CHAPTER VII

FORWARD POLICY

The policy of slow but steady penetration, discussed in the foregoing pages, aimed at the repression of raids into the plains of British territory and the establishment of political control and influence over the tribes to the extent of maintaining peace on the frontier. A central station was established at Samaguting in 1866 and a European Officer was appointed to bring that portion of the hill country into order. The measure succeeded in preventing raids into British territory; but it dismally failed to stop their internal feuds. In fact, since the occupation of Samaguting, the plains of North Cachar had been altogether free from the raids of the Nagas, but raids upon villages under Manipur's jurisdiction continued unabated. It was then realised almost by all officers posted in-charge of the hills in this frontier of Assam, that as a policy non-interference in inter-tribal feuds was a failure and its continuance was fraught with dangerous consequences.

BUTLER URGED A BOLDER POLICY:

Captain Butler, who had in the meantime acquired an intimate knowledge of the Angami Country and its people,
advocated a change in policy. He had been repeatedly pointing out to the Government that non-interference was misunderstood by the tribes and if allowed to continue, would land the Government into troubles and there was every likelihood of these feuds spreading into the plains. He, therefore, wanted the Government to allow him to interfere in the feuds of the Nagas in order to punish them for their atrocious behaviour on one another. He did not like to remain a silent spectator of the cruel deeds of violence resulting in the loss innocent lives of men, women and children within sight of his bungalow. But the Government of India was not inclined to allow the Deputy Commissioner a free hand, because blood-feuds were considered to be matters in which it had no concern except the offer of advice and remonstrance. Major Agnew, the officiating Commissioner was, therefore, annoyed at the constant pressure of Butler, advocating a change of policy that had been condemned by the Government, and which it was not prepared to adopt at the moment in view of the increased responsibility and expense. In his opinion too, the unhappy state of affairs prevailing in the Angami hills could not be eradicated except by purely offensive measures as advocated by Butler. But he was convinced that the adoption of such measures would require the mobilisation of military support to Samaguting and adequate police force in the hills, if not a military garrison at a huge cost.

RAIDS ON MANIPUR AND MEASURES PROPOSED

Since the settlement of Manipur-Naga Hills boundary in 1872, the former had lost control over some villages, which were under its authority for years. Now that Manipur was directed to restrict itself to the south of the line of 1842, the tribes beyond it considered themselves virtually independent of all authority either British or Manipur. The villages south of the Barail were almost in a state of anarchy. Even Berema, which was once friendly now turned hostile and was audacious enough to oppose Butler's entry into their village. Moreover, most of the northern tribes were acquiring a large number of fire-arms with sufficient ammunitions. In March 1871, the Political Agent of Manipur drew the attention of the Government to the extensive raids committed by the Angami and Kuchcha Nagas on the villages north of Manipur and intimated the intention of its Raja of punishing them. Butler, while opposing it, expressed the view that "we should take on ourselves the onus of giving him redress". He volunteered to go to the hills to extort the submission of the Naga villages if a moderate increase of 150 constables to the present police and of 10 men to his Beldar Corps was allowed. But Hopkinson considered the means proposed by Butler to be quite inadequate to achieve the object in view. He believed that with this small force the Naga country might be overrun.

easily, but for its ultimate subjugation a still greater force would be essential. Moreover, the occupation of the Angami Country would surely bring the British Government into collision with the Lhota and other tribes living beyond the Angamis. At the same time the Government would have to deal with the most difficult question of maintaining peace between the Angamis and the subjects of Manipur.4

HOPKINSON'S POLICY:

Like Captain Butler, Hopkinson was equally convinced that interference of some sort was unavoidable in the case of the Nagas. But he wanted to follow non-interference to the extreme point of exhaustion before embarking on such an enterprise. He entertained no doubt about the feasibility of occupation and thorough reduction of the Angami country by the same means and under the same circumstances as were employed against the Khasias. He maintained "with a fine body of infantry properly posted in it, strong support below and a good military road traversing the entire country, there would probably be very soon an end of the Naga as there has been an end of the Khasi difficulty."5 But at the same time, Hopkinson was constrained to remark:

5. Ibid.
I very much fear that affairs cannot remain as they now are, and that we shall be obliged to decide shortly whether we are to advance to the occupation of Naga hills, or retire letting the Munnipoories complete the conquest of the Angamis on their side and on ours withdrawing our frontier to a safe distance from the incursions of the tribes. As to the adoption of the latter course, I would say that it seems like an abandonment of our duty, and that it is uncertain whether, even in a remote province like Assam, we could afford to make so great an exhibition of our weakness. Neither may I add, would such a measure of retreat be very easy of execution, nor the cost of executing it inconsiderable so long as a line of frontier would have to be guarded.

Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal also agreed that the only satisfactory plan of dealing with the Naga tribes was to bring about gradually the establishment of political control and influence over them without any assertion of actual government. He proposed that this control should extend to the introduction of a sort of political police over the tribes. "We were no longer to refuse to arbitrate between hostile clans, but to accept the position and if need be, to enforce our awards". He suggested that the Political Agent should move to a more central position to effectively exercise his influence and if required to display force for keeping the peace of the hills. For the successful working of such a policy, the Lieutenant Governor proposed extensive explorations and survey on proper lines beforehand. Though these views were to a great extent eventually accepted by the Government of India, for the time

Meanwhile, Captain Butler had gone ahead with the administration of the Angami Naga country. Construction of road was in progress and trade with the plains had considerably improved. As far as the British Government was concerned, the Angamis appeared to be well-behaved and were no longer dangerous. But the continuance of their internecine warfare told heavily upon their own peace and prosperity. The apathy of the British Government towards the internal feuds of the Nagas and the continued non-interference in their concerns encouraged the most powerful villages to commit wanton aggressions in their neighbouring villages. Even houses were burnt and women and children massacred almost within hearing of Samaguting, where a European Officer had been residing since 1866. The effected Nagas failed to understand why the officer did not interfere and it seemed paradoxical to them that "we should thus suffer what they well know we disapprove". In the beginning of the year 1874, however, a change had taken place in the British-Naga relationship. Assam was now made into a separate province under a Chief Commissioner, and as a consequence the Naga Hills were separated from the administration of the

Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and made over to the charge of Colonel Keatinge, the first Chief Commissioner of Assam. Butler, being too much pre-occupied with distant survey and boundary settlement, applied for an officer to assist him at the headquarter and Captain Johnstone was accordingly deputed to act for him at Samaguting. The officiating Political Agent was greatly shocked to find the massacres committed on innocent villagers almost within sight of his bungalow; but he was powerless to stop them. However, in the spring of 1874, he could not but accept the prayers of the inhabitants of Mezhiphema and Setekimah for protection on payment of house tax as it was "consistent with honour, justice and sound policy".

JOHNSTONE'S ACTION APPROVED:

Col. Keatinge, while recommending approval of Johnstone's action admitted that the Political Agent could not have allowed women and children who had claimed his protection to be massacred almost within sight of his residence. But at the same time he pointed out the complications which might arise from such a step. The Government of India, which had very reluctantly given approval to the proceedings, desired the Chief Commissioner to judge the action of the Political Agent from its results. In this connection, it was

also observed that as raids into British territory were always caused by lawlessness outside the border, some such action was inevitable to maintain peace within the Political Agent's sphere of influence. But in the opinion of the Government, the only question to be decided was whether it was necessary for the maintenance of good order on the frontier and whether it was exercised without greater risk than the object was worth. The orders of the Government of India to the Chief Commissioner in this regard clearly stated:

If you are of opinion that these villages are worth protecting in the interests of our territory that they can conveniently and substantially protected, and that they are within easy range of your power to control, then Captain Johnstone's proceedings need not be disallowed. But if you think after taking account of the localities and state of affairs that the cost and consequences of this extension of our protection have been miscalculated and that no adequate advantage is to be gained, in that case you will possibly be obliged to take steps to withdraw from an embaressing position. And I am to say distinctly, that the Govt. of India desire neither to accept fealty, nor to take revenue from the independent villages and would rather not extend their protecting obligations unless you are satisfied and can report that it is now necessary to uphold what has been already done.

9. Ibid.
The extension of British protection to the Naga villages and the acceptance of revenue from them constituted a distinct departure from the declared policy of non-intervention. The action of Johnstone had forced upon the Government of India to extend its rule over the Naga villages. The Government of India had no option but to accord approval to Johnstone's proceedings. The orders issued to the Chief Commissioner in this regard clearly laid down that absolute non-interference not in all cases was necessary and deviations from it might be justified in specific cases according to the exigencies of the situation. Since 1874, the tyranny of the stronger villages on the weaker ones was so much on the increase and the security of the lives and properties of their inhabitants was endangered to such an extent, that some such action on the part of the Political Agent was called for on considerations "Of duty, of prestige and of personal interest". It was really impossible on his part to allow helpless women, and children to be slaughtered mercilessly within a few miles of Samaguting.

Even after the receipt of the orders from the Government, Johnstone had taken a third village under his protection and in his Annual Administration Report on the district, he had stated that he considered the action taken by these villages to be the beginning of a general voluntary submission on the part of the Nagas. Though the actual
protection which the Political Agent had given was nothing but a warning to the hostile clans to discontinue their threatening aggressions; more and more villages willingly offered payment of revenue for securing British protection. Gradually, the Government of India had given up protesting against taking Naga villages under its protection and sanction was given almost in all cases in due deference to the strong recommendations of the local officers. Thus the action of these officials had forced the hands of the Government to pursue a policy of annexation in spite of its declared policy of non-interference, from which there was no going back until village after village came under the control of the Government. In fact, by the end of 1878, seventeen Naga villages came under the British protectorate. Most of the villages belonged to the Angami tribe and some to the Kuchcha Nagas. Consequently the revenue of the Government had increased and the submission of the weaker villages to the British authority was assured. Major Johnstone, in his Administration Report on the Naga Hills for the year 1873-74, with a note of optimism expressed:

12. By the end of the year 1878, sanction had been accorded to the protection of the following seventeen villages: Meziphemah, Sitekemah, Pherema, Tesephemah, Jalikemah, Phuima, Intu, Zowna, Nidzuma, Hezimah, Thesimah, Injas, Injaomah, Meramah, Impi or Topama, Sohema and Keruphemah.
The attitude of the hill people is decidedly friendly towards us. They cheerfully accept their position as our subjects, and have little doubt that the greater part of them would, with little management, willingly pay revenue. At the same time the tribal feuds go on, houses are burnt, and women and children massacred almost within hearing of Samaguting and the Nagas ask themselves why we don't interfere. It seems incomprehensible to them that we should thus suffer what they well know we disapprove. I firmly believe that were we to step in tomorrow and put a stop to these outrages and tax the whole country, we should be looked upon as benefactors and the people would heave a sigh of relief.

AGGRESSIONS OF KHONOMA AND MOZOMA:

Although the weaker villages of the Angamis showed a general tendency to seek the protection of the British against the aggressions of Khonoma, Mozoma and some other powerful villages, the attitude of the powerful villages remained unchanged. The acquisition of a large number of fire-arms by the aforesaid villages emboldened them to commit the worst acts of aggressions on their less powerful neighbours. The villages of Khonoma and Mozoma were alone responsible for the death of more than two hundred and sixty two persons. The Political Agent of the Naga Hills stated that up to July 1876, six villages had been plundered, nine wholly or partially destroyed, three hundred and thirty four men, women and children killed and nine wounded. As regards raids into Manipur, the Administration Report of the year 1875-76

13. F.P.P.(A), 1874, August, No.274.
revealed that during the year five villages had been sacked, one hundred and six persons killed, eight wounded and six men and fourteen women carried away as captives.  

The worsening situation in the hills demanded strong action against the offending villages, and Mr. Carnegie, the Political Agent of Naga Hills proposed to lead an expedition against them in concert with the Political Agent of Manipur. Though the Chief Commissioner was in favour of this expedition, the Government of India ordered that the same be deferred until Johnstone assumed charge as Political Agent of Manipur. Meanwhile, Carnegie was directed to exert his influence over the villages within his reach and to go ahead with road-making, which was a sine qua non for effectively controlling the Nagas. These orders did not find favour with the Secretary of State for India who desired that no time should be lost in taking vigorous steps "to terminate a state of things on the border which had been a subject of frequent complaint from the Maharaja of Manipur, and was not creditable to the British Government".  

On the receipt of this communication, the Government of India authorised the Chief Commissioner to adopt measures for preventing future raids and exacting reparation for past outrages.

14. F.P.P.(A), 1877, April, Nos. 280-1.
15. F.P.P.(A), 1877, August, No.135.
CHANGE IN POLICY ADVOCATED:

The continuance of outrages in the Angami hills convinced Colonel Keatinge that the existing arrangements for establishing control and influence over the Naga tribes required judicial enlargement. Samaguting was too far from the heart of the Angami country to influence the more powerful clans, and it was still farther from the country of the Eastern Nagas. To him the tribes south of Assam were utter barbarians and it was dangerous to keep them in that state in the borders of British territory. He, therefore, advocated the prosecution of the survey on a different footing than that hitherto undertaken. Instead of a mere exploration, it should be the continuation of the political occupation of the hills which had been already begun at Samaguting. He was, however, quite aware of the full implications of such a policy; but it seemed to him that "our choice lies between a gradual advance such as is now recommended; or a spasmodic movement hereafter, probably attended with much loss of life and at a great cost to the state." 16

In July 1875, Keatinge submitted the following proposals for the consideration of the Government of India: (1) that the headquarter station of the Naga Hills District should be removed from Samaguting to a spur on the northern side of the Thesothar hill in the neighbourhood of Wokha.

(2) that Samaguting should be maintained as an out station and police post, being visited at frequent intervals by the political agent or his assistant,

(3) that the present military outpost at Golaghat should be transferred with the change of headquarter at Wokha.

While recommending transfer of the headquarter to Wokha, Col. Keatinge stated that it had all the advantages of Samaguting and none of its disadvantages. Its occupation would ensure political control over the tribes on the Sibsagar border and it would be easier to control the encroachment of Manipur. The Government of India which had already recognised the unhealthiness and disadvantages of Samaguting, deemed it advisable to wait the results of the survey, the prosecution of which was sanctioned.

SURVEY OPERATION IN THE HILLS:

Since the adoption of the new policy in 1866, survey and exploration works were undertaken on a considerable scale by the government of India, with a view to remove the geographical destitution in regard to the Naga Hills and the undefined country on the north-east frontier. In 1869, the Government of India proposed to send a topographical survey party under Major Godwin Austen to undertake survey of the entire frontier, both north-east in Assam as well as east in

17. F.P.P.(A), 1877, August, Nos. 120-2.
Manipur and on the borders of Cachar. But the plan was abandoned having regard to the risk and other difficulties. The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, therefore, recommended merely "a reconnaissance" instead of a full scale survey for the present so far settling the boundary between Manipur and Naga Hills was concerned. It was considered inexpedient to undertake survey of the country south of Cachar in view of the unsettled state of British relations with the tribes inhabiting that region.

In 1872, Godwin Austen had demarcated the boundary line of Manipur on the north upto the Telizæ peak. Though a large unknown area was explored, he could not carry on further operations due the opposition of the Manipurs. On the other hand, Captain Butler and Captain Badely found out that the Lanier was an affluent of the Irravady and the Kopamedza range the actual watershed. Towards the close of the same year, one party consisting of Captain Badgely and Lieutenant Holcombe and another with Captain Butler and Lieutenant Woodthorpe were engaged in survey in two different directions. Meanwhile, a third party under Major Lance had been demarcating the southern boundary of Sibsagar. Butler was provided with a military force of seventy men and Holcombe, a contingent of forty men besides police. The Nagas had been behaving

18. Later, on the recommendation of the Chief Commissioner, the Government of India sanctioned that survey operations were to be undertaken on a different footing. It was intended to be more than a mere survey; it would be the political occupation of the hills, which had already commenced at Samaguting. (vide F.P.P.(A)1873, Aug., Nos. 401-3).
in a hostile way towards the survey parties from the very
beginning. On January 3, 1875 Butler reached Wokha and the
next day, a coolie belonging to his party was murdered. This
was followed by a violent demonstration and the entire survey
camp was rounded up by the Nagas. Butler with the help of his
detachment, drove out the Nagas and destroyed their village.
He continued his work and mapped out a large area of the
hills. 19

Holcombe had already undertaken the survey of the
country lying to the south of Lakhimpur, being assisted by
Captain Samuels of the Revenue Survey. From a survey point of
view, Holcombe's expedition was a fairly successful one.
Altogether an outturn of 1,200 square miles was obtained
a result which was considered creditable. 20 But early in
1875, Holcombe and Badgely with their party were attacked
at Ninu. Holcombe and eighty men of his party were treacher-
ously killed and their heads, arms and properties were
carried off by the Nagas. Badgely and fifty men of the party
were badly injured. Butler was ordered to close his operations
and to avenge the treachery. He attacked every one of the
guilty villages and burnt and destroyed them. Seventy two
heads and nineteen guns were returned by the Nagas. Seven
more guns were surrendered later. But Butler himself was
attacked at the Lhota village of Pangti near Wokha, where he

was leading a survey party. On Christmas day 1875, he was severely wounded by a spear thrown by a Naga, and he succumbed to his injuries on January 7, 1876. Colonel Tulloch who accompanied the party destroyed and burnt Pangti; Woodthorpe hurriedly completed the survey. 21

These sad incidents had cast a gloom and the Government of India and the local authorities became more cautious as to the prosecution of survey explorations for the future. That the survey operations had been alienating hillmen had been established by these tragic happenings. Mr. Edgar, the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar says, "it has tended to create a feeling of distrust of our intentions amongst not only the tribes in the neighbourhood but even among the Manipuris, who oppose the survey of the tract lying between our frontier and the valley, because they suspect us of wishing to seize it for tea-planting." 22 Like the Manipuris, the Nagas were opposed to the yearly survey, which had caused constant annoyance and suspicion among them. Most of the villages through which survey parties proceeded had very often met unfriendly opposition and on occasions "shots had to be fired" to keep the Nagas at bay. The correspondent of the "Friend of India" in its issue of April 16, 1876 gave the explanation of Naga hostility towards the survey parties thus: "It is impossible to make the Naga understand what surveying is, or by what means it can be

22. B.J.P., 1869, October, No. 7.
carried out; and although at the first visit they are quite satisfied with the explanation that we have come to see the country, and received us as welcome guests, our coming again and again excites their suspicions. At one village we were asked - 'What are you searching for? Why do you come here year after year? Have you no rice in your own village that you travel about to eat?' Some of them, I believe, are fully convinced that we belong to a famine-stricken community, and have to leave our homes in search of food." In fact, the yearly visits of the survey parties, their requisitions for rice, transport and labour disturbed the peace of the independent Nagas, who in consequence became hostile to survey as such.

Notwithstanding these unhappy events, Woodthorpe succeeded in securing 1170 square miles of topography and about 2500 square miles of triangulation. The survey parties passed through between eighty to ninety villages never before visited by Europeans and fixed the positions of fifty eight more which were beyond their lines of march. Reviewing the progress of the survey operations Colonel Kentinge observed:

The geographical knowledge that has been acquired during these operations will be of the greatest practical utility in the dealings with the Nagas, which are necessary to secure the peace of the Sibsagar and Luckimnore districts - districts which in addition to our usual responsibilities towards the native inhabitants of the country, we have to protect tea-gardens inhabited by thousands

23. See "Friend of India", 1876, April 15.
of imported labourers, who are less able even than others to protect themselves and in which gardens there are buildings and machinery of great value.24

PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST MOZOMA:

During 1876-77, feuds amongst the Angamis and their raids into Manipur villages continued. The following year, the Nagas of Mozoma broke the peace by a sudden raid on Gumaigaju in North Cachar killing six and wounding two persons, besides carrying off two guns and a large booty. The same village was implicated in several more outrages. In the last part of 1876, a small party of young men of Mozoma attacked another village under British protection; there was also a fight of this village with Kohima. 25 In consequence of these repeated aggressions of Mozoma an expeditionary force was sent under Captain Brydon to punish the village. Carnegie accompanied the party as the Political Officer. On the approach of the force, the Nagas having placed their women and children in Khonama began to harass the enemy by intermittent firing and night attacks. They threatened Samaguting itself by trying to cut off communications with it. The British troops burnt Mozoma, but Khonama was not destroyed due to lack of strength. However, with the arrival of a reinforcement under Captain Williamson, the Inspector General of Police, Mozoma

was completely burnt and its inhabitants were left without food and shelter. At this juncture Carnegie was accidentally shot by his own sentry, which ultimately proved fatal. Williamson assuming the charge of the Political Officer brought the expedition to a close by concluding the following terms:

(1) that they should pay a fine of Rs. 50,
(2) that they should restore the arms and accoutrement of the deceased constables and contents of the plundered mail bag; and
(3) that they should surrender four of their own fire-arms. These terms imposed upon the village responsible for many of its misdeeds were considered to be too lenient at the time. The Chief Commissioner could not reconcile himself to the situation caused by the failure of the expedition to punish Khonoma and Jotsoma who were no less guilty of disturbing the peace of the border. The punishment meted out to Mozuma was actually not lenient. It was more than adequate, because the village was completely burnt, its stores of grain were either destroyed or consumed and its pride greatly humbled.26

MOVE TO KOHIMA RECOMMENDED:

After the conclusions of the peace, Colonel Keatinge made a thorough inspection of the probable sites of Wokha and

Kohima for the proposed headquarter of the district. It may be pointed out that Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal recommended the removal of the headquarter, from Samaguting to a higher, healthier, and a more convenient locality, but the Government of India directed the postponement of the question until the survey operations then in progress were completed. These being now over, Keatinge agreeing with the views of Captain Butler and Lieutenant Woodthorpe proposed Wokha to be the best site for the headquarter station. But at the same time, he desired that Samaguting should be maintained as an outstation and police post. Johnstone on the other hand, preferred Kohima in the heart of the Angami hills. He felt that an officer posted at that place would be able to maintain his influence over the Angamis. Moreover, Kohima was on the Angami trade route and also on the road between Samaguting and Manipur and was within a reasonable distance from the Lhota Nagas. The Government of India was between the two horns of a dilemma when the "doctors of the locality" differed, but it considered Johnstone's opinion to be more weighty than that of Keatinge. However, the matter was left to the decision of the Chief Commissioner.

FUTURE POLICY OUTLINED:

The policy of non-interference hitherto followed failed to repress internal feuds or establish peace and good order.

order among the tribes immediately on the borders of the British territory. Therefore, the local authorities including several Political Agents of the Naga Hills, the Chief Commissioner of Assam and the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal urged upon the Government of India to allow the Political Agent of Naga Hills to "have general authority to act as arbiter in inter-tribal feuds, with power to enforce his award", to put an end to the anarchy and bloodshed which prevailed among the Naga tribes. Although in 1865, the non-interference policy was reviewed, and it was decided to advance once more into the hills "to reassert our authority over the Nagas, and bring them under a system of administration suited to their circumstances and gradually to reclaim them from habits of lawlessness to those of order and civilisation", the order of the Government clearly stated that "His Excellency in Council cannot admit that we are bound to attempt more in their behalf than the resources of the Empire can reasonably afford". So it was apparent that the desire of the Supreme Government was that "should the hillmen be gradually reclaimed to our rule and civilised without much cost to the British treasury in process, it will be a good work well accomplished.\(^2\) Evidently the Supreme Government was not yet prepared to adopt a policy which would involve itself in financial obligations and responsibilities of a serious nature at a time when it was passing through a period of economic crisis and

\(^2\) Quoted in Elwin, V; Nagaland, p.24.
strained relations with Burma and Afghanistan. However, the advocates of the "forward policy" gained a favourable hearing with the creation of the separate province of Assam in 1874 under the direct control of the Government of India, and the views of the local authorities began to gain more weight and prestige. 29

The Government of India now felt that Samaguting, the present headquarters of the district was too far from the heart of the Angami country to admit of the District Officer effectively influencing the more powerful clans; it was still farther from the country of the Eastern Nagas, over whom in consequence of the extension of tea cultivation in the Sibapan district it was necessary to exercise effective control. At the same time powers of the District Officer were considered inadequate, and he being overburdened with heavy civil work and only assisted by a Political Officer could not devote his entire attention to establish real influence among the tribes.

Accordingly, the Government of India considered the following measures indispensable:

(a) removal of the headquarters to some locality in the interior of the Naga Hills,
(b) the location of a British Officer in the Eastern as well as in the Western Naga Hills,
(c) entertainment of such additional ministerial and police establishments as may be necessary,

(d) proper allowance of funds for the improvement of communications, and

(e) an increase of the power of the Political Officers to the extent recommended by the local authorities.  

The policy thus sketched out and the arrangements made by the Government of India in this regard were approved by the Home Government in August, 1877. While giving approval to the above proposals the Secretary of State for India observed "that an attitude of indifference to the internal feuds amongst the Nagas, which result in wholesale massacre of women and children could no longer be maintained without discredit to the British Government. The facts now reported show that both in the interest of our own subjects and for the sake of the Nagas themselves, a more active policy than has hitherto been pursued should be adopted towards the tribes inhabiting the hills on the south-east borders of Assam."  

KOHIMA SELECTED:

After inspecting both Kohima and Wokha, the Chief Commissioner selected a site near Kohima for the future headquarter of the district. Wokha was in the land of the Lhota Nagas and situated at a distance of about 51 miles from Kohima, the most powerful Angami village and still more from Mosoma.

Khonoma and Jotsoma. A move towards Wokha would be regarded by the Angamis as a retreat, which might result in a series of raids as those happened in 1851 after the withdrawal from Samaguting. He recommended Kohima as the best site for the proposed Station and Wokha as a sub-divisional post for controlling the Lhotas. While selecting Kohima in preference to Wokha, the Chief Commissioner was guided by the consideration that "the Angamis are the birds in the hand, while the Lhota Nagas are those still in the bush. It was well not to lose the first in attempting to grasp the others".

While submitting his proposals, the Chief Commissioner warned that Kohima should not be occupied until a road from Golaghat to the proposed station was completed and adequate police arrangements were made beforehand. He added that at present thirteen villages under British protection paid a total revenue of Rs. 1032/- annually and this could be eventually raised to Rs. 26,000/- by the assessment of a house-tax on all the Nagas and the Kukis between Assam and Manipur on the south and longitude 94°25′ east. Though he wanted to bring the whole of the northern slope of the Naga Hills as far as longitude 96° 30′ under British authority, he was not in favour of this extension until the Western Nagas were completely subjugated and communication system fully developed. To maintain effective control over the Nagas, he suggested that the present Naga Hills Police Force should be aided by

a military force of fifty men at the headquarters and fifty at Wokha. The Political Officer should also be provided with such additional assistance that might be required from time to time in putting down refractory villages. For this purpose he suggested that an additional force of two hundred men at the headquarters should be provided.

FORWARD POLICY APPROVED:

After careful consideration, the Governor-General in-Council agreed that a more definite policy than that hitherto followed should be adopted in its dealings with these tribes and "such a policy would necessarily look beyond our immediate needs and interests, and could not be confined to questions of the best system for protecting our own settled districts, and the villages in the Naga Hills which have submitted to our authority". In July 1878, the Supreme Government communicated to Sir Stuart Bayley, Keatinge's successor, its views on the more forward policy of his predecessor, which had been accepted in principle by the Government.

The Chief Commissioner's proposals envisaged the extension of British authority village by village, over the whole tract between the present British border and a specified parallel of longitude, not only for safeguarding the

Villages already under British protection, but for undertaking the gradual subjugation of all the wild tribes of this region. The Governor-General in-Council was convinced that these tribes lived in a state of constant anarchy and their raids into Manipur caused incessant bloodshed, and the continuance of such a state of affairs in the neighbourhood of a civilised Government could not be tolerated. But in his opinion there was no necessity of adopting any comprehensive scheme of extending British authority at present for covering the entire tribes of this area as specified by Keatinge as the British territory was sufficiently safe from their molestation. 34 As the present system of administration in the Naga Hills was more or less concerned with those villages, which had placed themselves under the Government to the extent of protecting them from the raids of their neighbours and Manipur, the present boundary had no definite meaning. The actual system of Government in the Naga Hills was, therefore, vague in the administrative sense. Under the circumstances, the Governor-General in-Council was inclined to believe that Keatinge's scheme was justifiable and expedient and that some measures were becoming practically unavoidable.

Accordingly, the Government of India approved the scheme anticipating no serious difficulties in its implementation provided "it was carried into effect by degrees,

34. F.P.P.(A), 1878, Feb. No.328."
without unreasonable risk or any very disproportionate expense. The Secretary of State for India sanctioned in principle the policy to be pursued in future towards the Nagas, agreeing with the views of the Governor-General in Council that such extension, although involving considerable increase of responsibility without much probability of fiscal advantages as practically unavoidable. While giving sanction to the policy he observed:

The continuance in the immediate proximity to settled British districts of a system of internecine warfare, conducted principally against women and children, cannot be tolerated, while the result of the punitive expedition lately undertaken against the village of Mozuma was not such as to encourage the expectation that measures of that kind will either suffice to prevent the periodical attacks on our own villages, or conduce to the civilisation of the tribes beyond the border. As those results can only be hoped for from the subjection of the larger villages to British rule which has already been accepted by many of the smaller and weaker communities it is satisfactory to gather in the opinion of the local authorities, their subjection can be effected without unreasonable risk or inordinate expense. Her Majesty's Government will await with interest further reports of the progress of work which you have properly directed shall be proceeded with cautiously, and without any foregone conclusion as to the ultimate line of boundary which will be most convenient for general administration, and as a fixed political frontier.

ADVANCE TO KOHLMA SANCTIONED:

Although non-intervention policy was abandoned in 1866, the Government of India hesitated to undertake a

35. Ibid.
36. F.P.P. (A), 1879, Sec. No. 583.
"forward policy" for a long time. Even in 1871, it declared in unmistakable terms its desire to assert no positive jurisdiction over communities not actually within the limits of British settled districts. In 1878, however, the Government of India as well as the Home Government agreed to advance the headquarter from Samaguting to a "more central and dominating position in the midst of the warring Angami clans and do away absolutely and for ever with the state of tribal anarchy that disgraced the so-called Hill District, and formed a standing menace to the peace of Cachar, Seersaugor and Nowgong."  

POLITICAL SITUATION BEFORE THE OCCUPATION OF KOHIMA:

Damant took over charge of the Naga Hills from Lieutenant Maxwell, the officiating Political Agent in July 1878. At the time of his taking charge, he did not find any very appreciable effect of the last expedition against Mozoma, but found the attitude of the powerful villages towards the British and Manipur far from satisfactory. In fact, the threatening attitude of Khonoma created such terror in the villages of Manipur that its Government was compelled to establish a post for their protection. Major Johnstone, the Political Agent of Manipur, was inclined to believe that the Angamis were not bent upon keeping the peace for long. He

thought "unless some great change takes place, one or more large villages will again feel inclined to try their strength with us." In view of such an alarming situation, the Chief Commissioner recommended that Kohima should be occupied without waiting for the completion of the road from Golaghat. The Secretary of State for India also in deference to the strong opinion expressed by the Chief Commissioner sanctioned the occupation of Kohima as soon as circumstances would permit.

ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES PROPOSED:

Accordingly, on March 19, 1879 Damant removed his headquarter to Kohima without any opposition from the Nagas. They assisted him with necessary carriage and supplies. He found no difficulty during the first few months in realising revenue and fines from the villages guilty of offences. The distant villages too voluntarily came in with their offer of submission. For the present Damant decided to abstain from direct administration to avoid distrust and suspicion among the Nagas that had already been created by the advance from Samaguting. He proposed to introduce direct administration from the next year and for this purpose the Naga country was tentatively divided into the following distinct tracts:

38. F.P.P. (General B) 1882, D.O. No. 109, From Bayley to Lyall, Aug. 29, 188.
(1) the first or the westernmost tract inhabited by peaceable tribes who paid a house-tax,
(2) the second or the central tract, which was not nearly so far settled,
(3) the third or the easternmost tract, which was beyond the reach of direct administration.

Both Sir Stuart Bayley and Damant attached great importance to the realisation of revenue from the Nagas, more as a symbol of authority than for any fiscal advantage. Since most of the villages had been already brought under the British protectorate on payment of revenue, Damant wanted to bring the rest under the same. As regards revenue from the Nagas of the second tract, he saw no possibility of large and powerful villages like Khonoma and Jotsoma giving in without a struggle. He, therefore, proposed to demand revenue from them in the coming cold weather and in case of their refusal to pay, to realise it by force of arms. Sir Stuart Bayley wanted such action to be taken not at once, but gradually. As regards the third tract, the Chief Commissioner desired that no attempt should be made to bring them under subjection unless and until the tribes in the central tract were for sometimes accustomed to regular administration.

As regards police arrangements, Stuart Bayley considered that for the next two or three years it would be necessary to maintain 200 military and at least 300 Police.
but Damant was in favour of the permanent force being 500 police to be placed under the Political Officer. He considered the local police would be of much use than the military, because of their acquaintance with the local conditions and the language of the people. Although the Government of India approved of Damant's proceedings relating to the occupation of Kohima, it had reserved examination of his proposal for bringing the Naga tribes under British administration. 40

OCCUPATION OF KOHIMA: ITS EFFECTS:

From the very beginning the advance from Samaguting was looked down upon by the Nagas with an eye of suspicion assuming that the British Government was going to stay permanently in their hills. At one time the attitude of Khonoma appeared to be so much threatening that Damant decided to undertake a military expedition against the village, but this became unnecessary due to change of attitude of the village in the meantime. Another powerful village, namely Jotsoma linked up its fortunes with Khonoma. Even Kohima was not wholly well-disposed and two of its seven khals were definitely hostile and nourished enmity and revenge towards the British. Notwithstanding the unfriendly attitude of the powerful Angami villages, everything went on well until the commencement of rains in 1879. Damant reported that since August 1878, not

40. Ibid.
a single raid or murder had taken place and the Chief Commissioneer considered the result of the occupation to be "conspicuously and uniformly satisfactory". 41

**INDICATIONS OF THE IMPENDING TROUBLE**

The observations of the Chief Commissioner and the Political Officer, however, proved to be superficial and ill-judged. Before long, Damant experienced difficulties in procuring labour and supplies for building up his new station. His interference in their internal feuds and demand for revenue caused irritation and resentment among the Nagas. The murder of a constable while escorting the mail-runners from Kohima to Piphima and the attempt to surprise the stockade at that place were clear expressions of their opposition to British rule. The attitude of the powerful village of Kohima, in the meanwhile, was becoming very much dangerous. This village had already collected a sufficient quantity of firearms with ammunitions from different quarters and had fortified their village defence with the ultimate intention of a trial of strength with the British. These were no doubt sufficient indications of the coming trouble, but Damant did not entertain any serious apprehension of danger. Had it been so, he would have probably requisitioned troops for his defence. On the otherhand, he was so much sure of his increased

influence in the Angami hills that he proposed to undertake an extended tour into the Hatigoria country for enquiring into some intertribal feuds. Stuart Bayley, while approving Damant's visit doubted the expediency of any active interference with such distant tribes until his own position among the Angamis was on a more secure footing. 42

**DAMANT KILLED AT KHONOMA:**

Before starting on this tour through the Trans-Dayang country Damant decided to visit Jotsoma, Khonoma and Mozoma to ascertain the disposition of these villages as to whether he could safely leave Kohima. On October 13, 1879, he set out on his ill-fated journey with an escort of 65 constables of the Frontier Police and 21 rifles of the 43rd Bengal Infantry. Halting the first night at Jotsoma, he left for Khonoma next morning inspite of the warning given to him by his interpreter not to visit the village at that time. Finding that he was determined to visit Khonoma, the friendly villagers insisted him to enter into that village through the western gate so that he could avoid the hostile clans on the way. Disbelieving in any danger and expecting perhaps a friendly reception, leaving half his men at the foot of the hill and without taking even the necessary precaution of a reconnaissance, he advanced towards the well-defended village

of Khonoma. The sudden visit of the Political Officer made the Nagas think that he was coming to seize their fire-arms. Therefore, as soon as he appeared in front of their gate, they fired on him and he was killed. This was followed by an attack on his escort, who became nothing better than a rabble, every individual running for his own safety. 43

UPRISING OF THE NAGAS:

The banner of revolt thus raised by Khonoma soon engulfed the whole Angami Country. Soon the stockaded post into which all non-combatants had been drawn found themselves besieged by thousand of determined Naga warriors. It was believed that some six thousand Nagas representing all the Angami clans and armed with at least five hundred fire-arms besieged the garrison. 44 It was difficult to say whether or not there was any secret understanding among the powerful Angami villages. Undoubtedly a deeper enmity among all the Nagas tribes had been generated by the occupation of Kohima by the British. The constant pressure exercised on the Nagas for revenue, rice, carriage and labour became so much irritating to them that they had been looking out for an opportunity to revolt at the earliest opportunity. The death of the Political Officer and the acquisition of a sufficient number of guns from the guards served as a great incentive.

43. F.P.P.(A) 1880, Feb. No. 252.
44. Shakespear, L.W.; History of the Assam Rifles, p. 148, Haimendorf, C; Naked Nagas, p. 28.
to the different warring clans to combine under the leadership of Khonoma. The selection of their time for such a struggle was opportune as the British Government at that time was engaged in a difficult war with Afghanistan for which all the efficient troops and officers had been commissioned.

SIEGE OF KOHIMA:

Mr. G. Cawley, the Assistant Political Officer, who assumed charge of Damant's duties, immediately sent for help to Wokha, Manipur and Samaguting. After the massacre of the guards at Khonoma, the force at Kohima stood at 100 Police and 80 military. The defences of the post at Kohima were dilapidated and its enclosures were crowded on all sides by numerous thatched houses. In addition to it, a number of children, women and other non-combatants were crowded into the stockade which added to the anxiety of the defenders. Provision in store was short and the only source of water supply was a spring outside. From the very beginning all communications with the plains were cut and the mail-runners were intercepted by the Nagas.

Mr. Hinde, the Sub-Divisional Officer at Wokha arrived with a reinforcement of 65 men covering some 50 miles by stealthy night marches through a hostile country. As soon

as the news of Damant's murder reached Manipur, Major Johnstone, with a contingent of 2000 troops furnished by the Maharaja and with his own escort and police set out for Kohima. Meanwhile at Kohima, the entire garrison with the population inside were reduced to great straits for want of food and water. The Nagas harassed the defenders by throwing spears wrapped with burning rags and intermittent firings into the stockade. The siege was so much complete that the defenders were becoming desperate and were on the point of giving in to the Nagas who promised them safe conduct to Samaguting. But the timely arrival of Johnstone with his contingent changed the entire situation. The Nagas dispersed without a fight and the siege was raised. The services of Manipuri troops would have been very useful in case of a prolonged conflict with the Nagas. Nevertheless, the help of the Maharaja of Manipur was publicly acknowledged. Johnstone also earned the high approbation of the Government of India for the energy and promptitude shown in the relief of Kohima. It was indeed a great help, and without which the entire garrison with the civilian population inside would have been at the mercy of the hostile Nagas.

47. In a Durbar held at Manipur, the Maharaja was presented with 1000 muskets and two mountain guns, by the Chief Commissioner (vide letter No.394 from Govt. of India to Secretary of State, dated March 10, 1880).
PUNITIVE EXPEDITIONS AGAINST THE NAGAS:

Whatever might have been the outcome of the encounter with the Nagas, the British Government realized that it was a mistake to attempt to bring under control a powerful tribe before its own position at Kohima was firmly established. It was now increasingly felt that the reported influence of the Political Officer over the Nagas was overrated and that he had been acting with rashness since his occupation of Kohima. Had there been some amount of caution on his part in the conduct of affairs, the danger could have been averted. After this lesson, the Government of India had cautioned all district officers not to undertake measures for the pacification and subjection of these tribes in future unless backed by a sufficient force, without careful consideration of all possible consequences and also without the distinct orders from the Chief Commissioner.48

The general uprising of the Nagas had thrown the British Government out of gear and the little influence which the occupation of Kohima had established over the Angami Nagas was gone. Therefore, for the re-assertion of its lost authority a punitive expedition became indispensable. Accordingly, an expedition was arranged for the cold season of 1879. Brigadier General Nation, commanding the N.E. Frontier took the field himself with a force consisting of the 44th Sylhet Light

Infantry under Colonel Nuttal, a detachment of the 43rd Assam Light Infantry under Major Evans and two mountain guns under Lt. Mansel and Williamson as Political Officer. On November 22, 1879 the well-fortified village of Khonoma was assaulted and at night-fall after one of the severest fighting, the lower part of the village was occupied. The Khonoma Nagas evacuating their upper defences retired to a very strong position known as the "Chakka fort" on the spur of the Japwa mountain. The loss to the Nagas in the fighting was moderate, but that of the British was considerable. With the small force at his disposal, the General could not follow them up to their impregnable fort. He, however, occupied their lands to cut off their sources of supply.

NAGAS STARTED GUERRILLA WARFARE:

The failure of the British forces to pursue the Nagas to their mountain fortresses, emboldened them to carry on a relentless guerilla warfare. Keeping their women and children in security in the neighbouring Angami villages and requisitioning food from the smaller Angami and Kuchoha Naga villages, they continued to harass the troops by their ambushes and surprise night attacks. From their well fortified position in the hills they shot at sentries, water

---

parties, escorts and coolies and disrupted communications. Their most serious attacks were those made on the Nichuguard between Samaguting and Kohima. By such attacks they killed about fifty persons and many wounded, besides causing serious apprehensions in regard to the safety of transport and supply arrangements.

BALADHAN RAID:

It would be a mistake to say that the Nagas were totally averse to offensive operations. Towards the end of January 1880, a party of Nagas attacked a detachment which was sent to Papolongmai. The attack resulted in the loss of four men and the flight of the coolies. A similar attack was made by the Nagas on Henderson's detachment which was escorting coolies with rassud to Papolongmai. In this also four men were killed and a good deal of rassud destroyed. But the raid on Baladhan tea-garden on January 27, 1880 was really a daring enterprise. A party of fifty men of Khonoma, with only seven fire-arms left their hills and marched down the bed of the Barak through Manipur territory and surprised the garden at night. After slaying the European Manager and sixteen coolies, they returned safe with their booty by the same route covering a distance of about eighty miles each way.

51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
PANIC AMONG GARDEN LABOUR:

Baladhan tea-garden was situated in the north-east of Cachar and some of the largest gardens lay within a few miles of it to the north and west. The raid on Baladhan created such panic among the imported labour that the entire labour force of one tea-garden had absconded, while some other gardens had been threatened with a general exodus. Several European Companies having branches in Calcutta appealed directly to the Governor-General for sanctioning additional guards and other protective measures to restore confidence in the minds of the planters and the plantation labour. As a measure of immediate protection a limited number of new Martini Henry Carbine with ammunitions were issued to the managers of the Cachar gardens. Sir Stuart Bayley undertook a tour of Cachar in February 1880, to devise protective measures as was possible under the circumstances. The measures undertaken for the protection of this part of the frontier restored confidence among the planters and the imported labour. The protective measures consisted of, firstly, in the reestablishment of the Asalu Sub-Division under an European Officer; secondly, in a double line of posts, those on the interior line being connected with each other and with Silchar by patrolling and signalling; thirdly, in the organisation of a Kuki militia, placing stockaded

Kuki villages on the line of roads, and attaching Kuki scouts to the police posts. In addition the Raja of Manipur had established two outposts along the line of the Barak river, over and above that which already existed at Jirighat. But the Chief Commissioner himself was convinced that the outlying gardens in Cachar could not be really protected if a party of forty to fifty Nagas were determined to descend. But he had no manner of doubt that these defensive measures would make their retreat not as easy as it was last year.55

FINAL OPERATIONS AGAINST KHONOMA:

The failure of the expeditionary force to punish Khonoma and its allies emboldened them to raids of retaliation. The burning and destruction of their village and granaries aroused their passion of revenge to such an extent that retaliation was expected from them at any point of the long frontier at any time. With a view to effectively shut them up in their fort and give them a final blow, General Nation proposed to post about 680 men at the villages of Khonoma, Mozoma, Jotsoma, Sachema, Papolongmai and Kigwema. But the execution of the plan was delayed due to the shortage of men.56 Sir Stuart Bayely, with a view to discuss the plan of the campaign against the Nagas with General Nation arrived

55. F.F.P.(A) 1881, August, No.636.
56. F.F.P.(A) 1880, April, No.219.
at Kohima from Cachar via Manipur on March 1, 1880. Along
with the question of the campaign against the Naga, he dis-
cussed the policy to be followed for administering the hills
at the end of the hostilities.

In the meanwhile, the arrival of a wing of the
18th Native Infantry had changed the position of the troops.
But the execution of the proposed plan of posting troops
around the villages did not become necessary as Jotsoma had
already submitted and deputations from some khels of Khonoma
and Kohima came in with offers of submission. The change in
the attitude of the powerful villages was brought about by
the acute scarcity of food and the presence of the new
British regiment. With the approach of the cultivation season
and the consequent pressure of the allies exerted on Khonoma
for terminating the hostilities, the latter sued for peace.
On March 28, 1880, the Chakka fort was surrendered by Khonoma
to General Nation. Of the thirteen villages in hostility
to the British, Piphimah, Sachimah, Sepamah and Kuchamah were
destroyed before the final assault on Khonoma.

TERMS OF THE PEACE :

The villages which took part in the struggle against
the British were punished by fines in cash and grain and in
a certain measure in unpaid labour. They were forced to

57. F. F. P. (A) 1881, August, No. 617.
surrender the fire-arms in their possession without any compensation. The offending villages were demolished and the villagers were forbidden to occupy their impregnable positions in inaccessible hill tops and were offered new sites in accessible places. Khonoma which was levelled to the ground suffered in addition the confiscation of their terraced fields, and its khels were dispersed among other village communities at a distance. From all villages an agreement was taken to pay revenue in the shape of one maund of rice and one rupee per house and to provide a certain amount of labour annually for state purposes. They were also to appoint a headman in each village, who should be responsible for good order and for carrying out the wishes of the Government. Though a general amnesty was declared, the person who had actually shot Demant and the interpreter, who betrayed him were excluded from it. 58

RESULTS OF THE EXPEDITION:

The chief object of the expedition - the punishment of Khonoma for killing Demant and several other villages for joining in the attack on Kohima had been attained. It has been already stated that Khonoma, besides incurring heavy losses in men and material, in action suffered the destruction of its site and in addition the confiscation of terraced

cultivation. Being dispossessed of their homes and fields, its people became "homeless wanderers" living in temporary huts and jungles depending on the charity of their neighbours which had brought sickness and mortality among them and a severe strain on those who had to subsist them. Moreover, the dominant leadership of Khonoma in the hills was reduced to nothing.

NAGA HILLS CAMPAIGN OVERSHADOWED:

Thus "not without a heavy loss in men and great expenditure of money", the primary object of the expedition was achieved. Notwithstanding the fact that there was no actual fighting, except at Khonoma, where the resistance of the Nagas was most determined, the British troops had a very arduous and fatiguing work. "Nothing worries troops more than warfare in a jungle-clad mountain, where they are being constantly ambushed and rarely get an opportunity of closing with the foe, who never shows himself." In fact their small ambushes and stealthy surprises proved more disastrous to British troops in effect than their open attacks. The troops employed in the Naga Hills campaign had been put to much loss and privations and they had a tough job there, inspite of their hardship and sufferings, they showed their utmost devotion to their duties and loyalty to the Government they

59. See Memorandum by the Chief Commissioner, dated January 29, 1881, Supplement to June 17, 1880.
60. F.P.P.(A) 1881, August, No. 621.
served. Sir Stuart Bayley, while pressing the claims of the officers and men for a "batta" was constrained to remark "Our wars in Assam generally partake of the character of this campaign, and in most of them troops have earned no glory and no rewards." Major Johnstone who had brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner, the claims of the troops for a medal for this campaign, with a clasp for Khonoma observed:

It was the misfortune of those engaged in the Naga Hills expedition, that they were overshadowed, and their gallant deeds almost ignored by the Afghan war then in progress. Some of the English papers imagined that the operations in the Naga hills were included in it, and the Government of India, which has only eyes for the North West Frontier showed little desire to recognize the hard work, and good service rendered on its eastern border, amidst difficulties far greater than those which beset our troops in Afghanistan. The force engaged, hoped that the capture of Khonoma, which was achieved after such hard fighting and at so great a loss, would have been at least recognised by some special decoration, but this hope was disappointed, apparently for no other reason, than that the troops engaged, fought in the east, and not in the west of India ......... A bronze star was the reward of a bloodless march from Kabul to Kandahar, but not even a clasp could be spared to commemorate the capture of Khonoma, and those who never saw a shot fired, shared the medal awarded equally with those who fought and bled in that bloody fight.61