CHAPTER III

EXPERIMENTS IN INDIRECT RULE
The administrative arrangements for the Garo frontier which Dohn Eliot, Thomas Sisson and a host of district officers of Rangpur and Mymensingh had formulated, was put into definite shape as the Non-Regulation system by David Scott who was responsible for its drafting and implementation.

**The Garo Scene**

After the passing of Regulation X of 1822, Scott proceeded to conclude engagements with the independent Garos. No fewer than 121 Garo chiefs living west of the Sumeswari are said to have entered into terms with him. With the commencement of war with Burma it was considered inexpedient to employ any military force in the hills to bring the remaining chiefs to terms. Scott's endeavours were principally directed towards conciliating the Garo chiefs who had already submitted to the British. When these chiefs assembled in December 1824 to pay their annual acknowledgement of Government's authority, Scott drew up a proclamation which explained the policy that the Government wished to pursue towards the independent Garos. This proclamation was translated into the Garo language and read to

1. A .Mackenzie, History of the Relations of the Government of Bengal with the Hill Tribes on the North-Eastern Frontier of Bengal, p.253. The terms of these engagements appear to have been the same as that signed with the Garos of Tikree Duar; J.B.Bhattacharjee, The Garos and the English, p.72.
the assembly of the chiefs and subsequently published at the markets frequented by the Bemulwa Garos. Although not directed by Government, Scott received from these Garo chiefs huzzurs of trifling value in token of their submission to Government which Scott recommended should continue. In return he made presents of cloth to some of the chiefs in an attempt of prevent the annoyance that the Garos were capable of giving to Government. Scott reported that the Tributary Garos who paid revenue to Government under his jurisdiction had conducted themselves in a peaceful and orderly manner. Some cases of homicide chiefly originating in drunken squabbles were tried agreeably to the provisions of the Regulation. Every assistance was given him by the Laskars and Sardars in apprehending offenders and the trying of cases. Scott wanted one minor change in the administration of criminal justice. As he found it difficult to try cases in the vicinity of the occurrence, or to obtain the attendance of assessors in a retrial, the Commissioner suggested that in cases of emergency he be permitted to try cases without assessors.

The most successful feature of Garo administration during these early years of British control was that of the collection of duties at the Garo markets. The collection was fully equivalent to the expenses on account of Scott's establishment at Singimari and other establishments on the

2. B.3.C.C., 17 February 1825, No.9.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
frontier. Scott recommended that the excess *duties* over expenditure should be spent for opening communication *thorough* the hills by constructing roads and bridges. This, and the change in the administration of criminal justice were sanctioned by Government. Scott's plans worked well in the Garo context and he could have further augmented his strategies had he not been involved in the larger issues in the north-east as a whole during the last few years of his life.

**Khasi-Daintia Hills: The Early Phase**

Whereas British administration was limited to the Garos on their frontier with a tendency to move into the hills by engagements and communication, their policy towards the Khasi-Daintias emerged from their imperialistic motives. The treaty of assistance with Ram Singh, the construction of the road through Daintia and the one through the Khasi Hills made the British familiar with the very interior of the hills. Its climate, vegetation and mineral resources caught the fancy of British administrators to settle within these hills, and this is one explanation as to why the entire Khasi states first, followed by Daintia were either annexed into their growing

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1822/23 Rs.33285  
1823/24 Rs.50471  
1824/25 Rs.54471  
1825/26 Rs.22554  
1826/27 Rs.36013

After the expenses incurred for administration during these five years, there remained a surplus of Rs.25,740. B.3.C.C., 26 June 1828, No.10.
dominion in India or allowed to remain under British control. Whereas a system for the administration of the Garos had been worked out much earlier than that for the Khasi and Daintia Hills, the Garos continued to remain in the periphery while the entire Khasi-Daintia Hills came under their nominal but direct administration. Taking advantage of the war with Burma, the British first traversed the hills and following the Khasi uprising British rule was firmly established over the Khasis and Daintias.

On Scott's death the Company authorities at Calcutta searched for a suitable person to take charge as the Governor-General's Agent for the North-East Frontier. William Cracroft, a friend and classmate of Scott and Suinon wished to officiate. T.C. Robertson too was a likely candidate. Of the two contenders, Swinton thought that Robertson was a good man, but as a married man he might not be able to rough it in the extensive area at all seasons as Scott had done. He felt Cracroft being a bachelor was more suited.\(^8\) These considerations must have weighed in favour of Cracroft officiating as Agent to the Governor-General till T.C. Robertson was relieved of his post at Bareilly to take charge in April 1832.

While peace was yet to be made with the Khasi insurgents, Government considered the appointment of a Superintending Officer at Cherrapunji, Suinon drew up a draft in which he defined the powers of the officer to be posted at

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\(^8\) Bentinck papers, PW3F 2811/XVI Suinon to Benson, 30 August 1831.
the station. In addition to his military functions the officer should be conferred certain political, fiscal and judicial authority to enable him to relieve the Governor-General's Agent when present from a constant attention to local duties and in his absence to administer the current business of the settlement. The charge he suggested, should be given to an officer of rank and experience well acquainted with military usage and local peculiarities and possessing a competent knowledge of the Khasi language and official business. Pending permanent arrangements, in September 1834, the Khasi states were placed under the judicial supervision of the Agent to the Governor-General, Lieutenant Tounshend was vested the powers of a Magistrate in the superintendence of local questions. He was directed to abstain from taking any part in the internal quarrels of the chiefs, particularly those not dependant on Government and was to interfere in the affairs of the hills only in cases "which had no direct tendency to endanger the peace of our territory, or permanency of our arrangement and with a view to obviate the necessity of having recourse to hostile measures as much as possible."

Change in attitude?

Meanwhile, the Court of Directors expressed its

9. Bentinck Papers, PUDF 2781/L(U) Suinton to Benson, 4 August 1832.
had erupted. It saw in the conduct of the officers in the Khasi Hills "much to be regretted and something to be blamed" for being completely misinformed as to the state of feeling among the Khasis towards the British. The Court was astonished that the Nongkhlaconvalescent depot had been established in the midst of a rude tribe unprotected either by fortification or by troops. It further took concern in the difficulty of subjecting the people and the "extremely liberal and indulgent" terms which, if offered earlier instead of after three years of successful resistance might probably have been more readily accepted. Continuing in the same hard line, the Court emphasised the necessity of reducing the Khasis to submission for were we ever to renounce the benefits which we expect from the occupation of various parts of this mountain region for sanitary purposes and the great advantage which it affords as a short and easy communication with Assam, we could not now retire from the hills without exposing the neighbouring plains to disturbing inroads.13

These stern observations were softened by the Court's great satisfaction that the Khasis "in every direction have lately manifested subdued disposition and temperance that the capture of Tirot Singh had been followed by the best results."14 Robertson had reported that in passing the hills from Assam to Sylhet he found many villages already reconstructed, the

12. B.P.C., 25 May 1835, Nb.3 Extract of a letter from the Court of Directors, 3 December 1834 read at the Governor-General-in-Council meeting.
13. Ibid.
14. F.P., C, 1835. Letter from Court of Directors, Nb.44 of 1835
people occupied in cultivating the valleys in the vicinity of Fairang and Nongkhlaw, hats reopened and frequented and single travellers from the plains traversing without fear where eighteen months earlier even armed detachments were liable to be waylaid and attacked.  

William Bentinck had already begun restructuring the administration of the north-east frontier. As the jurisdiction of the Agent to the Governor-General North-East Frontier was an extensive one, Bentinck suggested that distinct administrative arrangements should be made for the Khasi Hills, Cachar and Manipur and that the Agent should confine his duties to Assam and North-East Rangpur. The existing arrangement was faulty. For the sake of enjoying the salubrious climate of Cherrapumji, Robertson had made it his constant residence, thereby making himself inaccessible for receiving and transacting business in Assam and Sylhet, Bentinck had in mind the removal of Robertson who was to take charge as Officiating Judge of the Suddar Dewani and Nizamat Adalat, and the appointment to his place of Captain Francis Denkins of the 4 Regiment Native Infantry. Notice to this effect was issued on 23 January, 1834, Denkins was appointed as Commissioner and Agent to the Governor-General for Assam and the North-East parts of Rangpur.  

Denkins made it clear that his appointment extended only to the above mentioned jurisdiction. He, however, pointed out that he should continue to have charge over Cachar and the

15. Ibid.
16, F7P7C, 23 January 1834, No.73.
Khasi Hills. His argument was that every native chief from the intia Raja in the east to the Garo chiefs in the west held or claimed land in the plains of Assam independent, tributary or in rent to the British. Consequently, questions constantly arose in dispute between British subjects in the plains and particularly the Khasi chiefs. Jenkins saw the possibility of Government using their control over the personal estates of the Khasi chiefs in the plains to exercise greater influence over the chiefs in the hills. As no definite orders had been issued by Government for the administration of the Khasi Hills, Jenkins hoped that they should continue to be attached to this agency. He stressed the urgency that he be allowed an assistant for the immediate management of the hills. The best arrangement that struck him was to remove the head-quarters of the Sylhet Light Infantry from Sylhet to Cherrapunji, the Commandant of which would be the Political Agent in the Khasi Hills. If this were done, he proposed the abolition of Cherra as a civil station and the transfer of Lieutenant Townshend to Sylhet as second in command of the local corps. Jenkins proposed that Captain Lister, then commanding the Sylhet Light Infantry, should be appointed as Political Agent for the Khasi Hills, inclusive of Jaintia. Bentinck approved Jenkins' proposals.

Political Agency:

The new arrangement took shape on 11 February 1835.

17. Bentinck Papers, PU3F 2840/IX, Jenkins to Taylor, 29 January 1835.
18. Ibid.
Captain Lister was appointed Political Agent in the Kha-
Hills with charge of British relations with Gaintia, with head-
quartes at Chertapunji. He was vested with powers of a
Magistrate to try cases and inflict punishment to the extent
of a fine of rupees fifty hundred or imprisonment of a term not
exceeding two years. In graver cases the Political Agent was to
be aided by a panchayat consisting of not less than three persons
and in such cases to punish by fine to the extent of rupees five
hundred or by imprisonment of five years, with or without
labour. In cases of crime deserving a higher degree of punish-
ment, the case proceedings were to be recorded in English and
forwarded to the lmizamat Adalat for its judgement. In civil
cases the Deuani Adalat had power on inspection of periodical
returns, or on a petition being presented to them, to call for
and revise the Political Agent's proceedings. As a general rule
Lister was to consider that those villages which had become
British territories by conquest should be considered under his
jurisdiction but that he should exercise a sound discretion in
interfering and not consider it imperative upon him to take
cognizance of every offence that might occur within their
limits. Villages that had all along retained their independence
or which may have been restored by the British to former chiefs
were not to come under his jurisdiction. Government admitted
the somewhat vague powers that had been vested on the Political
Agent but it could scarcely be otherwise in the case of a tract
of country situated and circumvented as the Khasi Hills were.\textsuperscript{20}

The more perfectly to carry into effect the object in view in the establishment of the Cherrapunji Political Agency, the Governor-General-in-Council considered it essentially necessary that Lister should have an Assistant, who should be empowered to punish to the extent of one year's imprisonment and rupees two hundred in fines, his proceedings being always subject to revision by the Political Agent. Harry Inglis, grandson of Raitt Inglis, was recommended for the post. The younger, Inglis had rendered useful service to the Government in affecting a communication with the Khasi chiefs for which he was rewarded by a local commission in the Sylhet Light Infantry, which he relinquished in deference to the regulation of the service which prohibited any officer being engaged in trade to continue holding a commission. Lister was instructed that changing the post to Inglis it would be necessary that the latter should relinquish all trading speculations save those with the produce of his orange gardens. Harry Inglis must have considered this condition as he did not immediately take charge of the post, for his trading concerns in the hills gave him far more than the rupees four hundred per month he was offered as Assistant to the Political Agent.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., Dalhousie Muniments, GD 45/6/137/1, Administration of Justice in the Non-Regulation Provinces, March 1849. Harry Inglis appears to be the same person as Henry Inglis, whose name also appears in the records. For continuity the name Harry Inglis will be used.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid.
Bentinck did not quite accept Jenkins's suggestion that the Khasi Hills should remain under his charge as is apparent in the conditions for the direction of the Political Agent and his Assistant. By Act VI of 1835, the Political Agent of the Khasi Hills was placed in civil and criminal cases under the control and superintendence of the Deugni Adalat and Nizamat Adalat respectively.

Changing Power Structure;

While these administrative innovations were being formulated and implemented by the Calcutta authorities, the local government had concluded a series of treaties, engagements and recognizance with the chiefs of the various Khasi states. Scott had seen the impolicy of realizing any tribute from the dependant territories because the cost of collection would outweigh the receipts apart from the risks involved in its collections. He considered it expedient to impose fines and rents from Khasi states implicated in the disturbances. A fine of rupees five thousand was imposed by Scott on Bur Manick for abetting Tirot Singh on restoring his territory. The prosperous village of Sooparpunji and three adjoining villages were made to pay a yearly rent of rupees three hundred and a fine of double the amount by Cracroft for an unprovoked outrage on some travellers to Cherrapunji. Maumluh and an

23. F.P.C., 27 Way 1834, No.78.
24. Ibid.
adjoining village were fined rupees two hundred. Jenkins' proposal to make the villages pay an additional quit rent of rupees three hundred was objected by Government on grounds that Government had no control over the two villages. Rambrai was initially fined rupees five thousand by Scott for inroads in 1831 on the border districts of Assam which was, however, converted to an annual rent of one rupee per house. Denkins considered that there was no better means of punishment than fines which was universally prevalent among the Khasis. "To desist from levying these fines in part or in whole would be to expose the hillmen to commit further offences." The Calcutta authorities concurred with the Agent of the necessity to demand reparation from a chief or a community for any outrage committed. The imposition of fines afforded an "unobjectionable means of obtaining the necessary satisfaction, but as this is a power of great importance the indiscriminate use of which might severely press upon the resources of extensive communities and injuriously affect the reputation of the British Government, the exercise of it ought to be kept within well defined limits." It instructed that no executive officer should take upon himself to impose a fine upon any independent chief or community without the express sanction of Government.

25. Ibid., F.P.C., 7 August 1834, No.57.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. F.P.C., 22 Hay 1834, Kb.83.
29. Ibid.
Tirot Singh who languished in Dacca jail was replaced by Rajjan Singh as Syiem of Nongkhla. His installation took place on 29 March 1834, on which date he entered into an agreement pledging himself under the general control and authority of the Political Agent. The Syiem understood that he held his appointment under authority from the British Government, which had the right of removing him from office should he fail to give satisfaction to the people and the Government. Rajjan Singh was permitted to decide in open durbar with the assistance of elders according to the established custom of the state, all civil and criminal cases in his state beyond the cognizance of the police in which only his subjects were concerned. Moreover, he agreed to the right of the Government to establish sanatoria and military posts and the opening of roads through his state. The Syiem was given a monthly sum of rupees thirty on the suggestion of Lister, lest he might become unpopular by having recourse to taxation for his support before the villagers were well settled in the usual occupations. He was also given a tract of land in the Assam plains which was felt necessary for his support.

Two important consequences followed the peace.

31. F.P.C., 22 May 1834, Nb.B3; F.P.C., 22 April 1834, No.78.
First, it is believed that Khyrim, also called Mylliem was one state ruled by Bur Manick. It appears that the Syjem could not pay the fine imposed on him and was either removed for this, for which he continued resistance, or abdicated from old age. His state was divided between his two nephews, Singh Manick assuming charge over Khyrim and Chand Manick over Mylliem. This is evident from the agreement Chand Manick entered with the British to pay the rupees five thousand fine, rupees one thousand in cash and remaining sum for the construction of a road through Mylliem. That two states emerged is further clarified in the security these two Syiems gave for the agreement entered by Sngap Singh of Maharam in February 1839.

Secondly, though the larger states were restored to their chiefs, three smaller tracts, Mausmai, Maumluh and Sohbar were made British territories, the first two by conquest and the third by treaty. A new class of hill chiefs known as Sirdars or headmen for these villages appeared through whom the administration was conducted. They were empowered to investigate petty civil and criminal cases, and appeals from their decisions lay with the Cherrapunji court.

Cherrapunji: A British Base;

Scott's death was certainly an unfortunate event for the continued development of Cherrapunji as a cantonment.

33. Ibid., p.7.
convalescent depot and sanatorium for Europeans. The keen interest he had shown in its development was not shown by his successors. The advantages of Cherrapunji were considerable, but the one setback of the experiment was the long periods of rain which proved injurious to the invalids, who were crowded in buildings that were partially underground, and the portion that was above the ground had only a single wall for protection without any verandah. The crowded accommodation and damp therefore tended to create disease than remove it.\(^34\) The convalescent depot was finally removed in late 1834 and with it went the detachment of European troops. The Court of Directors noted that though it was prepared by former communications of the abandonment of the establishments, it could not but express its regret that so much expense should have been incurred in the prosecution of an experiment which had so completely failed.\(^35\) Even if the experiment had failed, Cherrapunji continued to serve a useful purpose as a sanatorium for it had by then attracted many settlers from Calcutta and the nearby plains as twelve bungalows had been constructed for the purpose. That a large European population having settled in Cherrapunji so soon after its establishment is evident from a petition they gave to Jenkins to retain an Assistant Surgeon in the station for its residents. Without questioning the propriety of Government's decision for the removal of soldiers

\(^{34}\) A.3 M.Mills, op.cit., p.32.

\(^{35}\) F.P.C., 17 October 1836, No.24.
and invalids, they thought that the failure of the experiment was no satisfactory proof that other members of the community could not benefit by residence in the hills. However, the decision of Government fixing the head-quarters of the Sylhet Light Infantry at Cherrapunji and the new political arrangements for the Khasi Hills revived the interest in Cherrapunji as the centre for British administration in the hills.

Transfrontiers: The Pressure zones

One continued and vexed problem for the British was the settlement of the lands formerly held by the Khasi chiefs on the northern foothills adjoining Assam. Eight Khasi chiefs had held nine passes on these foothills in fief from the Ahom monarchs under very nominal allegiance. The policy which the Ahom monarchs followed towards these chiefs was one of conciliation. With a view to disarm the hostilities of the hillmen, they admitted them to a share in the produce of the soil, a policy which was also pursued towards the tribes bordering the northern parts of the Assam valley. The explanation of this policy is to be sought in the geographical position of Assam and the extreme difficulty in defending a valley of four hundred miles in length from the inroads of the hill tribes.

36. F.P.C., 23 February 1835, No. 1.
37. F.P.C., 21 December 1835, No. 16; B.P.C., 24 November 1835, No. 17.
Certain of these Khasi chiefs lost their possessions in Assam on the expulsion of the Burmese for having taken part with them against the British in the war of 1824-1826. Others were deprived of their tracts for joining in the disturbances following the Nongkhlae massacre. Only two chiefs, Rajjan Singh of Nongkhlae and Ooroo, Rajajief Nonglang had their possessions restored to them.\(^{38}\) The disturbances in the hills had seriously affected the economy of the area which was rich in lac, sal wood and other timber. The revenue receipts of these foothills in 1833 amounted to Rs.24,000, Rs.30,000 in 1834 and was expected to realize Rs.50,000 by the end of five years when the border hats would be reopened and as confidence was restored.\(^{39}\) The problem of the duars came to prominence when, in October 1835, Chand Manick made a representation to Jenkins claiming his rights to enter into an engagement with Government with respect of the Desh Dumorua on grounds that his predecessors held the tract under the Ahom Government.\(^{40}\)

Lister recommended that the duars be placed under the various chiefs claiming them on leases for ten years under the system which had been in vogue at Burduar, a pass controlled by the Syiem of Nongkhlae. According to that system each ryot

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38. B.P.C., 24 November 1835, No.17.
39. F.P.C., 4 September 1834, No.56.
40. F.P.C., 21 December 1835, No.16; B.P.C., 24 November 1835, No.18.
in the duar was assessed according to cultivation ascertained by actual measurement. The hill chief got fifteen to twenty per cent, commission for the collection of revenue, besides a small plot of land rent free. The advantages anticipated from this arrangement would be "the conciliation of the Cossyphas generally, the softening ferocity of their character and the introduction of civilization amongst them by bringing them more frequently in contact with our louland subjects, and the doing away with the necessity of keeping outposts on the southern boundary of Assam." Such an arrangement, Lister was given to understand, would be agreeable to the plainsmen, as the Khasis were reported to have evinced greater moderation and forbearance in collecting their dues than Assamese agents of the British. Captain Bogles, Principal Assistant, Kamrup refused to believe that the transfer of the tracts to the Khasi chiefs would have the advantages as had been pointed out by Lister. Jenkins, took the recommendation of Lister for he was inclined to agree with the latter as Scott himself, had earlier agreed to assign some lands near Sonapur to the Khyrim Syiem for the purpose of trade. Sir Charles Metcalfe, the Officiating Governor-General considered the Syiem's claims as "wholly untenable."

41. B.P.C, 24 November 1834, No.17.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. H.K.Barpujari, op.cit., pp.86-87.
Nevertheless, he expressed his willingness to sanction the arrangement suggested by Jenkins provided it would be effected without injuring the interests of existing occupants of the desh.  

The Colonial Frame:

For British empire builders and administrators, the basic problem of indirect rule was to make local chiefs and princes, whether Indian, African, Arab or Malay — act largely as the British Government wanted, without the British having to assume the entire responsibility of administration. To achieve this end, a distribution of power and authority had to be arrived at among the traditional chiefs and the British. Broadly speaking, the goal of the British Government was to make a state act in harmony with its wishes, even if these wishes were as modest as a desire for no disturbances. The decision to rule indirectly was taken for a number of reasons. In India some states had entered into treaties with the East India Company when it was merely another competing Indian power. To have annexed such states later would have been regarded as an intolerable breach of faith by many British officers. More important

46. H.K.Barpujari, op.cit.» p.88.
for the British, it was easier to leave the country under
the local rulers than to conquer and administer it. Súi-ii
rulers generally lived under the system which has also
been described as "laissez faire." 48

The Khasi state was annexed into British India
but for three villages close to the British settlement at
Cherrapunji. The chiefs were bound to the British Government
by treaties and agreements to run the administration of
their respective states on behalf of the paramount power.
It would have been an impossible task to assume outright
the administration of "those Khasi states that had taken
up arms against the British. The number of British officials
was small necessitating a collaboration from the Khasi
chiefs. Whereas the early treaties and agreements with the
Khasi-3aintias secured their collaboration against the
Burmese and a recognition of British intent to construct
roads and sanatoria in the hills, the agreements and £
recognizance after 1829 imposed more severe conditions on the
Khasi states which gravely affected their independence.
Apart from the imposition of fines on certain of the states,
their chiefs agreed to conduct the administration of their
respective territories according to traditional customs, to
deliver those responsible for heinous crimes to the
Cherrapunji authorities and to deliver all those seeking

48. Ibid., p.278.
asylum in their states who were wanted for trial before British courts. In a country where there were numerous chiefs there was bound to occur differences between themselves. Conditions were imposed to settle all such disputes between chiefs through British mediation. 49

The Syiem of Cherra had by treaty, and those of Khyrim, Langrin, Nongstoin and Nongspung, with whom no treaty had been signed, had sole criminal and civil jurisdiction over their respective states. It was, however, the practice of the British to investigate all cases between British subjects and subjects of these five states, and between the subjects of two or more states. In the remaining twenty states the Cherrapunji authorities took cognizance, in addition to the above mentioned cases to all cases of a heinous nature, the chiefs being bound to make over the parties concerned for trial. Petty cases were decided by the prevailing customs.

The Cherrapunji station was the only place over which the Political Agent exercised sole jurisdiction, his rights extending to the administration of Mawsmai, Sohbar and Rawmluh which were under Sirdars who were empowered to investigate petty civil and criminal cases, 50.

Oenkins was convinced that much improvement could be made in the conditions of the people if the resources

and products of the hills were developed and as they forgot in industrious pursuits their former unsettled and predatory habits, Bengal continued to depend on Khasi limestone. The discovery of extensive deposits of excellent coal in and around Cherrapunji assumed great importance, though Khasi iron had as yet not been fully exploited to compete with foreign iron. "Without contributing much direct revenue," said Jenkins, "the Cossiahs may still prove not unprofitable subjects independent of the value the quiet submission of their country to our rule must be in a political point of view." 51

The economic motives in controlling the Khasi Hills becomes apparent in the terms which were imposed by Government on certain of the Khasi chiefs. Eo.ux Uahadadars of Sheila agreed in September 1829 "to allow the Government always to remove gratis, as much (limestone) as they require", in the quarries situated on the banks of the Boga river. 52 Deuan Singh of Cherra agreed to similar terms for the use by the British of limestone in his state. 53 His successor Subha Singh extended British rights to a perpetual lease of coal in Cherra. A similar lease of coal to the Company was made by the Sirdars of Byrung. 54

51. F.P.C., 27 Hay 1835, to.78.
52. C.U.Aitchison, op.cit.. Vfbl.XII, 1931, p.124.
53. Ibid., p.127.
54. Ibid., pp.145-147.
Integration of the Jaintia Hills:

The Oaintia Hills had remained outside these developments but in time was to suffer a worse fate in its annexation into British India. The integration of Daintia may be traced to two issues, one posed by the Raja of Jaintia and the other created by the British. In 1821 an attempt was made by some emissaries of the Raja to carry off certain British subjects from Sylhet for the purpose of human sacrifice. The incident was brought to the notice of Government and a solemn warning was given to Ram Singh that any repetition of the offence would be followed by the immediate confiscation of his territory. A second attempt was made in February 1832 when four British subjects were seized by Chatur Singh, Raja of Gobha, a-vassal of the Daintia Raja, under orders of Rajendra Singh, the heir apparent. Three men were immolated at the shrine of Kali, the fourth escaped and reported the ghastly incident. Demands for the arrest of the culprits came to naught as Rajendra Singh, who had in the meantime succeeded as Raja refused to comply.

In-the meantime, Robertson was considering changes in the treaty with Daintia. He pointed out that Government had reached a very unsatisfactory bargain in accepting

56. Ibid., pp.221-222.
military service in place of tribute and considered it desirable to amend the treaty to their advantage. Perhaps, he said, the best mode was to demand a fair share of the revenue of the state by subjecting it to an equitable system of taxation similar to that in operation in Sylhet and Assam. The Court of Directors thought otherwise. It categorically stated that the treaty of 1824 was a personal one since there was no mention of the Raja's successor being bound by its terms as was done in the treaty of March 1824 with Govinda Chandra of Cachar. The Court felt a "strong repugnance" to the contemplated imposition of tribute and advised: "If the treaty has expired, the Rajah is in the same situation as if none had ever been concluded, and our rights extends no further that to discontinuing to afford him the benefit of our protection."  

The Court's directive came late for Denkins had in the meantime suggested measures for the dismemberment of the state, that the plains portion should be taken under Government's immediate management and that the hill portion should be governed by a chief of their own election.

57. F.P.C., 7 January 1833, to.82.
58. F.P.C., 25 September 1835, Letter from Court of Directors, No.44 of 1835; B.P.C., 25 May 1835, to.3.
59. Communication between India and London was maintained largely by sailing ship which took anything from five months upwards on the single voyage.
60. B.P.C., 23 February 1835, to.3.
Government did not deem it proper to have recourse to the measures put forward by Jenkins. The Agent was instructed that Government had resolved to confiscate the plains portion of the state, leaving the Raja to exercise jurisdiction as before in the hills. 61

Accordingly Lister and Harry Inglis proceeded from Sylhet for Daintiapur. Fleeting the Raja in durbar on 15 March 1835, the Political Agent communicated Government's proclamation for the annexation of the Jaintia plains. Rajendra Singh did not resist. He declined to retain possession of the hills as his resources from the plains had supplemented his revenue without which he could not maintain his authority therein. 62 One wonders why the entire Jaintia state was annexed over trivial demands for justice and revenue when the neighbouring Khasi states were generally tolerated to continue to exist?

It was wrongly conceived that Daintia Hills formed part of the Khasi Hills. Following this assumption Government made Act 1/I of 1835 applicable to the recently annexed hills. Realizing the anomaly that the British were not in control of Jaintia when the Act was passed, 'Act XXI of 1836 subsequently sanctioned the general annexation of the entire

61. Ibid., No.5.
62. Ibid., No.17.
63. Ibid., No.19.
Daintia Kingdom to Sylhet, and the extension to it of the laws and regulations in force in Bengal. But only the plains portion of the Daintia Hills adjoining Sylhet was brought under the operation of this order. No orders for retaining the hill area under Lister's superintendence can be traced and Lister himself could find no instructions on the subject. It was said he always understood that the hill area of Daintia was to continue under his administration. These hills was therefore placed in a very anomalous position, which explains why there was little control by the Cherrapunji authorities over the Daintia Hills. Its administration continued to be under Dollois and Sirdars, each in charge of a number of villages, and empowered with similar functions as the village headmen in the Khasi Hills.

**Frontier Defence:**

British colonial expansion in the hills under review was brought about by economic, political and strategic considerations. The local regular and irregular corps and lines of communication were essential components in the colonial power structure. The first three decades of the last century was indeed the years of transition in Assam and its surrounding hills for in those years British rule shifted from nominal to actual control. Three local regiments are found to have figured in the defence of this

64. A.3.1*11118, op. cit., p. 9.
65. Ibid.
frontier. These were the Sylhet Light Infantry and two battalions of the Assam Light Infantry.

The 1st Assam Light Infantry had its origin in the Cuttack Legion raised in 1817. In 1823 it was moved to Rangpur, where it was renamed the Rangpur (Local) Light Infantry. Four years later, after service in Assam it became known as the 1st Assam Light Infantry with its headquarters at Gauhati. The second battalion was originally a corps of Garo Sebundys consisting of four companies, two stationed at Goalpara and two at Gauhati commanded by the Magistrates at these two places respectively. The two Companies posted at Goalpara are said to have existed from 1796. As an armed force the Garo Sebundys was definitely inferior to the Assam Light Infantry in efficiency and discipline which could not be expected of them for they were without a military officer or regular controlling authority. Otherwise, the Garos were described by Jenkins as "possessing great aptitude for military employment," especially in the hills and jungles where their services was most likely to be required. On Captain Bogle's (Principal Assistant Kamrup) representation on the impolicy of detaching considerable bodies of troops without European officers, Jenkins proposed the reorganization of the Garo Sebundys.

67. F.P.C., 19 February 1835, No.1.
He suggested that the four companies of the corps should be embodied into one corps and placed under the command of a Subaltern or Captain as Commanding Officer. The Governor-General agreed to this proposal in early 1835, and the corps reorganization was carried into effect as the Assam Sebundy Corps, commanded by Captain W. Simonds and stationed at Gauhati. Upon this force devolved all the defence duties in the Khasi Hills south of the Bogapani and from the eastern limits of Gauhati to Goalpara where two companies were stationed. This corps was later moved to Sadiya in Upper Assam when it was renamed the 2nd Assam Light Infantry.

The Sylhet Light Infantry raised in 1824 at Sylhet by Captain P. Dudgeon for the protection of that portion of Bengal from the Burmese threat, had its headquarters shifted to Cherrapunji early in 1835 as has been mentioned. This force was responsible for the defence of Sylhet and the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills with posts at Mairang and Nongkhlau. Apart from these battalions, David Scott had got Government's sanction in February 1831 to raise 150 Shan Musketeers who were "admirably adapted for operations against the Garrous, Cossyas, Bhooteyas and other tribes surrounding Assam" for the defence of the duars. These Shans who had been hired for service in Lower Assam were Burmese prisoners taken at Rangpur in Assam in 1825 and settled at Singimari.

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69. Ibid.
70. Bentinck Papers, PUJF 2820/VII a., Scott to Suinton, 3 March 1831; F.P.O., 25 February 1831, to 41.
To add to these native troops, a contingent of European troops was stationed at Cherrapunji during the duration of the Khasi uprising. Scott's plan to establish a large colony of European soldiers in the Khasi Hills never materialised. However, the importance of increasing the European element in the defence of the hills was strongly advised by Robertson, and Suinton who agreed with him stressed this in a private letter to Benson in which he wrote "Even our friends the Burmese would be less inclined to bully us if they knew we had European troops on our Sylhet frontier." Suinton referred to the establishment of a cantonment of European troops at Cherrapunji as "the dear babe, partly of my own creation... whom I have suckled and cherished since the hour of its birth." Similarly, little came out of the Agent's plan to settle Mauns and Manipuris in the Khasi Hills, but that a further report considered it "very desirable," but that a further report.
should be submitted on the subject.  

These native and European troops were instrumental in suppressing the Khasis during the Anglo-Khasi War, and the Garo inroads into the plains. When threat from without ceased to pose a problem for the British, attention was directed to safeguard their newly acquired frontier and to prevent any resistance. Distant as the region was from the regular and irregular local troops were found sufficient to keep the peace. Consequently, European troops were withdrawn in November 1834, Jenkins' apprehension that this would affect the tranquility in the hills was removed with the fixing of the headquarters of the Sylhet Light Infantry at Cherrapunji in 1835.  

The road through the Khasi Hills cut the distance between the Surma and Brahmaputra valleys from the original 400 miles to 125 miles. Assamese and Goalpara convicts were advantageously used on the upper parts of the road, assisted by hired rock blasters from Assam. Another group of convicts from Bengal worked on the road from Pandua to the crest of the hills. Scott could scarcely contemplate the construction of a road for wheeled carriages from its starting point in the Sylhet plains, but he considered Lieutenant Fisher's (then on survey duty) professional advice  

72. F.P.C., Despatch to Court of Directors, No.12 of 1832.  
73. B.P.C., 23 February 1835, Nos.1 and 3.  
74. Bentinck Papers, PUJF 2820/IV, Scott to Suinton, 6 December 1830, Suinton to Scott, 31 December 1830.
of its practicability, This road came to be known as Brigg's Trace, remnants of which are still to be seen. Another important road was one constructed between Cherrapunji and Mylliem.

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75. Bentinck Papers, PU3F 2791/III, Scott to Swinton, 20 October 1830; Fisher to Scott, 16 October 1830.
76. L.U. Shakespear, op. cit., p. 11.
77. F.P.C, 7 August 1834, Nb. 57.