Garos, the Commissioner should be assisted by five Garo assessors who should be consulted on all points connected with the peculiar customs and manners of the Garos and their proceedings of the case should be recorded, though this should not bind the court in passing judgement. All other civil and criminal cases which the Sardars and Laskars were unable to settle in the manner above prescribed should be tried before a panchayat either appointed by the Commissioner or chosen by the parties. The Sarbarakar would continue to supervise the activities of the Sardars and Laskars and would be directly responsible to the Commissioner. To effectively implement these proposals Scott suggested that there should be two annual assemblies of the Garo chiefs of each division wherein the Commissioner would entertain them at public expense, and the chiefs renew their allegiance and decide on all pending disputes. All these measures it was hoped would create a powerful body of hill chiefs, loyal to Government and serving as useful subsidiary agents in the maintenance of law and order.

The manner in which Scott had conducted his enquiries and made proposals for a regulation were approved by Government.

156. Ibid.
157. B.J.C.C., 28 December 1821, No.90.
158. Ibid.
The Governor-General resolved that the tract of country lying between the Sankosh and Brahmaputra rivers, including the Garo Hills and the tract of land hitherto attached to the thanas of Goalpara, Dhubri and Karaibari in Rangpur, be separated from the district of Rangpur and placed under the special charge of a Civil Commissioner of the North-East parts of Rangpur. What person was more suited to take charge of the new appointment that Scott himself. Recognizing Scott's "ability, judgement and conciliation," the Governor-General was desirous of availing himself of "the valuable officer's talents and local experience" in carrying into effect the more definite and extended arrangements which were resolved to adopt. Accordingly, Scott was issued notice to this effect in December 1821. He was to draw a salary of Rs.40,000 per annum, including all travelling and personal charges.

These administrative changes were followed by the enactment of Regulation X of 1822 passed on 19 September 1822. The Regulation was not passed in the precise shape that Scott had drafted but sufficient discretion to meet all cases that would arise was left in the hands of Government. There is, however, no doubt that the Regulation was the handiwork of Scott.

159. Ibid. No.1G0.
160. Ibid.
162. A. Mackenzie, op. cit., p.250.
and the realization of years of work to give the Garos a distinct pattern of administration and a policy for Government to follow. It preamble declared:

The condition of the Garrou Mountaineers, and of the other rude tribes on that frontier has, for some time past, attracted much of the attention of the Governor General in Council, and the circumstances which have conducted to check the progress of civilization amongst them have been fully investigated and ascertained. With a view, therefore, to promote the desireable object of reclaiming these tracts to the habits of civilized life, it seems necessary that a special plan for the administration of justice of a kind adopted to their peculiar customs and prejudices, should be arranged and concerted with the head men, and that measures should at the same time be taken for freeing them from any dependence on the Zemindars of the British provinces; compensation being of course made to the latter for any just pecuniary claims they may have over them.\(^\text{163}\)

It was declared indispensable to suspend the operations of the existing rules for the administration of civil and criminal justice and generally of the regulations of Government within the tract of country comprised in or bordering on the hills occupied by the Garos. The Regulation ratified the earlier administrative reorganization of the areas inhabited by the tribe in the thanas of Karaibari, Goalpara and Dhubri and the creation of the office of the Civil Commissioner for the North-East part of Rangpur. It defined the powers of the Civil Commissioner in administering civil and criminal justice, the collection of revenue and the superintendence of police. He was to exercise powers of a Magistrate and to have criminal

\(^{163}\)Ibid., p.251; B .Clarke, \textit{op.cit.}, p.659.
jurisdiction in the trial and sentencing of persons charged with offences to the extent of a civil judge. It was left to his discretion to refer cases to the Nizamat Adalat for its decision. The Regulation clearly distinguished the powers of the Civil Commissioner as a civil judge when trying non-Garos who were subject to the Bengal rules and the Garos who were exempted from such rules. He was to ordinarily conform to the spirit of the existing regulations subject to the restrictions and modifications provided in the Regulation and to such orders and amendments as may from time to time be issued by the Governor-General-in-Council.  

Owing to the "unsettled" or "uncivilized" state on the Garo frontier it was advisable not to bring this part of north-east Bengal under the general system of administration as was in vogue in "more peaceful and advanced communities."

Regulation X of 1822 introduced the Non-Regulation system in which the powers of Collector, Magistrate and Judge were united in the same person subject only to the control of the Governor-General. The system was characterized by a simple procedure of administration with the intention of bringing it direct to the people. While Regulation 1 of 1796 provided for the internal arrangement of the Mai Paharias, Regulation X of 1822 did not specify the new administration for the Garos but laid down guiding principles to be followed, leaving the actual

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administration to the local authorities. As the East India Company acquired new territories, repeated instances occurred in which the full provisions of the law as it prevailed in the settled valley of the Ganges were found inapplicable to the tracts newly annexed. In the Punjab the whole code of administration and judicial procedure was the work of the first Chief Commissioner, John Laurence, acting on the plenary authority delegated to him by the Governor-General. Similarly, the Non-Regulation system was adopted for Chota Nagpur, Dalpaiguri, Oarjeeling, and the Chittagong Hills in Bengal, Kumaon in the North-West Provinces and in certain districts of Sindh.166

Colonization:

In the meantime the Company's attention was drawn towards a possible invasion into Bengal by the Burmese forces which had occupied Assam and Manipur. The British policy of non-intervention could no longer continue in the face of this threat and the internal turmoil in these two states across their frontier. Its consequence was that British policy towards the hill tribes on the north-east frontier underwent a drastic change from one of non-interference to intervention. Abandoning its former policy war was declared on the kingdom of Ava on 5 March 1824. David Scott, (who had by then been appointed Agent to the Governor-General on the North-East Frontier of Bengal) visualized three possible Burmese routes into Bengal, the first from Planipur by Tipperah and Cachar, the second by Cachar and

166. Ibid., p.71.
Daintia and the third from Assam by the Brahmaputra. Scott's suspicions were confirmed when detachments of the Burmese crossed into Cachar and another marching through Uaintia threatened Sylhet. Raja Ram Singh was either unable to prevent this force from taking up a position in the hills, or threatened on either side by powerful neighbours, he vacillated between both* Government in consequence sent a military force to dislodge the Burmese detachment, and the march of these troops in all probability afforded the British who accompanied it an opportunity of learning more of the hills* The Burmese had shown that there were practicable routes across the hills. It therefore became necessary for the British to obtain a perfect knowledge of the country in order to despatch reinforcements through the hills to their forces in Assam, without the necessity of taking the immense bend round the Garo hills. 169 In pursuance of this end Scott opened negotiations with Ram Singh of Daintia. His first contact with the Raja did not prove successful, as he wrote to George Swinton:

The Dynteah Rajah has, with the usual procrastinating policy of the native Princes, declined entering into a treaty of alliance, until, as he says, the necessity may prove very urgent. I have pointed out the folly of this line of conduct, in the strongest terms, and, with a view to prevent his being intimidated into submission, by the

167. N.K.Barooah, David Scott in North East India, p.82.
169. Ibid.
approach of the Burmese army, I have, in the meantime, promised him the assistance of our troops, provided he himself makes all the opposition he can; and declared, that if he admit the Burmese into his territory, without doing so, we shall treat him as an enemy.\textsuperscript{170}

In March 1824 Scott personally met Ram Singh who gave the former a cordial reception. On 10 March that year a treaty was signed in which the Raja acknowledged allegiance to the Company and promised to give his military support to the Company by advancing his forces to the east of Gauhati and to assist in the war in return for protection from external threats.\textsuperscript{171} Scott also negotiated the construction of a road across the hills. The Raja readily agreed to this and after a survey by Scott, the Company began the construction of a road from Jaintiapur to Rahar in Nougong.\textsuperscript{172} Considerable sums of money was spent for the purpose but the result, at the end of three years the project was discontinued.\textsuperscript{173}

Scott had had an opportunity to reside in the hills during these parleys and delighted with its climate brought it to the notice of Government as offering very desireable situations for sanatory stations for Europeans, While the European community in the Upper Provinces had such stations in

\textsuperscript{170} A. White, \textit{Memoir of the Late David Scott}, p.74; H. H. Wilson, \textit{Documents Illustrative of the Burmese War}, p.19, George Sulinton was then Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal and had been Scott's classmate in Fort William College, Calcutta
\textsuperscript{171} C. U. Aitchison, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol.XII, 1931, pp.118-119.
\textsuperscript{172} *Chirra Punji*, \textit{op. cit.}: p.17.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.; Rs.19,982 was sanctioned for the construction of the road. F.P.C., 18 April 1829, No.53.
the newly acquired Simla hills after the Anglo-Nepal War, the residents of Calcutta could only resort to sea for change of climate and health, until the idea developed to establish a sanatorium in the Khasi Hills. Scott was in the meantime occupied in the construction of a road between the Surma and Brahmaputra valleys after the work on the Daintia road was discontinued. Taking advantage of a disputed succession in Nongkhlau, Scott announced that he would not grant the investiture of the Barduar, a tract of passes adjoining Nongkhlau in Assam, to any person whose authority was not fully recognized in the hills and the lowlands, and who was not prepared to grant the same facilities of communication through his territory as the Khasis enjoyed in British Assam and Sylhet. On Scott's mediation, the claims of Rajjan Singh, a lad of only five years and the brother and direct heir of Chattar Singh, the deceased Syiem, was set aside for Tirot Singh. Scott then got the permission of Tirot Singh and Oeuan Singh of Cherrapunji for the construction of a road through their states to provide a free passage for British subjects. In return the Khasi Syiems were provided small grants of land in the plains.

The construction of the road from Pandua to Barduar progressed and British relations with the Khasi states showed signs of cordiality. There was, however, a lull before the

174. »Chirra Punji", op.cit.. p.17.
175. N.K.Barooah, op.cit.. p.179.
storm. One of the first problems that demanded Scott's attention was the complaint of eight Khasi states that the lands on the northern foothills which they held in fief from the Ahom monarch were lost to them. Following the British conquest of Assam and the expulsion of the Burmese a revenue settlement was made in these tracts. Despite complaints to the British authorities that these lands were part of the Khasi states in the hill, no decision was arrived at which considered the rights of the Khasis. 177 As seen earlier, Scott himself exploited the situation in order to get the Syiem of Nongkhlau to allow the road to pass through his state. The growing British interest in the Khasi hills, their treaty relations with those states which agreed to the road, the growing establishments at Nongkhlau and Cherrapunji, their control of Sylhet and Assam and the problems that emerged therefrom must have created a psychosis of fear which burst into the massacre at Nongkhlau.

On 4 April 1829 four to five hundred Khasis surrounded the house of Lieutenants Bedingfield and Burlton at Nongkhlau, where they had gone for the benefit of their health. Bedingfield was killed that day and Burlton and his soldiers the following day as they were making a retreat towards Gauhati. 178 Scott escaped the carnage as he had left for Cherrapunji a few days earlier in connection with the construction of the road. 179 It seems absurd that the British

177. B.P.C., 24 November 1835, No.17.
would ascribe the cause of this outrage "to the false and foolish speech of a Bengalee Chupprassee, who, in a dispute with the Cassyas, . . . . . . had threatened them with his master's (Scott's) vengeance, and had plainly told them that it entered into his master's plans to subject them to taxation, the same as the inhabitants of the plains," 180 Yet, there is some element of truth in this for it would confirm that the Khasis were prepared to counter British expansion in these hills.

A local confrontation became the cause of most of the Khasi states to take up arms in what seemed a concerted attempt to drive out the British from the hills. On hearing of the outrage at Nongkhlau, the British immediately commenced operations from the Assam side. Captain A. White with a detachment of the Rangpur Light Infantry marched for the hills from Gauhati on 7 April 1829. 181 Captain Lister, commanding the Sylhet Light hastened from Sylhet to reinforce British forces in the hills. 187 The principal leaders of the insurgent forces were Tirot Singh and his servant Flonbot, Bormanik, Syiem of Mylliem and Zubbgir Singh, Syiem of Rambrai. In the face of continued resistance from the Khasi insurgents, Scott considered to offer an indemnity to the leaders upon their making their submission. The response to this offer was lukewarm as there were differences among the Khasis owing to

181. Ibid., pp.42-43.
the dilatory manner in which they conducted their business in long debates in which everyone was at liberty to take a part. Scott believed that coercive measures such as the burning of the villages might reduce the Khasis to submission, "but motives of humanity, if not of policy forbid the adoption of such measures." One very effective method of opposing the Khasis was to instruct the Magistrate of Sylhet to stop the markets in the plains from where the hillmen drew their supplies. Apparently William Bentinck must have been ill informed of the seriousness of what was happening in the hills for in letters to Ellenborough, President of the Board of Control he referred to the uprising as "the bow and arrow -insurrection ." By April 1830 a vast tract had been subdued including the whole of Mylliem, Rambrai, Flyriaux and Nongkhlau and certain areas on the southern fringe of the hills in Flaumluh, Mausmai, Suparpunji and Byrong. Burmanik entered into an agreement with the Company on 15 January 1830 in which he ceded a stretch of land to the south and east of the Umiam river, relinquished his claim over Desh Dumaria; agreed to become dependant on the Company; to pay a fine of Rs.5000 and

183. F.P.C., 31 December 1830, No.22.  
184. Ibid.  
185. India Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, No.9 of 1831.  
186. C.H. Phillips, The Correspondence of Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, Vol.1., No.130, p.266; No.175, p.381.  
promised to apprehend and deliver to the authorities Tirot Singh and others who were still in arms. Lar Singh of Myriau also entered into an agreement acknowledging British suzerainty, and so did Zubbar Singh of Rambrai. 

Scott proposed that the Sylpma should be reinstalled but under sanads granted by the Government. The Syiem should be liable to punishment for treason and that they should be liable to removal in the case of continued opposition. The restored Syiems were to be entrusted with the administration of justice for all but criminal offences. Rather than introduce a land revenue Scott proposed to impose fines upon the principal leaders. Realizing he could not continue the fight alone, Tirot Singh surrendered after much parley to Henry Inglis on 13 January 1833, on the single condition of his life being spared. He was taken to Gauhati and eventually confined in the Dacca Dail where he is said to have spent his last days. The submission of Tirot Singh was almost immediately followed by a general pacification, but it was not till Sngap Singh of Plaharam laid down arms in February 1839, that the Khasi insurrection came to an end.

Scott first planned a settlement at Nongkhlaw where

189. Ibid., pp.127-128.
190. TBJ, p.128.
191. TTPC, 7 Way 1830, Nb.49.
he constructed a house "to eat the Europe air." After only a years residence there he was stricken with a severe sickness which affected the other Europeans and natives. Nongkhlau was ruled out for further development. Still in search for a suitable site, Scott settled for Cherrapunji in preference to Mausmai and Plaumluh. Cherrapunji had two advantages, the more important of which was the extremely convenient distance it is situated from the plains where almost all articles of consumption could be drawn. The second advantage was that there were abundant supplies of lime, timber and sandstone for building purposes. Moreover, the Nongkhlau massacre and the disturbances elsewhere in the hills convinced the British to set up a sanatorium at Cherrapunji where the Syiem had remained if not neutral, an ally to the British.

An agreement was entered into between Scott and Dewan Singh on 10 September 1829 in which the latter voluntarily ceded land to the east of Cherrapunji to the Company for the construction of a sanatorium in return for an equal area of land in Pandua and Companygunj, with provision for more land should it be required by the British. Construction of the establishment began at once under the charge of C.A.Fenuick,

195. Ibid., pp.257-258; Thomas C.Uatson 'Chirra Punji', and a Detail of Some of the favourable circumstances which render it an Advantageous Site for the Erection of an Iron and Steel Manufactory on an extensive scalej
whom Scott had intended to use for his Garo experiments. So large was the proposed sanatorium that the land just acquired was inadequate. Subha Singh, who had in the meantime succeeded Dewan Singh readily ceded more of his lands to the south-east of Cherrapunji for the growing British position. 197

On the recommendation of Scott a detachment of European troops and convalescents were ordered to proceed to Cherrapunji. They were sent for the double purpose of overawing the recalcitrant Khasis and of ascertaining the effects of the climate upon the constitution of Europeans. 198 The detachment left Dum Dum in late August 1830 and arrived Cherrapunji in early October. "The change was felt immediately, and its beneficial effects manifested by the improvement of the health of the soldiers, who, in a short time recovered their good looks, assuming the robust appearance which is so seldom to be found upon the plains." 199 Scott, Captain Broadhurst, Superintendent of the Cherrapunji experiment, and the two doctors treating the invalids were "much pleased with the place and of opinion that it will answer the intended purpose perfectly." 200 The one apprehension Scott had, which he disclosed in a private letter to Swinton was that, "Captain Broadhurst cannot trust anyone of them .... without risk of them all getting drunk,"

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197. Ibid., p.132.
198. CTRT Phillips, op.cit., No.237, p.500*
199. *Chirra Punji*, op.cit., p.18,
200. Bentinck Papers, PU3F 2781/XXII, Scott to Swinton, 11 October 1830.
as "the Cossya being hale fellows and having no objection to give them a glass of grog in the very penetralia of their houses..." 201 The European soldiers in India generally suffered from drunkenness as there was no amusement for them when off duty. 202 Scott was convinced "of the immense advantage that the European force would derive from being cantoned in this quarter. If the recruits were at once brought up here they would have no opportunity of acquiring idle dissolute habits. 203 Swintons was enthusiastic as Scott in the establishment of a European cantonment in the Khasi hills for which cause both friends worked untiringly. Benteink's own views on Scott's early plans for the development of a military colony in Cherrapunji seemed "wild and impracticable, but I have no doubt, that Europeans will be induced to settle on those hills, if further trials confirms the belief entertained of their healthiness." 204 Scott looked forward to the Khasi, Nilgiri and Simla hills as sites for establishing colonies, in which a race of hardy European soldiers might be reared, capable of defending the British interests and territories in India.

201. Dalhousie Muniments, GD.45/5/48, Scott to Swinton, 27 October 1830.
202. Ibid., Swinton to Earl of Dalhousie, Commander-in-Chief, TT829-1832, 10 November 1830.
203. Ibid., Scott to Swinton, 27 October 1830.
204. C.H. Phillips, op.cit., No.237, p.500. Scott had submitted a detailed suggestion for the cantonment of 300 to 400 European soldiers in the Khasi hills which in time could grow to 10,000 men. He suggested Government to make a money advance to establish the colony which could be paid back in four years from the profits of dairy and agriculture business in the hills. Bentinck Papers, PU3F 2791/1, Scott to Swinton, 21 Duly 1830.
A. White, Scott's biographer thought that the colonies were speculated upon "in view of the possibility of our maritime supremacy being endangered, thereby cutting off our supply of recruits; although doubtless other contingencies entered into his calculation."\(^{205}\)

One other contingency was the economic development of the hills. Scott found that the hills provided abundant pasture for cattle. Taking a suggestion from Suinton (who got the idea from Major R. Benson, Military Secretary to Bentinck), he requested Government to send a herd of cattle from Hissar in the Punjab to improve the local breed. Well aware that such a suggestion would not be financed by Government, he informed that he would bear all the expenses of purchase and movement of the cattle. Government dismissed this proposal. Likewise nothing came out of another suggestion to experiment in the breeding of merino sheep in Barduar.\(^{208}\) There was success in Scott's interest in gardening. An interesting account of the start of English fruit and vegetables appears in a letter he wrote, while on tour in Assam, to Thomas Uatson, who shared his gardening interest:

> I am glad to hear that you think that there is probability of gardens succeeding after all. My own experience in the hills have

\(^{205}\) A. Uhite, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

\(^{206}\) Bentinck Papers, PU3F 2820/VI, Scott to Suinton, 6 December 1830.

\(^{207}\) Ibid., Suinton to Scott, 31 December 1830.

\(^{208}\) *O.C.*, 10 February 1826, ND.15.
certainly been far from favourable, nothing having succeeded, at any season with me, except turnips, beet roots and potatoes. Strawberries will evidently answer well and of fruits I think they are the best work attending to, as I dare say they might be made in such a climate to give two crops in the year, and they may be so speedily and easily propagated to any extent, I am now taking UP some apples, plum and apricot trees, of which I shall be hIPPY to send you a portion. Pray be so good as to inform me in what state the fruit trees are that were planted in the public garden.

The discovery of coal in Cherrapunji further strengthened that place for a settlement for Europeans, C.A. Fenwick first came across coal deposits in October-November 1832. Without actually stating he had discovered coal, Fenwick requested that a portion of land between Cherrapunji and Mausmai be retained by Government as he had discovered two strata of a valuable metal. He proposed that Government should lease the land to him for twenty years for a payment of Rs.50,000, Fenwick was not given the lease. It was only in 1840 that Government secured a lease.

209. Bentinck Papers, PU3F 2811/XI, Scott to Uatson, 2 June 1831.
210. Ibid., PU3F 2B51/XXXI, T.C. Robertson to Swinton, 1 November 1832. When Swinton read Robertson's report on the discovery, he wrote rather humourously to Benson, "I shall give up all thoughts of home, and become a partner with Mr. Fenwick in the Cossya Hills, Uill you take a share? I would tell Fir. Fenwick that he must send us a lump of his valuable metal for assay. It will doubtless turn out to be one of iron. Cracroft, however, thought it not improbable that silver might be found in the Cossya Hills. Time will show. I shall claim a Baron (Barren) Silver Mine, Yours in ecstasy." Bentinck Papers, PU3F 2851/XXX, Swinton to Benson, 9 November 1832. The perpetual lease given by Syiem Subha Singh was signed on 20 April 1840. CU. Aitchison, op.cit., Vol.1., 1862, pp.92-93.
from the Syjem to work the coal.

The one unhappy incident in the early British settlement at Cherrapunji was the realization that if the soldiers were often drunk, Captain Broadhurst was also attached to the bottle and had fallen into a state of mind which rendered his continued charge of the post inconvenient. He was removed from his charge when he compelled one of his men to swallow urine*. Major Thomas Uatson, "a much more steady person" who had considerable experience in Sylhet was recommended and eventually appointed as Superintendent at Cherrapunji.

The search for a permanent site for the proposed cantonment and sanatorium continued. The sanatorium at Cherrapunji had its advantages but the heavy rainfall made it quite unsuitable for the purpose. In October, 1830 Lieutenant Fisher of the Quarter-Master-General's Department reported to Scott two locations he thought were ideal for a cantonment. One was near the Chillangdeo hill, close to Nongkrem which had a flat surface of about four to five square miles and the other was the plains about three miles south of Nongundee. Both sites had similar advantages though the latter was more easily accessible from Pandua. In forwarding Fisher's report to

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211 * Ibid., PU3F 2811/XXV/II, Scott to Suinton, 25 June 1831; TOT 2820/III, Suinton to Benson, 1 July 1831.

212 « Ibid., PU3F 2791/III, Fisher to Scott, 16 October 1830.
Government, Scott quite agreed to the suggestions of Fisher though he preferred Myliiem as a permanent post and the plains of Nogundee as an experimental station. His arguments were:

I conceive that the soil and climate of the former place would admit of the ultimate production of wheat, vegetables and other supplies, while the proximity of Nogundee to the low country would render it more convenient so long as it might be necessary to transport all such stores from the plains; the climate owing to the frequent mists renders it improbable that any agricultural improvements of consequence could be made at the place itself.213

Sites were visited and details of the feasibility to establish a cantonment in the hills were despatched to Calcutta but no final decision could be taken to move from Cherrapunji while the Khasis were still in arms against the British. Moreover, the Cherrapunji experiment had not been fully tested and the possibility to remain there was still to be ascertained.214

The unsettled state in the Khasi hills during 1830-1831 deterred Europeans from visiting Cherrapunji, As things returned to quiet, flajor Watson, who had been employed in the negotiations for peace, again called the attention of Government and of the public to review the decision to settle in the Khasi hills. William Bentinck was at first strongly opposed to the project, preferring Darjeeling in Sikkim to which he sent a Captain Herbert on a survey. The favourable account given by that officer retarded the progress at

213. Ibid., Scott to Swinton, 20 October 1830.
214. Ibid., PU3F 2791/11, Swinton to Scott, 5 November 1830.
Cherrapunji for Government nearly determined to select Oarjeeling as a site for their sanatorium. The subjection of the Khasis and the abandonment of Sikkim in consequence of the non-interference policy that pervaded, restored Cherrapunji to notice, though it did not flourish with the rapidity that characterized Simla and Mussourree. Scott, who was the mastermind behind the setting up a British base in Cherrapunji, was ill. He complained of heart trouble, frequent sickness in the stomach and insomnia. He was advised to leave the hills and to go to Calcutta from where he could proceed to sea, but the rains in the hills and the seriousness of his ailment prevented him from moving. He passed away at the premature age of forty five on 20 August 1831 and was buried that same evening with full military honours.

The Government set up a memorial in Cherrapunji as a public and lasting record of its consideration for the personal character of the deceased, and of its estimation of the eraminebt services rendered by him in the administration of the extensive

216. Ibid.
217. Ibid.; PU3F 2811/XXVI, Scott to Suinton, 12 June 1831.
218. Ibid.; PU3F 2811/XXVII, Suinton to Benson, 9 July 1831.
219. *HcF.,* PU3F 2811/XII, Rhodes to Suinton, 21 August 1831; EUJC., 9 August 1831, No.2. Assistant Surgeon Rhodes who conducted the post-mortem wrote to Scott's friend Suinton: "I now come to the seat of the disease, and cause of the patient's death. On attempting to pass my fingers along the aorta, I found it obstructed at the semilunar valves by a bony substance, and on examination, found all the valves of the aorta ossified and the vessel itself almost totally blocked up, by a honey comb like bony substance."
territory committed to his charge." He has been called "indeed a second Cleveland,"*20 but by far the greatest tribute to Scott came from Alexander Mackenzie:

Had the scene of his life's labours been in North-West or Central India, where the great problem of empire was then being worked out, instead of amid the obscure jungles of Assam, he would occupy a place in history by the side of Malcolm, Elphinstone and Metcalfe,**!

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