CHAPTER 4

COMPANY RAJ AND ITS POLICY OF ANNEXATION

Critical Examination of Company's Administrative Arrangements: Assam was formally incorporated into the British dominion after the conclusion of the Yandaboo Treaty. The Company's troops actually took control of Guwahati in 1824. From that date the reins of administration were in the hands of the Company's officials until Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 under which the British Crown took over the administrative control of the whole of India. The first phase of the Campaign in Assam against the Burmese ended in July 1824 when Col. Richards returned to Guwahati after dispersing the Burmese to Moramukh. Thus in the first phase Lower Assam came to be captured. In the second phase Upper Assam, comprising Sibsagar and Lakhimpur excluding Matak and Khampti areas as well as remotest jungly tracts, was occupied in January 1825.

After the expulsion of the Burmese, the people of Assam expected the restoration of their country to native rulers. But it soon appeared to them that the Raj came to stay in Assam and not to retire. In the initial stage when Company's authority was established in Lower Assam the people viewed it with satisfaction in the belief that after the Burmese were expelled from Upper Assam they would be enabled to leave peacefully under a restored native rule.

On the eve of the march of the British troops from Goalpara, British policy was not aimed at keeping Assam permanently under their occupation. This was revealed in a letter to David Scott addressed by

Mr. Swinton. Thus, on the occupation of Western or Lower Assam the question of its administration arose before the authority of the Company. On the subject of setting up a native prince, Scott intimated his observations to the Government stating that it would be premature and impolitic to do so since the war against the Burmese was still continuing and the people of the country lost confidence in their chiefs or princes. Scott pleaded that the British Government should keep in its possession the south bank as far as Rohachoky while the possession of Kamrup's north bank should be left to one of the Darrang princes who were not on good terms with the Ahoms. It was a sort of divide et impera. Scott's advice was accepted by the Government and he was allowed to exercise his discretion in the matter of settling the north bank of Kamrup with any Darrang Prince. Now arrangements were made to administer the region from Goalpara to Gauhati generally known as Western or Lower Assam, as distinguished from Eastern or Upper Assam which was still in Burmese control. As the members of the former royal family were too much "divided" and were "obnoxious" to the people, it was decided to hold the country under military occupation as an "enemy country", pending a permanent arrangement. Though the country was to remain under military occupation, the spheres of control between civil and military authorities were clearly demarcated. The duties of the Political Agent and the Officer, commanding the troops, were clearly defined. The general administration, including collection of revenue and matters relating to the establishment of relations with friendly native chiefs, was entrusted to Scott, the Political Agent. But he was not to interfere with Lt. Col. Richards who was commanding the troops after the expiry of Col. Macmorine, in matters of purely military nature.

It was in the sphere of revenue collection that Scott mainly executed his labours. As soon as Western Assam came under British occupation, Scott began to find out ways and means for enhancing revenue collection of the area under British occupation, even though the decision on final disposal of the country was yet to be taken. It was evident that the British had a fixed purpose of retaining Assam permanently under their control. Scott could not introduce any innovation for betterment of the people's lot but to squeeze them, he effected important changes in the system of revenue administration. Some new heads of revenue were introduced. He carried on with the old arrangements and devised some new ones to maximise revenue collection. He had a limited staff and, naturally, therefore, he had to depend largely on the services of native assistants. He thought that it would not be advantageous to make any radical change until the ultimate destiny of the country had been settled. He effected an important change by ordering for an imposition of a poll-tax of three rupees per pakh in lieu of personal service. Scott mainly followed the Ahom system of revenue administration as the Burmese did not introduce any change in land administration because their prime motive was to ransack the country and not to administer it effectively.

It is in this context that a brief review of the Ahom revenue system may be made. The basis of it was the personal liability of every adult male to work for the benefit of the State for a period of 3 or 4 months in a year, in lieu of tax on a limited quantity of land. During the Ahom period land was the absolute property of the monarch. The ryots who cultivated the land were but serfs. The Ahom land tenure system was based on personal service. The Ahom administration employed every adult male in the service of the State either as a labourer or
a soldier. He was regarded as a Paik. The field-labourers were employed as soldiers and in peace time they were engaged in works of public utility. These labourers were called Kari-Paiks from the word Kar meaning an arrow, as they were originally organised for military duties. In return of his service to the State each Paik was allowed two Purus (nearly three acres) of runit or first class arable land free of rent. This land is called Gamati, or bodyland. In addition to bodyland each Paik was allowed a plot of land for his homestead which was known as Bari land. With very limited exception every adult male was registered as Paik. With the exception of nobles, priests and persons of high castes and their slaves, the whole male population between the age of fifteen and fifty were liable to render service to the State as Paiks. Exemption from personal service was allowed when a Kari-Paik was vested with some offices. In such case his name was removed from the Kari roll and registered with the Chamuas, the next higher order of the subjects. There were a few other classes of subjects who were exempted from personal service to the State. These classes consisted of Kumar (artisans). Kamar (blacksmith), Sonoyal (goldsmith), Kaharn (brass-workers), Kharsharia (gun powder makers), Katani (weavers), Teli (oil-makers), Kathkatia (wood cutters) and like guild-people. They were allowed only bari land free of rent on condition that they had to supply certain quantities of their products to the royal household and to public-stores. This system enabled the Ahom Government to command the services of all able-bodied male population of the country. It is said that Mumai Tamuli Barbaruah had introduced this system during the reign of king Pratap Singha (1603-1641). There was another type of paiks known as Liekchows.

3. AB(G).,p.104.
4. "Paiks allotted to Government officers as remuneration were called Liekchows."
As stated earlier, the Paiks were required to serve the Government but in turns. Four Paiks (later three) constituted a squad, known as the got. The first paik of a got was known as Mul, the second as Duwal and the third as Tewal. A member of a got was required to serve the Government for 3 or 4 months in a year. He was replaced by another of his own got. The normal works of an absentee paik in his village had to be performed by his home-keeping comrades. According to their nature of works, paiks were grouped into a unit known as Khel, each ranging generally from 3000 to 6000 men. Twenty Paiks were placed under an officer known as Bora, a hundred a Saikia, and a thousand under a Hazarika. The head of the Khel (unit) under whom the paiks served was called a Barua; and sometimes a Phukan if the unit was of a greater importance. All the members of Khel considered themselves to be members of one political fraternity. There was another kind of revenue in vogue in Kamrup known as Kharikatana. This system was introduced by King Chandra Kanta Singha to enhance revenue in his endeavour to meet the exigencies resulting from the Burmese depredation. Kharikatana literally means the drawing out of a kharika or a slender stick of the size of a knitting needle. One stick was to be taken from each house. Thus each stick represented a household for the purpose of collection of revenue. It was a house-tax upon all subjects whether liable to pay land revenue or not. This tax was also continued by the Burmese.

During the Ahom period when land tenure was mainly based on the Khel System, the revenue of the State was chiefly realised in kind and personal labour because not only the land but also the subjects were also regarded as property of the State.

As soon as the British acquired the possession of Lower Assam, their Agent Scott took steps to enhance the revenue, not in kind but in cash. The measures he had taken were designed to serve the interests of the Company. He did not hesitate to adopt any measure which even proved to be detrimental to the interests of the people of Assam. It was true that some of Scott's measures served some good for the people. But behind such measures the intention was entirely to serve the British imperial cause.

It is recorded that Scott based his revenue administration on some old revenue papers known as ḍāra-kakat. Here Scott showed his shrewdness. Without allowing the people to have any chance to criticise the changes in revenue administration, Scott tried to extort land revenue as high as a rate as possible functioning within the framework of the Ahom land-revenue system. He introduced poll-tax into the existing system. This was for easy collection of revenue in cash because revenue in kind would not serve the interests of the Company. But this was utterly detrimental to the people of the country. The people were not accustomed to cash payment of revenue. There was not sufficient cash in the hands of the people due to lack of facilities for marketing their products and that was why people found it was very difficult to meet the demand of poll-tax. By introducing the system of poll-tax Scott caused great difficulties to the people. They had to travel for two to three days journey to market their products for cash. Scott also enhanced the rate of tax. This was detrimental to the people who had to pass through a period of wars and devastations. People were not sufficiently well-off to meet Scott's demand of enhanced rate of revenue. Scott pitched the demand at about one-fourth of the rate of land revenue levied by the Zemindars of Goalpara and of the adjoining territories under the Company. But he was not justified in compelling the people of Assam to pay.
pay land revenue even at one-fourth rate of what was paid by the people of Goalpara and other adjoining territories of the Company, because neither the people of Goalpara nor the people of other adjoining districts of the Company had faced such internal disturbances and ravages of war as the people of Upper Assam had faced. Scott's action was one-sided motivated mainly by the desire of filling the coffers of the Company. For the year 1824-25 Scott estimated his demand in Narayani at Rs. 1,48,112 from Lower Assam comprising Kamrup, Darrang, Naduar and the areas under the chiefs of Dimura, Beltola and Rani. His demand was arbitrarily fixed. It was regarded by the people as an over-assessed demand. It was seen that neither the people nor the Chiefs were able to meet Scott's demands as evidenced from the fact that there occurred large balance in land revenue collection. Scott himself knew that his demands were high and that was why he widened the tax-base to a great extent by introducing poll-tax in place of paiks' service towards the State and imposing tax upon Lakhiraj lands. He also proposed to introduce several other measures for gradual enhancement of revenue and pleaded for the incorporation of Lower Assam under the British dominion so that increase in revenue collection might be effected. His endeavour to retain Lower Assam under the British and to enhance the British interests through colonisation over Lower Assam proved that Scott was a full-blooded imperialist administrator. He introduced the house-tax on the plea that it had originally been introduced by Ahom king Chandra Kanta Singha. But the circumstances that compelled Chandra Kanta to introduce house-tax were not similar. With the aim of widening the tax-base Scott imposed revenue on Lakhiraj paiks and Lakhiraj lands. Here also he took the plea that
Imposition of land revenue on Lakhira was not new. It was Purnananda Burahgohain who had first introduced such type of tax of Lakhira during the Burmese wars. To meet the war-expenditure Purnananda Burahgohain was compelled to impose tax on Lakhira lands. But Scott's motive was to enhance revenue collection. Scott was not compelled by any special circumstances to impose such a tax. Lakhira land was classified as debuttar, land granted for the maintenance of a deity; prohottar-land for the Brahmins; and dharottar lands granted for religious and charitable purpose. During the Ahom period those lands were exempted from any tax except for a temporary period when, these lands were subjected by Purnananda Burahgohain to pay a Barangai (contribution) to meet war expenditure. Barangai was not a regular head of revenue but Scott made it a regular one along with enhancement of its rate.

It is recorded that Scott based revenue assessment on the old revenue documents which he obtained from Majumdar Barua, the head of Manupko of Kamrup. But these documents were very old, dating back to 1678 when the first revenue settlement of Kamrup was made on the basis of a survey. It seemed that Scott knew it quite well that it would be

8. In Lower Assam lands, granted to deities, religious institutions or pious and meritorious persons by the Ahom kings, were known as Lakhira or half-revenue-paying estates, as distinguished from Bhal or full-revenue-paying estates. W.R. Ward records that in course of time these lands were held revenue-free and the owners called themselves Lakhira Mars. Ward further writes "these lands had been assessed at five annas a pure (four bighas) by the Assam Rajas themselves, Scott therefore fixed their assessment at this rate, and subsequently increased it to 7 or 8 annas a pure, by imposition of tax known as Barangai." (See Ward's Notes on the Assam Land Revenue System, pp. 60, 69 as cited in DSNI, p. 93). But no record is available which can speak that these lands were assessed by any Ahom king. It was Purnananda Burahgohain who imposed a contribution known as Barangai just to meet war expenditure during the Burmese wars and as such, probably Ward misunderstood it. The imposition of Barangai by the Prime Minister Purnananda Burahgohain must have the royal approval. Perhaps Ward took it in that sense and writes "assessed by Assam Rajas themselves".

9. DSNI, p. 95.
wrong to base his demand on such old revenue papers which could offer little chance to have an insight into the existing state of the country. But as his motive was to enhance revenue collection by any means he tried to mislead the people by stating that his assessments were based on old documents of the Ahom period. Scott was in favour of gradual enhancement of land revenue. He even suggested the policy of granting of waste lands to broaden the tax base. He also proposed several new heads of taxation and steps to increase tax-paying capacity of the people. Though Scott declared himself in favour of increasing the tax-paying capacity of the people, he, however, proceeded to enhance the rate of revenue even before any positive steps were taken to increase people's tax-paying capacity. It was in the very first year of his administration that he enhanced the rate of revenue in Lower Assam. Thus he subjected the people to groan under the pressure of high rates of land revenue. The sufferings of the people found expression in the writings of Robertson, the successor of David Scott. Robertson wrote in 1832 "... its inhabitants emigrating, its villages decaying and its revenue annually declining". The Court of Directors was alarmed to hear that "a dreadful extortion had been exacted the ryots and rendered a large portion of Assam waste in which up to our conquest such a thing as jungle was hardly to be seen."

Ever since the discovery of tea in Assam in 1826, it had been the policy of the Company Government to encourage the opening out of sparsely populated tracts of the province by the offer of lands (specially waste lands) on favourable terms. David Scott was the first man who

10. DSNI, pp.101-03.
11. Quotes are respectively from Political Proceedings, 23 July, 1828, No. 90 and the letter from the Court of Directors, No. 14, of 1831 as cited in PS, p.2.
drew the attention of the Government towards granting of Waste lands. Thereupon the Company Raj turned its attention to shape Assam "into an agricultural estate of tea-drinking Britons and to transform local traditional institutions in such a manner as to suit the colonial pattern of exploitation". In every district there were for many years large areas of unclassed and uncultivated lands, much of which while unsuitable for the cultivation of transplanted rice, was suitable for the cultivation of tea. And as such for a period there was no competition between the ordinary cultivators and those who sought land for tea cultivation. But with the passing of time it was felt necessary to give special impetus to the investors of culture of tea or the other special cultivation. For this purpose a set of Social Rules was enacted in 1838. These were to encourage the investors to take up lands for special cultivation only such as cultivation of tea, coffee, timber etc., as distinguished from the ordinary cultivation of the staple crops of the country. The first special Grant Rules were enacted on the 6 March 1838. These related to Assam proper only. No grant of land was to be made for than 100 acres or of a greater extent than 10,000 acres. One-fourth of the entire area was to be in cultivation by the expiration of the fifth year from the date of grant, on failure of which the whole grant was liable to resumption. One-fourth of the grant was to be held in perpetuity revenue-free. On the remaining three-fourth no revenue was to be assessed for the first five years if the lands were under grass, ten years if under reeds and high grass, and twenty years if under forest. On the expiry of this term revenue was to be assessed at 9 annas per acre for the next three years, after which the rate was to be for twenty two years @ Rs. 1-2-0 an acre. At the close of this period (the thirtieth year in case of grant of grass lands,

12. Rs.,p.2.
thirty fifth year in case of reed lands, and forty fifth year in case of forest lands), the three-fourths of the area be liable to assessment were to be assessed at the option of the grantee either at the market value or one-fourth of the produce of the land, or at the average rate of revenue paid by rice-lands in the district where the grant was situated. The revenue was, thereafter, to be adjusted in the same manner at the end of every term of twentyone years.

The next rules of the same nature with greater favourable terms for special cultivation were those for leasehold grants of 23 October 1854, commonly called the Old Assam Rules. Under these Rules no grant was to be of less than 500 acres in extent (afterwards reduced to 200 acres, or even 100 acres in special cases). One-fourth of the grant was exempted from assessment in perpetuity, and the remaining three-fourth were granted revenue-free for fifteen years, to be assessed thereafter at 3 annas an acre for 10 years and at 6 annas an acre for seventyfour years more making a whole term of ninetynine years, after which the grant was to be subjected to re-survey and settlement. One-eighth of grant was to be cleared and rendered fit for cultivation in five years, one-fourth in ten years, one-half in twenty years and three-fourth by the expiration of the thirtieth year; and the entire grant was declared to be liable to resumption in case of the non-fulfilment of these conditions. Under these rules the grants were made transferable, subject to registration. These rules were extended to Sylhet and Cachar in 1856 and were in force till 1861.

Behind enactment of these rules the motive of the Government was to introduce British enterprise, capital and skill in special cultivation in Assam. The growing prospect of tea culture in Assam, the forming...
tion of the Tea Committee in early 1834, the starting of the Government Experimental Tea Garden in 1836 and the first successful manufacture of Assam Tea in December 1837 prompted the Government to make the waste land available for special cultivation on attractive terms by enacting a set of special rules known as the Waste Land Rules of 6 March 1838, which were subsequently revised in 1854 providing for more favourable terms to the European investors. Both the Rules have already been stated above. These rules were designed to rob the peasants of their chance of clearing the jungle by fixing a higher acreage for the land granted. The mass of the people of Assam could not afford sufficient capital required at the preliminary stage to avail themselves of the benefit of Waste Land Rules. The rules gave more land on favourable terms to the planters (the European investors in tea cultivation). Thus there arose a new slogan 'land to the Planters'. The waste land settlement policy tempted the planters to grab more land than what was required because such waste land provided them with much more resources in the shape of providing housing materials including valuable timber, space for settling labourers as tenants on the surplus land. This again provided fresh opportunities to have extra labourers. As Guha observes 'it was an additional bait to allure land-hungry tribal peasants from famine-stricken areas outside Assam to come and work at wages otherwise unattractive. Yet another motivation behind this perverse land grab policy was to keep away the prospective competitor from the neighbourhood.'

Thus it is seen that from the early days of the Company's occupation of Assam, it started a policy of transforming Assam to suit the

15. Ibid., p.12.
colonial pattern of their exploitation. The people of Assam reacted to Company Raj at an early stage with mixed feelings. After a long period of chaos, the Company's measures for restoring law and orders appeared to the Assamese peasants as a welcome relief. But as soon as the Company took steps for transforming Assam to suit the colonial interest by imposing heavy land revenue on the subject people they became indignant. The Company's measures were designed to uproot people from cultivation and reduce them to the status of cheap labourers for exploitation by the British tea planters. Their feelings were further aggravated by the Company's policy of monopolization when there was deficiency of currency supply and extremely limited marketing facilities for farm products. Thus the people began to regard the Company's administration responsible for their hardship. People were unable to secure cash to pay their taxes. They could not secure more land because of enhancement of the land revenue. But more lands were made available to the planters on favourable terms. This proved a damper on the peasants' efforts at expansion of their agricultural acreage.

A brief discussion of the Company's Judicial administration or more exactly, the Police administration is necessary for having a fuller understanding of the nature of the Company Raj.

At the bottom of the judicial system there were Choudhuries of the Parganas, who were entitled to decide petty cases usually with the help of the mals or Panchayats along with their duties of collecting revenue. Scott tried to make the justice cheap and to provide for the judgement-seat within the easy reach of all. With this end in view as early as May 1825 one Lambodar Barua, a brother-in-Law of the Ex-King Chandra Manta Singha, was appointed co-adjutant with the Barbarua of the revenue department in Upper Assam to administer Civil justice. In Lower Assam the Commissioner stood in the position hitherto held
by the Barphukan (viceroy) of Gauhati. He was employed empowered to try civil cases without limit and criminal cases not involving death penalty. He was to be assisted by Adam White in this respect. But this system could hardly meet the ends of justice since it had not been possible on the part of the Commissioner and his lone assistant Adam White to dispose of all the civil cases speedily. This was due to heavy accumulation of a large number of pending cases as well as the Commissioner's other multifarious duties. By the end of 1826 at Gauhati three native Tribunals—namely Court of Rajkhowa, and two other Courts under two Barphukans, were set up. Cases of minor importance were to be tried by the Rajkhowa's Courts; while one of the Courts under Barphukan was empowered to decide cases to the extent of rupees one thousand and to hear appeals from the Lower Courts and the other was empowered to decide criminal cases and to hear appeals from the miscellaneous and other revenue officials. These officials were also empowered to maintain local law and orders along with the power of collecting revenue from their respective jurisdiction. To minimise the accumulation of cases at the headquarters a few mofussil panchayats with elected members were set up in number of selected areas with a substantial population. Mofussil Panchayats were entitled to try minor civil cases. From such panchayats appeals could be preferred to the Courts at Gauhati. Thus tentative arrangements were made for the disposal of civil and petty criminal cases.

In Lower Assam the Commissioner was empowered to try all cases not involving capital punishment. He was also empowered to pass sentences of fifty stripes, imprisonment with labour or without labour and transportation for life. But heinous crimes requiring death sentences were to be tried by a special Tribunal, to be commissioned under Colonel Richards. But the Tribunal could never be commissioned due to some technical
nicality and as a result there was an accumulation of heinous crimes pending at the headquarters. It appears from the official reports that the Commissioner had to admit that after the British occupation of Assam the number of heinous crimes was on the increase. "Apart from usual theft, cattle-lifting and elopement of girls, cases of burglary, highway and gang-robberies, previously unknown in Assam, were of now of frequent occurrence." The increase in the number of crimes was due to the fact that there was absence of police protection mainly in the rural areas.

Neufville admitted that "the introduction of a perfect or even tolerably efficient police in a country like Assam is altogether out of our power." But Scott had his own explanation for the increase in crimes. He was of the opinion that due to disuse of capital and inhuman corporal punishment that was in vogue during the Ahom period the number of crimes increased. Scott's view might have been partially correct but it was not the entire explanation for the increase in the incidence of crimes.

It was the inefficient police arrangements which accounted for the increase of crimes. A police establishment consisting of one Daroga, a Jamadar and a few constables was maintained only at the headquarters but the mofussil police was left entirely in the hands of the local revenue collectors like Choudhuries, Patgiris and other revenue officials. In those days the maintenance of law and order was considered

17. ADC..p.32.


19. Hamilton in his 'An Account of Assam' in pages 49-50 has given a clear picture of a few methods of corporal punishments of the offenders during the Ahom period. He recorded as follows: "The capital offences are treason, murder, rape, arson and voluntary abortion. Rebels are never excused; for other offences pardon may be purchased. Capital punishment extends to whole family of a rebel, parents, brothers, sisters, wives and children. Offenders are put to death in various manners, by cutting their throats, by impaling them, grinding them between two wooden cylinders, by sawing them asunder between two planks, by beating them with hammers, and by applying burning hoes to different parts until they die."
to be the collective responsibility of the people of the area and if they failed to do so by detecting or apprehending a criminal, a regular force was to be despatched from the headquarters for the purpose. Expenses for such despatch of regular force were realised by imposing collective fines on the inhabitants of the locality. This system proved unsatisfactory to both the rulers and the ruled. The system put the Choudhury in a position to become oppressor for realising as much revenue as the Choudhury could without infringing on the law of justice because mofussil police was left under Choudhury's control. No effective check was there to protect the ryots from possible extortion by any Choudhury, " in theory the Choudhury was to be elected by the people, but in practice not only did he bribe the people by the false promises and even by money, but he resorted to the same method among the subahs at Sadar station and this amount together with the revenue and a profit to himself were afterwards exacted from the ryots. Moreover, foreseeing the possibility of not being re-elected and determined to make as much (money) as possible during the period he exacted on all sides sometimes five or six times the real amount of rent collected. He had nothing to be afraid of the court of justice because he was in power of maintaining law and order in the locality concerned and the people had rarely took resort to Courts of law for the redress of their grievances. Civil cases were left to the local tribunals subject to the supervision of European Officials. But such supervision hardly took place. The mofussil courts were few and far between and the great accumulation of pending cases at Gahhati made it difficult to obtain speedy justice. It was reported that Sadar Courts were full of corruption. People had no trust in the Courts at Sadar. They preferred not to seek redress at these Courts but to digest the injustice, as presenting of a complaint was more injurious than putting up with the original cases.

21. Ibid., p. 16.
Thus it can be seen that neither the Company's administrative system of revenue collection nor the system of maintaining law and justice was good; in fact it was positively harmful to the people. Deplo- rable indeed was the condition all over Assam. In Central Assam settlements were made mainly with non-residents and, without considering resources of the ryots or of the country, innumerable extra cesses were imposed. And the situation became more deplorable with the abrupt change in demand of revenue from kind to cash. This change compelled the ryots to leave their holding and to find shelter in the adjoining hills as they had no ready money to meet the demand of revenue in cash due to insufficient marketing facilities. So also was the case in upper Assam where Khel system could not work successfully. For speedy collection of revenue Kheldars depended on the service of some petty agents who were mainly concerned with collecting as much revenue as they could. A considerable amount of revenue for the year 1826-27 and 1827-28 never reached the treasury, even if the amount deposited in treasury was not sufficient to meet the expenditure of the establishment. The ruthless extortion compelled the ryots to migrate to the Matak territory where taxation was nil or nominal.

Thus the already deplorable condition of Assam due to the Moamaria uprising and the Burmese invasions became more and more deplorable with the occupation of the land by the forces of the Company Raj. Its system of justice and revenue administration were arranged on the basis of 'want of farsight' as the Court of Directors viewed it later on.

Annexation of Upper Assam: It is seen that the administration of Company Raj over Lower Assam started as early as 1824 when the Company's
troops took Gauhati under their possession. But Upper Assam came under their possession in January 1825 only. Thus preliminary measures of administration were adopted in the course of the conquest. It started with the conquest of Gauhati and continued till the occupation of Rangpur by Colonel Richards in January 1825 which signalled the final expulsion of the Burmese from Assam. The Supreme Government congratulated Colonel Richards for his success against the Burmese by a letter. The very letter contained also the general instructions "for the temporary administration of Assam pending final decision of the Government regarding the disposal of the Country."

At the conclusion of the Yandaboo Treaty the Company became the unrivalled authority over Assam and the Calcutta Council faced the question of final disposal of the newly acquired country. Scott, the Agent, was asked to furnish his views on this important and political issue. On 15 April 1826 he submitted a lengthy memorandum to the Bengal Government. In his memorandum Scott proposed the restoration in Assam of the former Ahom monarchy on a tributary basis under the protection of the East India Company and alternately to retain Lower Assam as far as Biswanath under the direct administrative control of the Company, handing over the rest of the territory, excluding areas under the occupation of the Matakas, Khamptis and the Singphoes, to an Ahom prince. Scott also reminded the Bengal Government of the promise they had made to the people of Assam on the eve of the Anglo-Burmese conflict. As regards the selection of the candidate Scott held that Raja Chandra Kanta Singha should be elevated to the throne to be succeeded by Purandar Singha and his heirs. Scott pleaded that such restoration would solve many problems.

25. ADC, p.17.
26. AXA, p.31.
It would relieve the Bengal Government of the financial burden of administration of an unproductive territory; also "it would lessen tension of the frontier and contribute to its defence; it would establish British good faith, halt the process of annexation and conquest breaking down of the Indian Society; and above all it would solve the problem of providing suitable employment to the Ahom and other Assamese officials and nobles, thereby removing a major cause for unrest and rebellion. The Bengal Government found the proposal not acceptable as the proposal was to extend the Company's protection over an area, where potentiality in respect of revenue resources was yet to be completely ascertained. The Government did not approve of the proposal but Scott was again asked to review the whole issue and submit a fresh recommendation. Accordingly Scott had submitted a revised proposal by the end of the 1827.

Scott again recommended that Lower Assam be annexed permanently to the Company's territory while in Upper Assam, from Biswamth to the river Buridihing, a native dynasty should be established under an Ahom prince. According to him annexation of Upper Assam would be uneconomic as the major portion of the revenue of the area would be spent in providing pension to the members of the former royal family. Scott pointed out that retention of the Lower Assam would not give rise to much objection as the people of the area were well accustomed to foreign administration. They even regarded their Ahom Administrators strangers to their area. In fact Lower Assam had long been under the possession of the Mughols. Lower Assam was the latest acquisition of the Ahoms who did never take Lower Assam as an integral part of their kingdom, so also they did never trust the people of Lower Assam. The Governor-General-

27. DSNI, p. 131.
28. ADC, p. 18; PHA, p. 8; AXA, p. 31.
29. AXA, p. 31.
In Council did approve of Scott's proposal on 7 March 1828 relating to retention of Lower Assam permanently in view of its economic potentialities. Scott pointed out that Lower Assam would yield a revenue of rupees three lakhs a year. The Bengal Government also accepted his proposal of stationing an European Officer near the territories under the possession of the Mataks, the Kamptis and the Singpheas. But in respect of the question of restoration of Upper Assam to an Ahom prince, the Calcutta Council was not inclined to take a final decision without further study of the issue.

Thus for the time being entire Brahmaputra Valley, excluding Mataks, Kampti and Singphoe territories, was incorporated in the Company's dominions. The Governor-General-in-Council was of the opinion that as none of the Ahom princes had rendered any help to the Company in its endeavour to oust the Burmese from Assam, the Company was under no obligation to support their pretensions. But Calcutta Council did not block permanently the way for the restoration of Upper Assam as Scott proposed. The Council again asked Scott to review the question and submit his views. It took another seven years for final settlement.

From the above it is noticed that the Bengal Government was not inclined to restore any portion to any native prince. Had there been no rebellion by the Assamese nobles and princes for ousting the British, the Calcutta-Council would never been found agreeable to part with a portion of their newly conquered land and to finally settle the question of restoration of Upper Assam. Within a very short period since the conclusion of the Yandaboo Treaty it became clear to the Assamese people that the Bengal authorities were not willing to honour their

30. AXA, p. 33.
31. Ibid., p. 33.
own promise that Assam would be placed under a 'Government adapted' to the Assamese people. There arose a series of rebellions between 1828 and 1831, first being that of Gomdhar Kowarn. A detailed discussion on these rebellions will follow in the next chapter. Since 1828 to June 1831 nothing further was done in the direction of the restoration of Upper Assam. During the period rebellion after rebellion was spearheaded by the disaffected nobility of the land. Though these rebellions were nipped in the bud, these compelled the Calcutta-Council to think over the question of final disposal of Upper Assam. The council asked Scott to submit an elaborate report in respect of future administration of Upper Assam. Accordingly Scott submitted his report in June 1831. Scott in his report urged the Bengal Government to appoint an able European officer to "reside constantly at Sadiya with two companies of Light Infantry and 20 horses who with the militia maintained by the Barsenapati, Sadiyakhowa Gohain and Bisa Gaum would place at the officer's disposal a force of 800 men." As his prediction about rebellion became a reality, he became more and more inclined towards the restoration of a native dynasty. He again pointed out the advisability of restoring Upper Assam to a native prince. He was of the opinion that only the restoration of Upper Assam to a native prince would bring the spirit of intrigues to an end. Scott in his report remarked that "it would be unreasonable to expect that the Ahom nobility and the members of the royal dynasty whose predecessors ruled the territory for several centuries, would relinquish their ancient rights upon the appearance amongst them of a handful of strangers." It was not also possible to absorb all the nobility under the Government nor the revenue.

34. *ADC*, p.54.
of the area hardly met the administrative expenditure. Scott tried to impress upon the Council the urgency of a change observing that "an imperfect British administration, whether occasioned by a deficiency of European officers or by an adherence to custom that are incompatible with the spirit of our rule must be worse than a native one, which at least possesses a perfect knowledge of the laws, customs, and prejudices of its subject and an intimate acquaintance with their peculiar revenue system on which, if it is to be maintained in its present shape, so such depends."

Scott studied the problem from a the political and military viewpoint, but the Vice-President-in-Council, Sir Charles Metcalf, ignored the strategic point and reviewed the question only from the economic end. Metcalf could not see any logic in Scott's proposal of retaining protection of the frontier while handing over Upper Assam to a native prince. To him the Company Raj should not shoulder a responsibility which needed a huge expenditure in protecting an unprofitable and isolated tract around Sadiya while Upper Assam, the profitable tract was proposed to be transferred to a native prince. The Vice-President-in-Council even favoured to make over these tracts to Gambheer Singha of Manipur instead of installing a native prince in Upper Assam.

Though Governor-General Lord William Bentinck considered the whole issue from a utilitarian point of view, he did not find any logic in establishing Gambheer Singha's control over these tracts. He agreed with Scott on the point of retaining Sadiya frontier under the direct protection of the British Government. In respect of restoration of a native monarchy in Upper Assam Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General, came to the conclusion that "the native Government may be established

35. ADC., p. 55.
aided by the support and advice of a British officer. He was of the opinion that the "Ahom monarchy must have some "intrinsically good" thing otherwise it would not have been possible for them to rule a country for more than six centuries. Scott was asked to furnish a specific plan for restoration, and accordingly he submitted his proposal advocating that "the transfer of Central Assam to a native prince would offer such prospect of prosperity as would outweigh the objection raised by the Vice-President-in-Council. How restoration was really within sight. But at this juncture David Scott died at Cherapoonji on 20 August 1831. Due to his sudden demise the Government delayed its final decision in respect of restoration till October 1832. In the month of October 1832 Lord Bentick passed formal orders in favour of restoration. On Scott's death William Crocroft was temporarily placed in charge of the duties of the Agent. The Supreme Government did not think it wise to carry their project of restoration into effect till Robertson, Agent-Designate, took the charge. On 25 April 1832 Robertson joined his duties. He was asked to furnish his views on the question of restoration. Robertson's views on the matter were similar to those of Scott. But his reasons were something different from those urged by Scott. Robertson opined that the restoration was necessary only due to dearth of European officers available for frontier defence and administration of newly acquired country. In respect of selection of Purandar Singha as the best-suited candidate he put forward his reasons that Purandar Singha, on account of his distant proximity of relationship with the last head of the State, had no strong ground to claim anything from

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37. AXA2, p.110; PHA2, p.28.
38. BPG2, Sept. 2, No.2. as cited in PHA2, p.28.
39. AXA2, p.111.
40. ABR2, p.574; HA2, p.295.
41. ABR2, p.562.
* Lahiri records as Crawfurd. See AXA2, p.111.
42. ABR2, p.562.
the Company Raj. And, as such, even the offer of one-half of the kingdom, made by the Company Raj would be accepted by him as a boon. On the other hand, Robertson emphasised that Chandra Kant, due to his closed relationship with the last head of the State, would not be satisfied with one-half of the kingdom. He rather felt that he was unjustly deprived of the other half. So Robertson favoured Purandar Singha to be elevated to the throne in Upper Assam. The Governor-General did not accept Robertson's views regarding the dearth of European officers which compelled Scott to propose to set up a native dynasty and in respect of selection of a candidate, the Governor-General Lord Bentick was of the opinion that the criterion for selecting a candidate should be superiority of qualifications rather than proximity of relationship to the last head of the State. Ultimately the issue was decided not on legality but on expediency in favour of Purandar Singha who was considered "best fitted to be at the head of the State." Robertson held several interviews with Purandar Singha and having completed all the preliminaries he entered into a treaty with Purandar Singha on 2 March 1833 at Gauhati. On 9 March Purandar Singha started for Jorhat from Gauhati under the escort of a party of the 35th Regiment of Native Infantry. He arrived at Jorhat on 18 April 1833. On 24 April 1833 civil and revenue administration was handed over to him. On 28 April 1833 he was formally installed with 19 gunshots accompanied by a troops' parade in front of the palace. By this treaty the Company handed over to Purandar Singha Upper Assam extending from Burhat to the Dhansiri river. In return, Purandar Singha agreed to pay a tribute of fifty thousand rupees annually; to obey the directions of the Political Agent and to introduce

43. AXA, p. 112; ADC, pp. 63, 68, 70.
44. AXA, p. 114; ADC, p. 71.
45. BPC, 1832, Nov. 5, Nos. 4-5, as cited in PHA, p. 28; AAR, p. 563; HA, p. 297.
46. See Appendix No. 6.
more humane system of justice in consonance with principles of British jurisprudence. He also agreed to abolish 'sati' and check the consumption of opium in his territory. Further, he bound himself to surrender to the Agent on demand any fugitive who might have taken refuge in his territory. On the other hand, the Company Raj undertook to protect his territory from external aggression, but reserved the right to transfer his kingdom to other rulers or to resume control over the administration in the event of maladministration on the part of Purandar Singha.

Within short period the status of Purandar Singha was reduced to that of a jagirdar. By this time basing on Pemberton's Report on Manipur Cachar and Assam, the Governor-General himself doubted the correctness of some of his earlier findings. Pemberton's Report revealed that Upper Assam was worth having under the Company's direct charge. The Report effected a change in the hitherto indifferent attitude of the Company Raj towards their newly acquired territory. They considered the transaction with Purandar Singha a bad one and tried to make the best out of a bad bargain by reducing the status of Purandar Singha. The Bengal Government insisted on having an akrrylena (an agreement) from Purandar Singha conferring on him the administration of Jorhat Division of the Brahmaputra Valley by a sanad. Accordingly the treaty was recast in favour of an agreement and Purandar Singha had to sign it on 27 June 1833. Thus Purandar Singha was practically reduced to the status of a jagirdar.

Whatever the status, it concerned Purandar Singha little. From the very beginning of his reign he was found endeavouring to improve the administration either in respect of collection of revenue or in respect

47. *AXA*, p.115-16; *HBR*, pp.8-9; *AAR*, p.563.
of discharging speedy and efficient justice. Purandar Singha effected several reformatory measures in various directions. He revived, for appeasing nobles and other people of status, the old customs, traditions and institutions. He reorganised the Khels with specific boundaries; settlements were made with Khelar on commission basis for a period of four years; Khelars were required to stay within the Khel and also required to learn, read and write within three years, otherwise a Khelar was liable to be removed. With this aim in view at least one school in each Khel was started. To protect the ryots from the oppression of the Khelars, Khelars were required to issue receipts in confirmation of collection of revenue. Purandar Singha also effected certain judicial reforms as the Courts established by the British in Central Assam were of little use to the people due to onerous centralisation of the Courts at Sadar. For discharging speedy justice Khelars were invested with the power of trying criminal and civil cases to a certain extent. In criminal cases he was empowered to inflict penalty to the extent of imprisonment up to six months and in civil cases to impose fine to the extent of Rs. 10. He was also empowered to hear complaints against the corruption of Mofussil courts. Mofussil Courts were set up at Rangpur, Majuli, North Lakhimpur, Basa and Dayang to dispose of the minor cases. The court of the Barbaruah (which was at the level of a Magistrate's Court) at the Sadar was empowered to award penalty of imprisonment up to three years in criminal cases, and in civil cases penalty up to rupees five hundred. A scholar refers to the Barbaruah's fining capacity to the tune of rupees one thousand. Whatever the limit, the Barbaruah was empowered to decide cases of higher degree. The Sadar Court or the Supreme Court, composed of three judges

49. APB., p.195.
50. It is recorded by Barpujar Dr. HK., that the period was of three years. See PHA., p.32.
and the Raja as the president, was set up to act as the highest court of Judicature. Besides all these reformatory works Purandar Singha worked for improving the moral and material prosperity of his territory. He imposed the severe penalty of fourteen years' imprisonment for the offence of enslaveing any paika; to prevent corruption among the amalaha he provided adequate remuneration for the amalaha; he offered jungle lands to the dyote ryots rent-free for two years for increasing the acreage under cultivation. To encourage industrial activity Purandar Singha directed the Kheldars to receive products of the producers and encouraging commerce he abolished custom houses on the Brahmaputra to facilitate the free flow of goods. From all accounts it became clear that Purandar Singha left no stone unturned to improve the condition of his territory to enable himself to discharge his agreement with the Company Raj, both in respect of paying tribute in time and in respect of providing good administration to the subjects.

Inspite of his several works of utility and good Government he could not appease certain section of nobility who did not take kindly to Purandar's accession. They remained ever hostile to him. They thought that Chandra Kanta's claim to the throne was unjustifiably rejected. They regarded Purandar Singha more as a Bengali than an Assamese due to his long residence in Bengal. They were convinced that Purandar Singha had little sympathies with the aspirations of the Assamese people. They favoured Chandra Kanta Singha whom, they thought, the British unjustly deprived of his legitimate due. They organised Non-Co operation campaigns resulting in a great fall in the first year's revenue. Purandar Singha had also faced some other difficulties arising out of unset-

51. PHA., pp.31-32; AXA., pp.161-63; ADC., pp.101-03.
52. ADC., p.103.
53. AXA., p.164; ADC., pp.103-04.
54. AXA., p.161.
55. Ibid., p.166.
tled conditions of the country. As the question of restoration had been hanging for long seven years, no sincere attempts were made by the Company's officers to erase the effects of misrule and confusion that prevailed in the country on the eve of the Company's occupation. Thus it seemed that from the very beginning that an inexperienced youngman like Purandar Singha was ill equipped to deal with the problems on head.

Inspite of a low return of revenue collection Purandar Singha paid in the time his annual tribute which was no doubt a heavy burden imposed on him. The Court of Directors was also of the opinion that "it appears to us very doubtful that whether this chief will be able to pay an annual tribute amounting to the half of his gross revenue without involving himself in embarrassment." The second year of his reign also passed away smoothly. But from the third year difficulties appeared.

In the Matak territory, the ryots had to pay no tax or very little tax and, as such, there took place an exodus of a large number of people from the Central Assam, i.e., Purandar Singha's kingdom, to that of the Barsenapatil, the leader of the Mataks. The exodus was a continued one and, hence, it constituted a continued source of embarrassment to Purandar Singha, who had to face it from the very outset of his reign. As such exodus and no-rent campaigns of Purandar Singha's own subjects, especially of nobility, resulted in a heavy fall in revenue collection. Adam White, the Political Agent, fully realised the gravity of the situation and proposed that Purandar Singha's subjects, who would take refuge in the territory of the Barsenapatil, were to be taxed at the same or at a slightly lower rate as prevalent in Purandar Singha's territory. This was to check the exodus or at least to check the great fall in revenue return in Purandar's country. He also proposed to

56. ADC, p.73; PHA, p.28.
entrust a native officer on Government’s behalf to collect taxes from such emigrated ryots in Matak territory. Besides these proposals, the Agent also proposed to impose a proportional tribute on the Barasenapatā, the leader of the Matak. The Supreme Government turned down all such proposals with the result that the temptation of emigration remained there as before. In 1834 T.C. Robertson was succeeded by Francis Jenkins as the Commissioner and Agent to the Governor-General for Assam and North East of Rangpur. The new Commissioner was initially sympathetic to Purandar Singha. But this proved to be short-lived. Commissioner Jenkins realised the difficulties of Purandar Singha to govern a tract bounded in the east by the territory of the Barasenapatā where taxation was practically nil and on the west by the Company’s possession of Lower Assam where redress for any grievance was easily available. As such Jenkins agreed with Adam White, the Political Agent, that for the purpose of stopping exodus the Barasenapatā of the Matak was to be placed on the same tributary basis as applicable to Purandar Singha. But this did not materialise because Jenkins changed his mind due to the efforts of the Assamese nobles who were against Purandar Singha. Jenkins received a large number of anonymous letters from Assamese nobles containing allegations against Purandar Singha’s oppressive acts. Their repeated allegations made Jenkins believe that most of the allegations were true. All this had changed the earlier attitude of Jenkins towards Purandar Singha. As a result he began to favour resumption of Upper Assam.

In the beginning of 1836 a new settlement policy was adopted by the Company’s authorities in respect of Lower Assam where certain classes of people, namely, the fisherman, weavers and goldwashers, were
exempted from any taxation unless they held any land. But in Purandar Singha's territory such people were taxed at the rate which Scott had started few years ago. The new settlement policy in the British occupied areas turned things from bad to worse. The consequential result was that such people in large number began to migrate from Central Assam to Lower Assam where they found favourable terms for settlement and a great exodus took place. This reflected in return of revenue collection. Hitherto Purandar Singha could maintain his commitment of paying the tribute in time. But since 1835-36 arrears piled up. Purandar Singha attributed the default in payment to the transfer of Nadiuar, a productive area, to Darrang; to the withdrawal of civil and military establishment and mainly due to the emigration of his subjects to the Matak territory and to Company's possession of Lower Assam. He promptly brought the facts to the notice of the authorities. White, the Political Agent, appreciated the financial stringencies of Central Assam and observed that if Purandar Singha were allowed to continue his rule, he must have some concessions otherwise it was meaningless for Purandar Singha to continue as the king of Central Assam. Accordingly White, the Political Agent, proposed a reduction of the tribute from fifty thousand to thirty-five thousand rupees a year with the condition that Purandar Singha must fix pay fixed salaries to his subjects and abolish sura duties. But Jenkins while forwarding the proposal for reducing the amount of the tribute remarked that he could not recommend the reduction of tribute as his information in respect of causes of migration of the people from Central Assam to the Matak territory and to the Lower Assam was something different from that given by White. Jenkins assigned the cause of migration to the maladministration of Purandar Singha. The conflicting views of White and Jenkins compelled

59. *AKA*, pp. 169-70
60. *Ibid*, p. 175.
the Supreme Government to ask the latter to pay a personal visit to the territory of Purandar Singhaj and acquire personal knowledge of the condition that prevailed in the Raja's territory, as the Supreme Government found it difficult to agree with one view and reject the other. To gain a first hand knowledge of the conditions existing in the territory of Purandar Singhaj, Jenkins paid a visit to Upper Assam in the early part of 1838. He started his journey on 10 January 1838. In course of his journey he visited Biswanath, Gohpur, Kalabari, Majuli, Gaurisagar, Rangpur, Gorgaon, Borhat, Jaipur and Jorhat, the capital of King Purandar Singhaj. At Jorhat Jenkins stayed till the middle of March 1838.

He submitted his report in two parts known as the *Journal of A Tour in Upper Assam, 1838*. In his final report of 3 April 1838 Jenkins informed the Supreme Government that he found traces of a number of hitherto prosperous villages which had now been deserted because of the imposition of oppressive transit duties, exaction of undue services, want of military protection, wholesale corruption and inefficiency at the Court of justice, the cumulative result of all this being maladministration, all around the territory of Purandar Singhaj. At the same time Jenkins admitted that Purandar Singhaj had to rule the country under trying circumstances resulting from lower taxation in the Makar country and abolition of services of *Paika*, transit duties and Poll-tax in Lower Assam. As such Jenkins felt that Purandar Singhaj deserved sympathetic consideration and recommended resumption of not the whole territory but a part thereof stretching the whole of the north bank, Majuli and a tract between the Buridihing and Disang. The rest of the area with certain specific conditions was recommended to be allowed to remain under the rule of Purandar Singhaj free of any kind of tribute. But strangely enough Jenkins changed his mind overnight and reversed his view.

earlier recommendation presuming that Purandar Singha might not agree to have a bifurcated territory. On 4 April 1838 in a semi-official letter to Prinsep, the Secretary to the Government of India, Jenkins coloured Purandar Singha as "one of the worst characters, a rapacious miser, a Bengali by education and habits and, therefore, not acceptable to the Assamese." This letter sealed the fate of Purandar Singha.

On the receipt of this report the Vice-President-in-Council decided on complete resumption. They forwarded their decision, appending the semi-official letter of Jenkins to the Governor-General for confirmation. Accordingly, Governor-General Lord Auckland sanctioned absolute resumption. Jenkins was authorised to take necessary actions for resuming the administration of Upper Assam. On 16 September 1838 Captain White under the instruction of Commissioner Jenkins assumed charge of Upper Assam and placed it under two district officers designated as Principal Assistants, viz., Lieutenant Brodie and Vetesh with headquarters at Jorhat and Lakhimpur respectively after bifurcating Upper Assam into two districts, namely, Sibpur (later known as Sibsagar) and Lakhimpur. Purandar Singha was to retire with a pension of rupees one thousand per month. But he never accepted any pension nor acquiesced in the resumption. Purandar Singha and after him his son Kameswar Singha continued to make representations for restoration, but in vain. Thus came to end the rule of Purandar Singha, and Upper Assam was finally annexed to the Company's dominions.

Annexation of Cachar: As stated earlier, by the Treaty of Badarpur, concluded on 6 March 1824 Raja Govinda Chandra of Cachar placed

63. AKA., p. 183; ADC., p. 122.
64. AKA., p. 185.
65. Ibid., p. 187; ADC., p. 124; FHA., p. 36.
66. HR., p. 10; HA., p. 308.
himself under the protection of the Company Raj agreeing to pay an
annual tribute of rupees twenty thousand to the Company Government which
undertook to re-instate him in his fief with free internal administra-
tion. With the fate of Assam, the fate of Manipur, Cachar and Jayantiya
was also linked as their political status was covered by the second
Article of the Peace Treaty of Yandaboo which brought the Anglo-Burmese
war to an end. After the conclusion of the Treaty of Yandaboo, all the
potentates, with whom the Company Government had entered into diplo-
matic ties on the eve of the Anglo-Burmese war, were restored in their
respective kingdoms. Raja Govinda Chandra was re-instated in Cachar.
Haritikar was made the seat of his Government.

But very soon Govinda Chandra found himself in a sea of troubles—
internal and external. To understand his internal difficulties, it seems
pertinent to make a brief reference to the historical background of the
kingdom of Cachar. Raja Krishna Chandra of Cachar, who was the elder
brother of the present king, died in 1813. On the expiry of Krishna
Chandra, Govinda Chandra succeeded his brother on the throne of Cachar.
Late king Krishna Chandra had a table servant named Kohi Din who was
also known as Kahi Dss and Kacha Din. Becoming king Govinda Chandra
appointed Kacha Din to a high post in the northern hilly tract of his
territory where Kacha Din revolted and tried to establish an independent
kingdom of his own. However Govinda Chandra inveigled him into coming
to Dharampur and caused him to be murdered there. Kacha Din's son
Tularum who had been in Govinda Chandra's service, as Cauprase, found
himself insecure and fled to the northern hills and undertook the un-
accomplished mission of his late father for establishing an independent
principality in the northern hilly tract. Tularum repulsed all attempts

68. AXA, p.45; PR., p.197; PHA, p.38.
made by Govinda Chandra to reduce him. Thus Govinda Chandra in very early years of his reign lost the northern portion of his dominion to Tularam, son of Kacha Din from his wife Ratnamala, a Manipuri maid servant of the Kachari king. At this stage external trouble appeared in the arena. In the year 1818 Marjit Singha of Manipur invaded Cachar. Marjit's two brothers Chourjit and Gambheer Singha tracked the same path of Marjit and arrived at Govinda Chandra's dominion. These three Manipuri brothers thus made Cachar the arena of their political activities and individual rivalry against each other. They became successful in driving out Govinda Chandra from Cachar. Govinda Chandra was compelled to take refuge in the Company's territory (Sylhet). But the Manipuri brothers could not live in Cachar unitedly and peacefully. They established their supremacy over different parts of Cachar and remained ever ready to crush the other. Gambheer Singha kept his head a bit higher than the other two brothers. This compelled Govinda Chandra to seek the Company's help from for regaining his kingdom. He even sought Burmese help for this purpose. From the above it be seen that Govinda Chandra was gradually weakened by the continuous enmity of Tularam and of the Manipuri brothers. Though Govinda Chandra got himself re-instated in his kingdom with the interference of the Company Raj the northern portion of his dominion was still under the possession of Tularam and though the Manipuri brothers reluctantly ceded the territories under their possession in his favour due to the instrumentality of the Company Government the formidable Gambheer Singha did not give up his greed to grab Cachar. These were the circumstances under which Govinda Chandra started his second term.

69. HA2, pp.257-58; FR2, p.197.
70. AXA1, pp.45-49.
As soon as he was re-instated, Govinda Chandra had to face troubles from Tularam and Gambheer Singha as before. Besides this, he had to face trouble in paying the annual tribute of rupees ten thousand which had been fixed rather arbitrarily. It could be seen easily that troubles created by Tularam and Gambheer Singha on top of the depredations created by the Burmese and the raid of the Kukis made the condition of his country a most deplorable one. Thus he was very soon engulfed by a number of difficulties on various fronts.

The annual tribute of rupees ten thousand was fixed on the basis rather assumption that would be possible to raise revenue up to three lakhs of rupees as lands in Cachar were fertile besides being rich in timber and other forest products. But for reasons cited above, revenue collections fell down due to its deplorable conditions. The consequential result was that the annual tribute fell into arrears. But it was not the personal fault of Govinda Chandra. The distracted conditions of the country was responsible for this. Even Tucker, the Commissioner of Sylhet, admitted that "it would require years of peace and good management to place it in a condition capable of liquidating the tribute payable by the Raja." All the lands east of Bikamapur and Panchgram were thrown out of cultivation and a large number of cultivators were either killed or carried away. Thus the collection of revenue was very poor. Raja Govinda Chandra had to apply for remission of payment of tribute for the years 1825-26 and 1826-27. Scott, the Agent to the Governor-General, supported him on the ground that the Paramount Power could not afford sufficient protection to the people of Cachar and, as such, the necessary remission on the condition that Govinda Chandra was to construct a suitable road across his territory for facilitating smooth communication between Sylhet and Manipur.

Govinda Chandra did his utmost to keep faith. He reduced the number of Ministers and Judges by way of minimising the expenditure; he also withdrew their perquisites like rent-free grants. Every effort was made to realise the arrears due from the defaulters. To increase the return of revenue, additional taxes were imposed on the cultivation of poppy, fruits and vegetables, wearing of gold ornaments, riding on Palanquin, and the playing of music in marriages or festivals. Besides these he also tried to reorganise the administration by recruiting a number of outsiders mostly from Bengal. But this act of the Raja alienated the influential Kaohari people who found themselves in a position of losing their influence over their own land. Many of them left their country and migrated to Assam and even to Bengal.

After the conclusion of the Treaty of Yandaboo, the Manipur throne was offered to Gambheer Singha who, however, had to give up his Cachar possession with great reluctance. But Gambheer Singha did not easily accept the terms of losing his Cachar possession. He was in constant readiness to grab Govinda Chandra's territory. Thus he continued his endeavour to slice the Kachari kingdom. After the conclusion of the Treaty of Yandaboo, the Company Government was haunted with the apprehension of a fresh Burmese invasion. This was reflected in their early relations with native States like Cachar, Manipur, Matak Principality and with the frontier people. They regarded Gambheer Singha as a strong bulwark against the Burmese, and, as such, he was rewarded with Manipur. Gambheer Singha was also provided with fire-arms along with other means essential for maintaining a 3000 strong force. This the Company regarded as the minimum to repulse any Burmese attempt at invasion. It was even reported that the Company Government also indirectly encouraged Gambheer Singha to encroach on Govinda Chandra's dominion. Encouraged...
ged at high quarters and taking advantage of the rivalry of Tularam with Govinda Chandra and the deplorable economic condition of Cachar and the apathetic attitude of the influential people of Cachar towards their king, Gambheer Singha penetrated towards the end of 1827 into the most resourceful hilly tract of Cachar in the western bank of Barak; this was hitherto the boundary fixed between Cachar and Manipur. Further encroachments were also made and by 1828 Gambheer Singha claimed sovereignty over the area. But Govinda Chandra brought this matter to the notice of Tucker. He, however, choose to play a passive role in that he did not demand an explanation from Gambheer Singha for act of encroachment. This further encouraged Gambheer Singha. During 1828 he forcibly occupied the ilaka of Chandrapur, an area belonging to Govinda Chandra and settled Manipuris in the area. Govinda Chandra again appealed to Tucker who, finding the matter complicated, referred it to the Supreme Government at Calcutta. The Supreme Government asked Scott to look into the matter. Though Scott in his report opined in favour of Govinda Chandra, he pleaded for assignment of a small tract of land in Cachar to Gambheer Singha. The area was to be used by Gambheer Singha for settling a few Manipuris there so as to facilitate transport of military stores between Manipur and Cachar. The Supreme Government became convinced on Scott's reasoning and disallowed the claim of Gambheer Singha over the ilaka of Chandrapur. Scott succeeded in his endeavours. He prevailed upon Govinda Chandra to assign a definite tract of land measuring fifty Kulbah at Chandrapur on lease for fifteen years to Gambheer Singha for the purpose of erecting a magazine there. Accordingly an agreement was entered into on 15 July 1829 between the parties to that effect. Acquisition of Chandrapur on lease could not, however, quench the thirst of Gambheer Singha for more land.

75. AXA, pp.128-30; PB, p.198; ADC, pp.75-76.
Thus be managed to secure by dubious means another piece of land in the eastern part of Cachar. The local English authorities remained silent on this questionable acquisition by Gambheer Singha because this tended to serve their purpose better by completing the lines of communication between Cachar and Manipur. In fact Gambheer Singha never ceased his hostile activities against Govinda Chandra. His men, stationed at Chandrapur, were found to be engaged in regular atrocities and oppression over the Kacharis at the instance of their ruler Gambheer Singha. Thus, the danger overhanging Govinda Chandra from Gambheer Singha's ambitious ventures continued.

On the other hand, Tularam, who had been in possession of the northern hilly tracts of Cachar at the time of the conclusion of the Yandabo Treaty, challenged the authority of Govinda Chandra from within. In 1828 forty Sampongs of Kachari tribe, perhaps under the influence of Tularam, submitted a memorandum to the East India Company alleging that Govinda Chandra had violated the old usages of the country. They submitted that Ministers of the country as well as the king should be chosen from amongst the forty Sampongs and that Govinda Chandra forfeited their confidence. Though later it was proved that the Sampongs had no right to elect the king, yet the circumstances of the memorandum was utilised by Tularam to his advantage. Towards the end of 1828 Tularam, descending from Dharampur, committed a number of outrages and murders in the plains and retired unmolested to his hilly abode. After these successful raids, Tularam assigned the task of challenging Govinda Chandra to his two cousins, Govindaram and Durga Charan. Govindaram and Durga Charan prevented Govinda Chandra's officer from collecting revenue from Central Cachar. Ultimately, however, they were

76. AIAA, p.130.
77. Ibid., pp.125-26; FR., p.197; ADG., p.77.
repulsed by the men of Govinda Chandra. But soon thereafter Govindaram regrouped his forces and inflicted a crushing defeat on Govinda Chandra's men. As a result, collection of revenue from the area of Central Cachar came to a halt. Govinda Chandra was thus compelled to seek help from the Company Government.

The success over the men of Raja Govinda Chandra blinded Govindaram to the extent of proving a traitor to Tularam who had reared him from infancy to manhood. Govindaram usurped the authority of Tularam compelling him to take refuge in the neighbouring State of Jayantia. Tularam became successful within the same year (1829) in recovering his lost possession with the aid of the Manipuri king Gambheer Singha. Govindaram was defeated and driven out to Dharampur where he acknowledged allegiance of king Govinda Chandra. At this stage in response to the appeal made by Govinda Chandra the Supreme Government directed Scott to effect a compromise between Tularam and Govinda Chandra. Scott tactfully effected an agreement between the two with the condition that Govinda Chandra was to recognise Tularam as his Senapati assigning to him the formal charge of hilly areas that he held under his possession; and in return Tularam was to refrain from future encroachments and to behave peacefully. Accordingly an agreement was concluded on 28 July 1829 (13 Sravana, 1236 B.E.) to that effect. Govinda Chandra accepted the terms and conditions. Yet he could not forgive Tularam whom he regarded as a usurper. To undo Tularam he entered into secret agreement with Govindaram and Durga Charan and secretly offered them a number of fire-arms. But Govinda Chandra did not live long to witness the results of his secret agreement.

78. AXA., p.126;
79. Ibid.; PR., pp.197-98; ADC., p.77.
80. AXA., p.127; PR., p.198; ADC., p.78.
81. AXA., p.127.
There was little rapport between Govinda Chandra and the local officers of the Company Raj. Govinda Chandra was childless and they created troubles for him even in the matter of adopting a child. Govinda Chandra incurred the displeasures of the Company Officials because some of his measures affected the commercial interests of the Company rather adversely. Govinda Chandra was very strict in the matter of realisation of custom duties. To enhance the revenue potentialities, he adopted several measures such as his monopoly in rice trade and imposition of heavy transit duties. It was these that adversely affected the commercial interests of the Company, especially those of the Sylhet merchants. Naturally, therefore, the alien merchants pleaded with the Supreme Government to make room for the complete annexation of Cachar. They did not find any justification in keeping Cachar under Raja Govinda Chandra whom they regarded a tyrant, unpopular and weak; further Govinda Chandra was quite advanced in age having no issue to inherit him. They feared that there would be chaos after Govinda Chandra's death centering round the question of succession. The Supreme Government tried to induce Govinda Chandra through Tucker to give up his Raj on favourable term and not to adopt a child to inherit him. On failure of Tucker the task was entrusted to Scott. On the issue of adoption, Scott had a different mind. He opposed on religious ground the idea of inducing Govinda Chandra not to adopt any son to inherit him. For his part Govinda Chandra was determined to adopt a son as early as possible in order to remove the possibilities of quarrels for succession after his death. Govinda Chandra hurriedly submitted a proposal to the Supreme Government for allowing him to adopt a child. At this stage while negotiation was going on for entering into a new arrangement Govinda Chandra was murdered on 24 April 1830 by a Manipuri assassin at the instance of Gabheer Singh. On the night of 24 April 1830, a band of
Manipuris acting in league with the Raja's Manipuri body-guards raided the palace of the king, hacked him to pieces and set fire to the palace. At first Tularan was suspected of having committed the murder. Scott was asked to institute an inquiry which revealed that Gambheer Singh, finding that Scott was not against the adoption of a child by Govinda Chandra and noticing a change in the attitude of the Supreme Government towards the adoption question, feared that the proposed adoption would foil his ambition of grabbing Cachar and, therefore, a conspiracy was hatched. Accordingly Gambheer Singh "entered into a conspiracy with Bidyananda, the British Vakil at the court of Govinda Chandra, Ramgovinda, Bidyananda's Muktair, one Balaram Havildar, an officer of Govinda Chandra, and his (Gambheer Singh's) own Bhandari, Gourshyan, to put an end to the life of Govinda Chandra". Ramgovinda and Balaram were convicted for transportation to Tenasserin coast while Gourshyan was not apprehended because "that would have been tantamount to the public accusation of his own master Gambhir Singh".

After the murder of Govinda Chandra, a proclamation inviting the claimants to the throne of Cachar was issued by the Paramount Power. As anticipated there appeared several claimants to the Cachar throne. It was claimed by Rani Indraprova, the eldest queen of late Govinda Chandra, by Gambheer Singh who preferred an alternative proposal of having Cachar on lease for number of years. Rani Indraprova's claim was rejected on the ground that she was "not acceptable to the immigrants Hindus on account of her previous marriage with Krishna Chandra," brother of Govinda Chandra. Tularan claimed the throne tracing his descent from the royal family of Cachar. His claim was rejected forthwith as the Kachari people of the plains did not accept his descent from

83. ANA, p. 127.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., pp. 140-41; PHA, pp. 38-39.
from the royal family and looked upon him as of "low origin" from a Manipuri Slave girl by a Khidmadgar in the service of the Kachari king. The claim of the forty Sampongs was rejected on the ground that there was no instance of free and fair election of the king by the Sampongs in the past history of Cachar. Gambheer Singha's claim was also not acceptable as it was felt impolitic to allow Gambheer Singha to profit by a crime which had been committed at his instigation.

Now there remained only two alternatives, either to annex the plains of Cachar to the Company's dominions or to make it over to Gambheer Singha on lease. But the local authorities were against the arrangement of letting out Cachar to Gambheer Singha. They feared that such an arrangement would place the helpless people of Cachar at the mercy of a cruel chieftain. In absence of any legitimate heir to the late Raja Govinda Chandra and as all of the local officer, except Scott who pleaded to keep Cachar under Rani Indraprova, were unanimous in recommending the annexation of the plains of Cachar to the Company's dominions, the Governor-General-in-Council ordered annexation to be carried on. Accordingly by a proclamation of 14 August 1832 the plains of Cachar were annexed to the dominions of the Company. Suitable provisions for the Ranis of the murdered king in the shape of cash allowance and rent-free grants of the total value of Rs. 3875 were made and Tularam was confirmed in his hilly possession that had been assigned to him by Govinda Chandra due to Scott's instrumentality. Thus his dominion was disposed of to the advantage of the Company Raj.

86. AXA, pp. 140-41; PR, p.198.
87. AXA, p.142.
88. PHA, p.36; AXA, pp.138-39.
89. Ibid., p.39; HA, p.304; HBR, p.13; PR, p.198. AXA, p.142; ADC, p.86.
90. AXA, p.142; ADC, p.86; HA, p.305.
On the annexation of the plains of Cachar the question of the northern hilly tracts, which were under Tularam, engaged the serious attention of the local officials of the Company as well as of the Supreme Power at Calcutta. Like Govinda Chandra, Tularam was not destined to rule his territory peacefully. After the death of Govinda Chandra his queen Indraprova carried on the mission of destroying Tularam with the help of Govinda Ram and Durga Charan. Govindaram, aided by the Rani Indraprova, made two successful incursions into the territory of his uncle Tularam—one in the summer of 1830 immediately after the death of Govinda Chandra and the other in October 1831. As a result Tularam practically lost the western part of his kingdom to Govindaram who began to erect stockades at strategic points on the hills of the Central Cachar which was to the verge of complete ruin. Captain Fisher, who had been placed in charge of Central Cachar, put forward a number of remedies to effect a complete stop to these hostilities. The Supreme Government accepted some of his suggestions such as removing Govindaram and Durga Charan from the Rani's service. The Government also took steps to keep them faraway from Cachar and to place the Ranis under the guardianship of Parbati Singha, the brother of queen Indraprova. But the Supreme Government disapproved of his suggestion for protecting Tularam as a direct tributary chief of the Company Government. It is seen in the records that though Tularam got no direct help from the Supreme Government as desired by Captain Fisher, he got all possible help from local officers to protect his person and his possession. But at this stage an incident took place which diverted the course when things were brightening up for him. Towards the end of September 1832 Tularam made a descent upon Dharampur which was under the control of a native officer, placed by the Company. He burnt down a number of villages and carried away several individuals. Two of the cap-

91. ADC, p. 96; AXA, p. 194.
92. AXA, p. 196.
atives Sonaram and Mathur, were killed. Robertson at once caused the arrest of Tularam to stand his trial on the charge of murder. On instructions from the Supreme Government the proceedings against Tularam were withdrawn as he was an independent hill chieftain not liable to be tried by the British Magistrate. On enquiry it was revealed that the murdered men were his subjects and the spot where they were put to death was within his jurisdiction also. Moreover it was found that the murdered men had committed gross and unprovoked outrages against Tularam. But as his aggression amounted to a violation of the stipulation of the Treaty of 1829 he was liable to forfeit his possession. However, the British Government was found reluctant to resume his entire territory. It was only interested in resuming the strategic Western portion of his territory as it was the focal point of Assam, Manipur and Sylhet. It was the meeting ground of four principalities, namely, Assam, Sylhet, the Khasi Hills and Manipur. Taking advantage of the popular desire to have British administration, as revealed to Captain Fisher and Jenkins, who had been in tour in the area for ascertaining people's sentiment and Tularam's own responsibility of forfeiture due to his aggression, the British Government thrust upon Tularam a new treaty, concluded on 16 October 1834. Under this treaty, he had to give up all the western portions of his territory, retaining only the eastern hilly portion bounded on the south by the Mahur river and the Naga Hills, on the north by Jamuna and Doyang, on the east by the Dhansiri and on the west by the Doyang. Tularam agreed to pay a tribute of four pairs of elephants' tusks weighing each 70 lbs. which were later commuted for a cash payment of £.490/- and in return he was granted a monthly pension of £.50/-. He was not given the title of Raja. His other powers

94. FR: p.198. See Appendix No.6.
were also curbed. The British Government reserved for itself the right of placing their military posts anywhere within Tularam's territory and Tularam had to furnish the troops with provisions and labourers on payment if the movement of troops took place through his land. Tularam had also to abide by the treaty terms of not indulging in military operations/against any neighbouring chiefs without permission from the British Government. As these were viewed unfavourable to Govindaram and Durga Charan, provision for their pensions was also made subject to their stay in south Cachar, i.e., in the plains of Cachar.

Though freed from the intrigues of his cousins, Tularam very soon had to face a new danger in the shape of incursions of the Angami Nagas in the south east of his territory. It was recorded that hill-tribes like Agamis and others were in the habit of collecting their provisions of food, salt, dried-fish etc., from the area in question. They did no wrong if they were allowed to collect their provisions undisturbed otherwise they forcibly carried off whatever they could on their way. Tularam proved himself a failure to protect his people from the incursions of the hill-tribes. As a result the Kachari population of the area came to verge of ruin. The latter part of his life thus became a miserable one. He could not bear the burden of administration on any further due to his infirmity and old age. In 1844 he handed over the charge of administration to his sons Mukulram Barman and Brajanath Barman having obtained proper sanction from the Company Government. Tularam died in October 1861. On his death Captain Butlar, who was in charge of Cachar, proposed the resumption of Tularam's territory only on the ground that the arrangement entered with him in 1834 was a life tenure only. But Dalhousie, the Governor-General, did not accept his

96. APD., p.98; AXA., p.198; HA., p.305.
97. ADG., p.140.
98. Ibid., p.141; AXA., p.212.
proposal. The Governor-General observed that the arrangement was not limited to life tenure and issued instruction to confirm his sons to their parental possession subject to the condition that the tribute should be paid regularly and British troops be assisted in their march through their territory. Accordingly Tularam's sons were confirmed to the fief of their father. But the two sons of Tularam proved themselves unequal to the situation because of the abduction of the wife of Nakulram by his younger brother Brajanath. They could not offer proper protection to their people.

In the year 1853 a serious outrage was committed by the Nagas within their possession killing 85 persons, carrying off at least another 115 and injuring a good number of people and plundering several villages. To avenge it Nakulram without taking prior permission from the British Government invaded the country of the Nagas and in doing so he mistakably invaded another Naga village which had given him no wrong. In this encounter Nakulram lost his life. His invasion of the Naga village without prior permission from the British Government was regarded by the local officers as a violation of the arrangement entered with them. This time the Agent also supported the local officers and even A.J. Moffatt Mills, the Judge of Sadar Dewani Adawlat, who had been touring Assam at this time also favoured resumption when he was asked to furnish his comments on the issue. Ultimately the Governor-General recommended the resumption. Accordingly Tularam's territory was annexed to the British dominions in 1854 assuring protection to the people against the Naga incursions. Some pensions were provided to the members of Tularam's family. Thus the entire territory of Cachar came under the protection of the Company.

99. [Ref.]
After the annexation of Cachar, Lt. T. Fisher of the Survey Department, who was in charge of the District, was appointed the Superintendent of Cachar. He was subordinate to the Commissioner of Assam and Agent to the Governor-General for the North East Frontier of Bengal.

Fisher had his headquarters at Dudpatili (Dudpatil), near the present Silchar town. In 1836 the district of Cachar was transferred to the Dacca Division with the change of designation of its administrative Officer from Superintendent to Deputy Commissioner. By Act V of 1836 it was placed under the High Court of Bengal for Judicial matters and as for revenue matters, it was brought under the Board of Revenue. Being put on the head of the district administration Fisher's first important task was to check the Kuki inroads which he did by establishing Manipuris along the frontier line. These people were supplied with firearms to a limited extent. This worked wonderfully well. Fisher was invested with the powers of a Magistrate, Collector and a Civil Judge.

It was noticed that even before the invasion of the Burmese a considerable number of Hindu and Muslim immigrants came to Cachar from the adjoining districts of Bengal attracted by the fertility of the soil. A tolerant administration in Cachar allowed the immigrants to follow their own customs and usages and establish their institutions. The immigrants favoured a State within a State, as it were. A good number of Kachari people including members of the royal family embraced Hinduism and showed leniency in many cases towards the customs and usages of the immigrants. Thus when the British annexed Cachar it was found that virtually two distinct systems of administration one of the immigrants and the other of the Kachari people, operated side by side.

101. PHA, p.39; HAs, p.305; DCC, p.87.
102. DC, p.87.
103. HA, p.305.
104. Ibid.
The orthodox institutions of the Kacharis included officers like the Barabhandari (Chief Law-man or Prime Minister), the Patrasl (Ministers), the Senapati (Commander-in-Chief) and the Rajpandit (Chief Priest). The political and economic units of the immigrants were known as Khel having for its members, unlike that of the Upper Assam, people from all castes and creeds—Bengali Hindus, Muslims, Nagas, Kukis and even some Europeans. They all had certain common objectives. Mukhteat was the collector of revenue from a Khel and in return he was granted rent-free grants and empowered to confine and punish the defaulters. "Group of Khels were joined together under a larger unit called Rai, over each was placed an elective representative with various designations like Choudhury, Maiumdar, Laskar, Barabhuive, Chota-Ehuive etc., all according to social status and importance of the Unit, of which he was the representative!"

Fisher tried to introduce as minimum changes as possible in the administration in the given situations. Former functionaries were retained in their respective offices and their powers and privileges as were withdrawn by the king Govinda Chandra were restored. Due to low return in revenue collection, Fisher came to the conclusion that people from adjoining districts were to be induced to immigrate into Cachar since he thought that depopulation caused by the Burmese and Manipuri depredations and unsettled conditions of the country was the cause of poor collection of revenue. To secure people from districts like Dacca, Mymenshingh, Tippera he issued circulars through the respective officers to the effect that lands in Cachar were to be given in settlement on favourable terms and conditions. Keeping this in view, he abolished a majority of river Ghats retaining only a few hill-ghats at which duties were levied on exportable goods at a moderate rate. But agricultu-

107. SAA., pp. 397-98. (vol. 11).
108. ADC., p. 99.
rural products were completely exempted from taxation. He also abolished monopolies in the trade of bael-nuts, timber, salt, cotton, etc.

In 1832 Fisher with the approval of the Supreme Government introduced in Cachar the same rate of revenue as was prevalent in the adjoining Bengal districts. The rate was Rs.5-2-0 (Rupees five, two annas and zero Paise) per kulibah of arable land exempting bari and chara (site for house and Garden lands) lands. This was done to induce the Bengali people to rush into Cachar. But here Fisher had committed a mistake by imposing the rate prevalent in Sylhet because the people of Cachar were not as resourceful as the people of Sylhet had been. Thus his new rate imposed heavy burden on the people of Cachar. The consequential result was accumulation of huge arrears of revenue. Thus in 1838 his successor Major J.C. Burns with the direction from the Board of Revenue had to lower the rate to Rs.3/- per hal for cultivation of lands. This time chara lands were also covered under taxation but bari lands remained rent-free as before. The settlement made by Burns was to last for a period of five years only.

In the year 1841 a fresh survey of the district was done under Lieutenant Thuillier. The new survey brought more lands under assessment and on the expiry of the earlier term, a new settlement for fifteen years was made retaining the previous rate for arable lands and bringing the bari lands under assessment. The chara and bari lands were also assessed at the rates varying from Rs.3/- to Rs.2/-. Jungle lands were assessed at the rate of Rs.1-8-0 per hal allowing exemption benefit for the first five years. By this time finding the agency of Mukhtear expensive it was replaced by three salaried Thsildars having their respective headquarters at Silchar, Katigora and Hallakandi.

109. SAA, p.416.(Vol II)
110. Ibid., p.420.
In the system of judiciary Fisher also tried to effect minimum changes. Yet some changes took place in the judicial administration on the occupation of the British. Before the annexation there was in Cachar no fixed code of law. During the Kachari rule four Patras or Ministers formed a court of justice. Their findings were reported to the king who pronounced the judgement basing on the recommendations made. After the British occupation Magistrates were empowered to exercise the powers of a Zilla Magistrate and to try minor criminal cases not involving sentences of imprisonment for more than three years with the help of the jury. Offences of a heinous nature were to be referred to the Court of the Agent to the Governor-General. In deciding cases "the spirit and practice of the Regulation in force in Company's territories were followed." Fisher's recommendation was to continue the existing procedures with least modifications, which were deemed extremely necessary, in deciding cases in respect of original inhabitants of the land such as the Cacharis, the Kukis, the Manipuris and the Nagas. The Supreme Government modified his recommendation in the way that no jury was to be summoned except in cases of grievous nature involving sentences of imprisonment for not less than two years. Fisher further recommended that the administration of justice should be conducted in the same manner as was done in the zilla courts basing on Hindu and Mohammedan laws as modified by such local usages and customs. But the Vice-President-in-council allowed him some degree of discretion in the cases of objectionable and impracticable local usages and customs. Within a short period it was noticed that the changes affected the life of the country to a great extent. Pemberton wrote in 1835-" on the both banks of Surma from Badarpur to Banskandi villages had been established and the plains which, six or seven years ago, were wholly deserted and covered with

reads, now present a scene of newly awakened industry and broad belt
of as fine and varied cultivation as can be found in any part of Bengal."

The same author further wrote—"if we look to its" (annexation
of Cachar)"effect upon the inhabitants of the country, the proofs of
benefit are seen in re-peopled villages, rapidly extending cultivation
and an increasing demand for all those articles which contribute to
individual comfort, and in ability of purchase which, is a very unequi-

vocal proof of growing prosperity."

Annexation of Jayantia: It has already been stated that when the
Burmese demanded allegiance from the Jayantias, the Jayantia king was
compelled to enter into a defensive treaty with the British acknowle-
dging allegiance to the Company. By the 2nd Article of the Treaty of
Yandaboo the new status had been recognised. Raja Ram Singh was duly
confirmed in his possession.

On the conclusion of the Anglo-Burmese war it was observed th-
at the British had an unsatisfactory bargain in taking the responsibili-

ty of protecting Jayantia without imposing any provision for demanding
annual tribute from the king of Jayantia while he had, as Fisher view-
ed, sufficient resources to pay a tribute. The king of Jayantia was
simply to acknowledge the Company's supremacy and to assist the Compa-
y's troops in expelling the Burmese. At the time of entering into a
treaty in March 1824 Scott had the impression that the Jayantia would
be a great help to the Company against the Burmese. But the Jayantias
disappointed him by their poor performance against the Burmese as well.

113. Mh., p. 305.
114. EB., p. 218.
115. Ibid., p. 220.
116. AAR., pp. 514, 550; AXA., pp. 50-57.
117. AXA., p. 145.
118. FRA., p. 40.
as against the Khasis. Thus Scott's successor Robertson from the very beginning of his tenure proposed to reshape the unsatisfactory treaty in favour of the British.

After the conclusion of the Yandaboo Treaty Raja Ram Singh began his reign in a cordial atmosphere. Though the local officers were not satisfied because of the non-insertion of any provision of any provision in the treaty relating to payment of tribute, yet this cordial atmosphere continued till 1831 when an incident took place breaking the period of amity. It was reported that two British subjects, Banu and Madhav had been apprehended and dragged towards frontier by some Jayantias with the alleged intention of sacrificing them before the Goddess Kali. But their lives were saved. Banu was rescued by some cowherds while Madhav himself somehow managed to escape. Cracroft, the interim successor of Scott, made severe remonstrance to the Raja of Jayantia. According to Gait, Mackenzie and Pemberton recurrence of attempts to kidnap British subjects for the purpose of sacrificing before the Goddess Kali and failure on the part of the king in punishing the offenders or in surrendering the offenders to the British officials were the main causes of annexation. But it will be seen subsequently that these inspired reports were not entirely correct, because annexation was made in the time of Rajendra Singh. During the period of his reign, only one incident of this nature took place and offenders were surrendered to the British officers. In the year 1821, 1827 and in January 1832 attempts were made to kidnap the British subjects from Sylhet though the king of Jayantia had agreed as early as early as 1821 not to allow repetition of such mal practice.

In 1821, some persons from the State of Jayantia were detected in the
act of kidnapping British subjects for the purpose of sacrificing them at the shrine of Kali. The offenders were suitably punished and the Raja was warned that repetition of such offence would be followed by the confiscation of his territory. A few month later since the incident of January 1832, four British subjects were seized and of them three were sacrificed before the Goddess Kali at the instance of Sohha Singh, Raja of Gova, a feudatory chief to the king of Jayantia. The fourth captive escaped and narrated the incident to Robertson, who disliked the treaty which bestowed favours and protection to the Raja of Jayantia without the obligation of payment of tribute. Robertson on receipt of the news addressed a letter of remonstrance to the King of Jayantia on 3 September 1832. In response Raja Ram Singh assured a full enquiry into the matter.

At this stage Raja Ram Singh died and was succeeded by his seventeen year old grand-nephew Rajendra Singh. Here Robertson found an opportunity to improve the English position by obtaining an annual tribute from the Raja of Jayantia and proposed to the Government of Bengal the imposition of an annual tribute of Rs.10,000/- on the Raja of Jayantia proving for the renewal of the earlier treaty with the stipulation of payment of an annual tribute of by the Jayantia king. In support of his proposal Robertson had advanced his reasons that the previous treaty enacted with Raja Ram Singh was of a personal nature and, as such, with the expiry of Raja Ram Singh, the new ruler need not

121. "One of the culprits admitted that human sacrifices had been annually offered for at least ten years, in the hope that the sister of the Raja might, through the intercessions of the Goddess Kali, be blessed with offspring. The princess was always present on the occasion of each sacrifice, and bathed her person in the blood of the victim, whose throat was cut by the officiating priest." See DG(A), Vol.II, p.32.
123. It was Chuttur Singh in PR, p.221.
124. AXA, p.147.
125. PHA, p.40.
be allowed to have the benefit of that treaty. The Vice-President-in-Council accepted his proposal and instructed him to materialise his idea of enacting a new treaty. Accordingly Robertson met the young Raja and his ministers on 25 May 1833 and hinted that the treaty be renewed with the obligation of either paying an annual tribute of Rs. 10,000/- or the cession of the tract known as the "Seven Banks" to the British as a price for offering protection. The new Raja and his Dewan were not prepared for accepting such a departure from the established norms. They pleaded that without consulting the Dalois, the heads of small republics, component principalities of the Jajantia kingdom, the king had no right to agree to such a proposal and asked for time to reconsider the matter. But Robertson was impatient and called for immediate action. He informed the Raja that if the proposal for proposed treaty were not accepted, he would be de-recognised; further, that, he would be regarded as only in-charge of the estate of his deceased relative. Robertson also advised the Supreme Government to withhold recognition until Rajendar Singh accepted the terms. The Governor-General-in-Council following his advice issued orders that "Rajendra Singh be not recognised as the Raja until he binds himself to contribute towards the general defence of the frontier."

During the pendency of these proceedings, three British subjects were sacrificed in August 1832. Robertson blamed it upon the young Raja in order to browbeat him into submission. It was alleged that the Raja of Gova committed the crime at the instance of Rajendra Singh when he was the heir apparent. The purpose of raking up an old incident was all too clear; it was designed to force Rajendra Singh to renew the treaty with onerous conditions. Robertson sent reminder after

128. Scott warned in 1821 that repetition of the practice of human sacrifice in future would be followed by annexation of the territory.
reminder to Rajendra Singh to apprehend the offenders and to surrender Sobha Singh, the Chief of Gova, to him. As no reply from the king of Jayantia was received within time, Robertson came to believe that Raja Rajendra Singh was harbouring Sobha Singh and proposed to the Supreme Government to remove the king of Jayantia from the throne on his failure to arrest and surrender the criminals. The Supreme Government did not want to take a hasty decision without further enquiry, which was subsequently carried out by Captain Jenkins who reported that the guilt of the Raja in this matter was not conclusively proved. In January 1834 Rajendra Singh appealed to the Governor-General pleading that as his country was a small one and most of his subjects rendered personal service instead of paying cash revenue, he was not in a position to pay any tribute to the Company. In March 1834 Robertson was replaced as the Agent by Captain Jenkins who took a balanced view regarding the matter of renewing the treaty. He disapproved of the proceeding to force a treaty on Rajendra Singh by devious means. Thus he proposed that as the Chief of Gova had been implicated in the sacrifice of the British subjects, the Supreme Government should only penalise the offending principality of Gova and not the suzerain authority. But the Supreme Government was of the opinion that so long as the Jayantia king pretended to be the sovereign of Gova, he must be held responsible for the offences committed by the people of Gova. They asked Jenkins to inform the Raja of Jayantia that in case of his inability to punish his vassal, the Chief of Gova, the Supreme Government would treat Gova as severed from the dominion of Jayantia and would take necessary action in the matter. Accordingly on 28 May 1834 Jenkins served notice on Rajendra Singh to apprehend the offender, to

129. AXA, p.149.
130. PHA, p.41.
131. Ibid.
132. AXA, p.152.
pay the tribute demanded and, to renew the treaty. In response to it the king of Jayantia gave his best assurances but in respect of paying the tribute he pleaded his inability as before.

At this stage a fresh cause of dispute arose. Raja Ram Singh had a Chouki at Chaparmukh for levying tax on goods passing through it. The Chouki was located on the southern bank of the Kapili which was the boundary between Assam and Jayantia. It was alleged that the collectors of the Jayantia Raja practiced extortion which sometimes led to violence. Scott had raised the question of the propriety of maintaining Chouki at all and demanded its removal. But Raja Ram Singh expressed his inability to remove the Chouki and requested Scott not to press the question. The matter remained unsettled till the time of Jenkins. He proposed to the Supreme Government that the rights of the Raja of Jayantia be purchased in case the Supreme Government admitted the propriety of the Raja in having established the Chouki. From this it became clear that Jenkins's and his predecessor's main concern was to protect trade interest and not to establish the rights of ownership over the spot on which the Chouki was located. Thus the contention of Gait, Mackenzie and Pemberton that the Raja of Jayantia did not comply with the demand of removing the unauthorised Chouki was not correct. They seized upon it as a major cause of grievance affecting the relationship between the Company and the Raja of Jayantia. The Supreme Government wanted further enquiries in this respect and did not insist on the removal of the Chouki.

At this stage the young Raja of Jayantia made an undiplomatic request in vain for some territories from Assam as a reward for the services rendered in expelling the Burmese and quelling the Khasi.

133. AXA, p.154.
134. HA, p.306; PR, p.221; HGRWFR, p.218.
135. AXA, p.155.
uprising. He was informed that the restoration of Raja Ram Singh was sufficient reward for his little assistance. This caused further deterioration in his relation with the Company. At last Rajendra Singh surrendered to Jenkins the four offenders in connection with the human sacrifices. Captain Jenkins confirmed the surrender of the offenders in a letter addressed to C.E. Trevelyon, Deputy Secretary, Political Department, Fort William. Strangely enough such an important event missed the notice of Gait. Following the surrender of the alleged culprits it appeared Rajendra Singh would now concede the main demand relating to burdensome renewal of the treaty. Six months had elapsed but nothing of the sort happened. Then suddenly in March 1835 Rajendra Singh was informed of the annexation of his entire plains territories. It was on 15 March 1835 that Captain Lister took possession of Jayantiapur, the Capital of Jayantia Raj kingdom at the head of two Companies of the Sylhet Light Infantry. Gova was also annexed a few weeks later. Deprived of the productive plains possessions, Rajendra Singh in disgust gave up his unproductive hilly territories as well. The plain portion including Jayantipur was joined to Sylhet, Gova to Nowgong while hilly tracts were added to the Khasi Hills under a Political Officer with his headquarters at Jowai. Although the king was found wanting in offering any resistance to the forcible annexation, the hill tribes of Jayantia rose in rebellion. However, this was eventually suppressed. The alien regime adopted a cautious attitude to the hill tribes, no revenue was imposed on them in order to neutralise their oppositions. Rajendra Singh appealed for restoration of his Raj belatedly expressing his willingness to pay a reasonable tribute. But his prayers were rejected. A monthly pension of Rs. 500/- was sanctioned to the Raja who retired to Sylhet.

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136. AAA, p.156.
139. HA., p.307.
140. Ibid.
The action of the Governor-General-in-Council in the form of the attempted imposition of a tribute and failing that, the seizure of Rajendra Singh's territories were viewed with disfavour by the Court of Directors at Home (London) at least for the sake of record. Now that annexation had already been completed, the Court of Directors directed the Governor-General to treat the Raja of Jayantia with every reasonable indulgence and guard him against over-assessment. All this showed but the two faces of imperialism. It was a curious system of administration affording an example of the tail wagging the dog, as it were.

Relation with Frontier Peoples: Annexation of Their Territories:
On their occupation of Assam the Bengal Government appointed David Scott as Agent to the Governor-General for Assam and Commissioner of Rangpore. Scott was also to take necessary steps for establishing relations with the frontier people. Scott was in favour of annexation of Lower Assam to the British dominions, restoration of Upper Assam to an Ahom prince and establishment of a British protectorate for frontier people, like the Singphoes, the Nataks and the Khampts. It was stated that internal administration of the hill people would not be interfered with, although they were to acknowledge allegiance to the British Government. Scott's recommendation for annexation of Lower Assam was promptly accepted by the Supreme Government; the restoration of Upper Assam was effected at a later date and in respect of the frontier peoples Scott was allowed to act according to his discretion. His suggestion of controlling frontier tribes like the Singphoes, the Khamptis and the Moamarias (Natak territory) through an officer permanently stationed in or near their areas had a great strategic importance. The question of peaceful subjugation of the hill tribes was left to be handled by Captain Neufville.

141. P.1942.
142. P.442.
Settlement with the Singphoes: The Singphoes, a virile border tribe, inhabited the eastern most part of Assam through which lay the passage to Burma. They occupied the tract of the country called Namrup extending eastward from the Matak border to the head of the Dihing river across the river Noa Dihing. There were thirty seven subdivisions of this tribe in Assam of which Bisa Gaum, Daffa Gaum, Satu Gaum and Late-ra Gaum were prominent. They were independent in respect of administration. The Singphoes took the advantage of the anarchical state of the country resulting from the Burmese invasion. They committed several outrages and carried away a large number of Assamese captives. After the British occupation of Assam military operations were launched to provide security to eastern part of the land and to check the outrages of the Singphoes.

By the middle of March 1825 the Barsenapati, leader of the Mataks, and Sadiyakhova Gohain, the leader of the Khamptis, were attacked by the Singphoes and they appealed to the British Government for help. Accordingly troops were despatched under Captain Neufville who was authorised to negotiate with the frontier tribes by adopting both conciliatory and coercive measures as might be found necessary. Neufville proceeded to the heart of the Singphoe territory. In the course of his operation lasting for six months, he liberated a large number of the Assamese captives. He continued his operations and towards the end of August 1825 succeeded in forcing the Gaums (Chiefs) of Bisa, Kassan, Mullarkoo, Peesi, Neeche and Naggo to surrender all their arms and ammunition along with their Assamese captives. By this time the British won the victory over the Burmese on the Irrawaddy and this had greatly facilitated the final subjugation of the Singphoes. Neufville succeeded in liberating as many

144. *MA*, p.22.
as six thousand Assamese captives. In this task he was aided by the auxiliary troops of the Baransepati of the Mataks and of the Sadirakhaona. For their assistance they were awarded a sum of rupees four thousand. As the British arms penetrated into the very heart of the Singphoe country, a number of Singphoe chief chiefs wished to come to terms with the British and accordingly on 5 May 1836 Scott, who by this time arrived at Sadiya, made an agreement with sixteen Singphoe chiefs who acknowledged their allegiance to the Company Raj, agreeing to sever relations with the Burmese who had hitherto acted as the Paramount Power. Under the terms of the agreement, the Singphoes were not required to pay any revenue. They were empowered to administer their respective localities according to their own customs. But they were obliged to deliver their near relatives to the custody of the Political Agent as hostages.

The rest of the Chiefs numbering twelve absconded. Scott issued a proclamation asking them to appear at Sadiya within two months and to accept the agreement, otherwise their properties would be confiscated and they would be finally expelled from Assam. It was Neufville's energy, ability and interpidity, aided as he was by the efforts of the Mataks and the Khampti auxiliaries, that caused the reduction of the Singphoe strongholds and removed the Singphoe terror.

**Settlement with the Mataks; Annexation of their Territories:** We have already pointed out that although the Moamarias were suppressed in various fronts with the help of Captain Welsh, the traces of their rising could not be erased fully. They maintained their existence in the Matak Territory in the tract of land lying between the Buridihiing and

147. DSW., p.118.
149. BF., p.33.
150. DSW., p.119; PFA., p.3.
151. AS., p.40; DSW., p.119.
Brahmaputra. The Ahoms had to allow a quasi-independent status to their leader with the title of Barseenapati.

On their occupation of Assam the British Government found the Barseenapati and Salan Sadyakhoova Gohain, the respective rulers of the Matak Territory and Sadiya was the only persons of consequence in the eastern part of Assam who were to be useful in securing peace in the eastern frontiers inhabited by warlike tribes. The Barseenapati and the Sadyakhoova Gohain earlier proved their usefulness by rendering assistance to Neufville for suppressing the Singphoes. Scott intended to use the Mataks and the Khamptis as a screen between the Burmese and their newly acquired province of Assam. Scott proposed to maintain the Barseenapati's quasi-independent status and accordingly on 13 May 1826 a Kabul-i-Yat (deed of agreement) was executed by which Barseenapati undertook to furnish an armed contingent of 300 gota of paiks on demand and to supply provisions on payment to any British expedition passing through his country. His powers to try criminal cases and other judicial powers were however reduced and he was also held responsible for the collection of poll-tax from British subjects emigrating into his territories. This arrangement continued smoothly till 1833 when Upper Assam was restored to Pur and ar Singha. A huge exodus into the Barseenapati's territories took place and While proposed a proportionate assessment from the Barseenapati on account of the immigrants. But this was not accepted. In 1835 an innovation was introduced for indirectly assessing the Barseenapati. Accordingly in January 1835 the stipulation of supplying Paiks had been replaced by a monetary tribute of £1,800/ annually for the term of life of the ruling Barseenapati Matibar.

152. **AIA**, p.37; **ADC**, p.34; **IES**, pp.137-39. As one paik from each gota consisting of three was liable to serve the State at times it was said that 300 paiks were to be made ready to serve the English.
154. Matibar was the son of Sarbananda, whom the Ahom Premier Purnananda Burahgohain had offered the title of Barseenapati.
This arrangement continued till the death of Baraenapatni (Matiber) in the early part of January 1839 leaving seven sons in charge of each of the seven districts. The local British officers continued to levy a general tribute despite protestations to the contrary by the Supreme Government. The local British officers wanted to impose a higher rate of tribute, because the tax-free Matak country tempted exodus from the British territories resulting in the loss of revenue in those areas. The question of imposing money tribute on the Baraenapatni was favourably responded to by Jenkins who deputed White in 1838 to the Baraenapatni’s dominions to study the internal conditions with a view to securing tributes. But Jenkins’s proposal also received no better hearing from the Supreme Government which was not prepared to decide or even indicate during the life time of Baraenapatni what arrangement should be made for his country after his death. By this time Baraenapatni was far advanced in age. He had seven grown up sons to each of whom he assigned one district for administration because due to his advanced age it was not possible on his part to look after the administration. As Jenkins intended to divide the interests of his sons by making separate arrangements, the Baraenapatni became compelled to do something for ensuring the unity of his sons and thereby to present the division of his territory. Accordingly he by the end of 1838 appointed Maju Gohain, his second son, as the

155. AKA, p.199. In fact from the time of Robertson attempts were being made to impose upon the Baraenapatni a general tribute but the Supreme Government was not in favour of imposing any tribute upon him apprehending that might alienate the Baraenapatni whose friendship was badly necessary in resisting the Burmese from making any attempt to invade Assam, and, as such, Robertson could not take any positive step in the matter.

156. AKA, p.200; ADC, p.129.

157. AKA, p.200. But Barpujari, Dr. H.K., records that the Baraenapatni died on 2 January 1839 leaving only four sons. Thus in respect of number of Baraenapatni’s sons, Lahiri, R.M.’s statement is not undisputed. See, ADC, p.130.

158. AKA, p.200.

Manager of his estate and nominated him as his successor. The

Barsenapati expired on 2 January 1839 leaving for sons— Bargohain, Maju Gohain, Khood Gohain and Captain Gohain, the last being in charge of Upper Matak.

On the expiry of the Barsenapati, Maju Gohain assumed the charge of the Matak territory. The death of Barsenapati presented an opportunity to Jenkins for making fresh arrangements. He intended to raise the tribute from £1,800/- to £10,000/- a year and to compel the sons of the Barsenapati to make over the waste lands for the cultivation of tea.

He deputed White, the Political Agent, to extract a new treaty. White arrived at Rangagora, the capital of the Matak country, on 20 January 1839 and announced in a Durbar (Assembly) on 21 January 1839 that the British Government would recognize Maju Gohain as the Chief of the Matak if he agreed to a new treaty on conditions of paying an annual tribute of £10,000/-.

Two other conditions were attached, that the waste lands were to be made available for the tea plantation and that a British officer was to be appointed for adjudication of disputes arising between the Matak and the European tea-planters. In respect of enhancement of the rate of tribute, the Matak raised a strong objection. Maju Gohain politely argued that his subjects were too poor to bear any heavy taxation, that they were not habituated to paying taxes and that only by applying force the system of taxation could be imposed. Even so he assured the Political Agent that "he would intimate him" (the Agent) "after ascertaining the number of Paika what additional amount he could pay by way of tribute to the British Government." White being convinced that in no way it was possible to raise the tribute higher than £2,500/- he returned to his headquarters. He left the matter

160. DC, p.130.
161. Ibid, p.130; PFA, p.43.
162. It is Rangagora in PR, p.71.
163. DC, p.130.
to the discretion of the Supreme Government, but in his report he recog-
nized the retention of the existing arrangements because "if a rupture
takes place with Burma and Assam is invaded, we shall in great measure
depend upon Matak for the main sinews of war - provisions and coolies".

Due to the annexation of Assam by this time it was felt necessary to
shift the headquarters of the Assam Light Infantry from Biswanath to
Sadiya as the latter place was commanding a better position in the re-
lations with Ava and the neighbouring frontier people. When only half
of the troops moved to Sadiya the Khamptis attacked them on 29 January
1839 eliminating a good part of them. Further White lost his life at
the hands of the raiders. Captain Hamilton Vetch was thus appointed
Political Agent of Upper Assam. Vetch was also instructed by Jenkins to
raise question of enhancing the tribute up to Rs.10,000/-. Like White,
Vetch also realised very soon that it was not possible for Maju Gohain
to enter into a new agreement against the wishes of his people and
reported this to the Agent with the recommendations that the status quo
be maintained. But Jenkins was eager to impose the new terms and condi-
tions on Maju Gohain. Jenkins feared that Maju Gohain would be the fi-
irst Chief to rise against the British at any available opportunity, and
as such, he was not in favour of allowing Maju Gohain any further op-
portunity to establish his authority firmly.

By this time dissension had broken out among the inhabitants of
the Baraenapati's territory. They were divided into two rival groups,
namely the Mataka and the Morans under their respective religious heads
aiming at establishing dominion over the other group. The Morans, inha-
hbitants of Upper Matak, even preferred British rule to native rule by
Maju Gohain, a follower of a different sect. The Upper part of the

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166. ADG, p.132.
167. PHA., p.44; AKA., p.203.
Natak dominion was exclusively inhabited by the Neemarias of Moran and hence, they were against the rule of Maju Gohain or any member of Barasanati's family, since their religious tenets and practices differed from those of the members of the ruling family. The population of Lower Natak was mainly composed of the refugees: Assamese paiks. The Neemarias had submitted several memoranda against placing them under the administration of a ruler belonging to a different religious sect. Thus the Supreme Government wanted separation of Upper Natak from Lower Natak. Accordingly Jenkins instructed Captain Vetch to proceed to Rangagora and to impose a settlement as the Supreme Government desired, failing which he was to annex the Natak territory. Accordingly Vetch, escorted by 300 men of the Assam Light Infantry and 160 recruits of the Upper Assam Subani, arrived at Rangagora and submitted the terms to the sene of the Barasanati in a Durbar. The proposal for separation of the Upper Moran and of placing the waste lands at the disposal of the East India Company was vehemently opposed. Vetch was requested to modify his demands. As Maju Gohain rejected the terms, his other brothers also followed suit. The result was that Captain Vetch formally announced the annexation of the Natak territory to the British dominions. It was placed under the jurisdiction of the Principal Assistant stationed at Lakhimpur.

The Supreme Government while approving of the annexation of the Natak territory instructed Captain Jenkins to make suitable provisions for pensions to the members of the Barasanati's family. "Barasanati had left no less than 10 sons, 6 daughters, 3 widows, a brother and a number of dependents," and all this demanded a huge amount for the purpose of granting pension to them. The Barasanati's sons were removed. See p.168. The number of Barasanati's sons is not undisputed.
ved to Biswanath in Lower Assam along with some of their principal
advisers. There they were allotted settlements and given pension wholly
in cash amounting rupees fifteen thousand.

The resumption of the Matak territory was unjustified one, because there was no instance of mal-administration by the Bar senapatı. Rather it was a record of good government and resulting prosperity. The local British authority was motivated by the desire to do away with a non-taxed Matak territory that worked behind the annexation.

Settlement with the Khamptis: Annexation of their Territory: As noted earlier, the Sadiyakhowa Cohain, the Khampti Chief, had assisted Captain Neufville greatly in realising releasing the Assamese captives from the Singphoes. By an agreement, executed on 15 May 1826 Scott confirmed Salan Sadiyakhowa Cohain, the Khampti Chief, in his possession on the condition that the latter agreed to supply a contingent of 200, to be trained and equipped by the Company Government. But he was not required to pay any tribute. He was empowered to run the internal administration and to decide petty cases and collect poll-tax of ₹1 per head and to remit it to the Political Officer. The intercourse with the Khamptis was carried on by the Company Government through a native officer who was stationed at the headquarters of the Khamptis. The Khamptis proved themselves as good allies of the British in 1830 in checking the Singphoes' inroads on the eastern part of Assam. Everything passed on smoothly till the death of the Sadiyakhowa Cohain early in 1836, when he was succeeded by his eldest son.

170. AXA., p.205; But according to Gait it was only seven thousand rupees. See HA., p.310.
171. ADC., p.34; DIII., p.130.
172. HA., p.292.
173. Ibid., p.308; AXA., p.208
By this time there was a fresh immigration of the Khampis from beyond the border. The new-comers settled at Salkhowa, a tract just opposite to Sadiya. The British Government favoured such immigration and their settlement, because they feared another Burmese invasion and in that case such warlike people would be of great help. But a dispute soon arose between the Barasmanati of the Mataks and the Sadiyakhova Gohain centering round the claims over the new refugees of Upper Assam who settled at Salkhowa. White, the Political Agent at Sadiya, in order to prevent any collision, asked the rival chiefs to appear before him and place their respective claims. In defiance of this specific instruction of White to submit their dispute to White's arbitration, the Sadiyakhova Gohain by the end of 1834 forcibly occupied Salkhowa, and assaulted the new settlers there. The local British authorities represented these developments. The Sadiyakhova Gohain was asked to give up his new possession, but he refused to do so. Therefore, the post of Sadiyakhova Gohain was abolished and he was dislodged from the office and removed to Guwahati as an internee. His territory on either side of the river (Luhit) - Sadiya and Salkhowa, - was annexed to the British dominions. No tax was imposed on the Khampis who were allowed to manage their internal affairs under their own chiefs. But they were deprived of their control over local Assamese. This was vested with the Political Officer at Sadiya.

Apparently the Khampis accepted their new lot. In reality they could hardly reconcile themselves either to the loss of their autonomous status or to the loss of their Assamese captives. They were simply waiting for an opportunity. They also began to suspect that they would be soon taxed by the alien authority. Suddenly in the last part of January 1839 they rebelled. On the night of 29 January 1839 the British
cantonment at Sadiya was attacked by the Khamptis. They massacred the Political Agent White with a number of his followers. The camp was set on fire. Immediately a punitive force was despatched against the Khamptis. The force found that all the Khampti people including women and children deserted their villages and entered the Mishmi hills. They were pursued into the Mishmi hills and were defeated at several places and were compelled to surrender, the last assault being in December, 1843. On their surrender some of them were deported to Narayanpur and allowed to settle above Sadiya to form a sort of barrier between the Assamese and the Mishmis. This time the Khamptis were so dispersed that since then they ceased to be of any political importance.

Annexation of Duars: 'Duar' is a word in native parlance meaning 'door' or access to the passes running into the hills. The strip of level tract from Darrang to Darjeeling at the foot of the Himalayas was intersected by several Duars leading from the hills to the plains. In the direction of Bhutan, there were eighteen such passes, eleven on the frontier of Bengal and Goalpara, and seven in North Kamrup and Darrang. The passes on the frontier of Bengal had been annexed by the Bhutias long before the British occupied Bengal. But the Duars on the frontier of Assam were held by the Ahoms till the reign of Gaurinath Singha. There were five duars in Kamrup, namely Bijni, Chappa-khamar, Chappaguri, Bansika and Gaukolla. The remaining two duars were on the frontier of Darrang. They were Kalling and Booriguma.

The passes on the frontier of Assam formed integral parts of Assam and were held by the Ahoms. Taking advantage of the weakness of the Ahom Government due to the Moamaria uprisings during the reign of Gaurinath Singha, the Bhutias occupied these passes. Unable to offer

177. AXA*, p.216.
any resistance, the Ahom Government entered into a compromise with the
the Bhutias. The Government agreed to pay "24 Tolas of Gold dust, 36
ponies, 24 pieces of musk, 24 cowtails, 24 daggers, 24 blankets and 2400
rupees in cash having an estimated value of 4786 Narayanee rupees". Under the terms of the agreement, Kamrup Duars were to remain perma-
ently with the Bhutias so long as the stipulated tribute was paid, while
the Duars on Darrang frontier were to be held jointly on a periodical
basis. For five months in a year from July to November, these Duars we-
re to remain under the control of the Ahoms, and for the rest of the
period these were to be administered by the Bhutias. The dual ownership
frequently led to disputes. It fell very heavily upon the inhabitants
who were rackrented, pillaged and assaulted in turns equally by the
oppressive Assamese and Bhutia Officers. Moreover, the Duars became the
favourite hideout and haunt of dacoits and absconders. The Bhutias were
not at all regular in their payment of tribute, and, on the other hand, the Ahom Government was too weak to enforce either regular or full pay-
ment of tribute.

With the occupation of Assam in 1826, these Duars also came un-
der British subjugation. The British tried to maintain the old arrange-
ments. In the Britishers, the Bhutias found very alert masters in esta-
ablishing their right. The Britishers put in public auction all kinds
paid as tribute and if the stipulated amount (n.4786-) was not reali-
sed, the shortfall was to be reckoned as arrears. In this way the arre-
ars mounted up. The Bhutias showed little sign of clearing the arrears
and, as such, disputes arose between the two powers. Some Duars occasion-
nally were attached by the British for non-payment of tribute and this
usually produced the desired results. But there was no end of outrages
followed by attachments. The Supreme Government tried to end such a

178. \textit{AlA}, p.216.
state of affairs by sending a Mission to the Bhutan Government. Captain Pemberton was selected for the purpose. He arrived at Punakha, the headquarters of the Bhutan Government, in 1837. Pemberton could gain nothing, as at that time the authority of Dharmaraja, the Bhutan king as well as the spiritual head, was at stake due to rivalry between Paso Pilo and Tango Pila, the two Governors of Western Bhutan and Eastern Bhutan. In 1839 Captain Jenkins sent another Mission to Punakha but in vain. By this time the local Bhutia authorities, in charge of the Duars stopped the payment of the tribute altogether. Three of the Duars were earlier attached and the Supreme Government, finding other methods ineffective, instructed the Agent to resume the Duars temporarily till the establishment of a stable Government at Punakha. The attachment of the three Duars produced some results. It was noticed that Bhutan Government was willing to settle the dispute and sent two letters requesting the British Government to send a mission for amicable settlement. But the Governor-General did not accept the proposal. He was of opinion that such a mission would only create embarrassments. Lord Auckland sent a note of warning to the Bhutan Government that if the matter dragged on in this way the British Government would be compelled to occupy all the Duars without any reference to the Bhutan Government.

180. Pemberton Mission was in the year 1838 as recorded in CBH, p.364.
181. The Ministers, appointed by Dharmaraja, was known as Devraja who was the temporal head in all practical purposes. In Bhutan he was known as Kusudebu and in Bengal as Devraja as well as Dharma-Devajumihar. It is believed that after the expiry, one Dharmaraja, he used to take re-birth and became again Dharmaraja. But in 1905 on the expiry of the then Dharmaraja, his re-birth could not be traced out. In such cases Devraja should act as spiritual and temporal (administrative) head but as the then Devraja was found reluctant in this affairs, Tangshu Penko (Palla), the Governor of Tangshu Division of the country, became the sole authority (king) in the country and eventually the British Government had recognized him as king as well as the claim of his family members to kingship. See CBH, pp.334-36.
182. ATK, pp. 218-19.
183. Variously known as Purnkha, Punnyakhata, Punnyakha. See CBH, p.100.
184. ATK, p.222.
As things did not improve inspite of the warning the British Government decided in 1841 to take possession of Kamrup Duars and Darrang Duars permanently. It was apprehended that the Bhutias would resent the attachment and would try to prevent the British officers from doing so. Thus some precautionary measures were taken such as raising the strength of the First Assam Subandi Regiment and establishment of an additional Thana and one Police Outpost on the border. However, nothing untoward happened. The British Government agreed to pay annually ₹10,000/- to the Bhutan Government as compensation for the loss of their share of the estimated revenue from these Duars.

This arrangement continued till 1864 when the Bhutan war broke out due to certain incidents and frontier disputes centering round the other Duars on the Goalpara and Bengal frontier. The Bhutan war came to an end in 1866 by a treaty. Under its terms seven Assam Duars along with the Duars on Goalpara and Bengal frontier were finally annexed to the British dominions; the British Government agreed to pay to the Bhutan Government annually a sum of ₹50,000/- including ₹10,000/- which was paid since 1841. The strip of lands covered by these Duars was divided into two districts, viz., the Western Duars and the Eastern Duars; and in 1867 the Eastern Duars were annexed to Goalpara, when Goalpara along with the Garo Hills were placed under the Commissioner of Coach Behar. But in 1874 the Eastern Duars, Goalpara and Garo Hills districts were retransferred to Assam. The district of Garo Hills was created in 1869.

To the east of the Bhutan Duars, there were two other Duars namely, Kuriapara and Charduar; Kuriapara was under the control of a body of

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185. HA, pp. 312; HER, pp. 16 & 37; AXA, p. 222.
186. HER, pp. 17 & 38; CBH, pp. 361-71. But Gait records that the sum was 25,000/. See HA, p. 312.
187. HER, pp. 17 & 38.
Bhutia chiefs known as Sat Raja (not necessarily seven in number) who were subordinate to Twang Raja, a tributary of Lhasa. These chiefs were also found oppressive giving rise to outrages and disputes which ultimately compelled the British Government to resume that Duar in 1844 on condition of receiving from the British by the Sat Raja a sum of Rs.5,000/- or one-third of the estimated revenue which was to be handed over to the British by the Sat Raja and the Thebongee Bhutias annually at the time of Udalguri fair.

To the east of Kuriapara Duar there was Charduar which was also under a body of Chiefs also known as Sat Raja, but they were not subordinate to the Twang Raja. These Chiefs and the Thebongee Bhutias used to collect tribute from Charduar which was the first Duar that was annexed by the British as early as 1826 on an annual payment of Rs.2872/- to the Sat Raja and the Thebongee Bhutias.

Annexation of Southern Kamrup Duars: Like the Bhutan Duars on the northern frontier of Kamrup, there were also a few other duars on its southern frontier. These were being held by the Khasi Chiefs and hence, these Duars were known as Khasi Duars. These Chiefs acknowledged the supremacy of the Ahoms and used to send occasional tributes. One such occasion was the coming of a new Ahom Governor, indicating their subordination to the Ahom Government. But during the deplorable conditions of the Ahom Raj following the Mromaria uprisings, these Chiefs were practically out of control of the Ahom Raj. These Chiefs were allowed control of the internal administration. As these Chiefs sometimes openly resorted to wars among themselves, the British Government tried to bring them under their control and established a Special Court for the trial of civil and criminal cases. The British also introduced a moderate land assessment to replace the old feudal service of supplying 

raiks and paying money on the occasion of the coming of a new chief.

188. HAA., P.312; AXA., P.223; BNGBEB.,pp.13-20.
189. AXA., P.223; BNGBEB.,pp.13-20.
The Khasi Chiefs soon fell into arrears in payment of their revenue and in consequence their estates (Duars) were taken over by the British Government.

Observation on British Annexation Policy: The occupation of Assam followed by the annexation of Cachar, Jayantia, Matak, Sadiya and a number of Duars, forms an interesting episode in the expansion of the British dominions in India. The conquest of Assam was apparently forced upon the British since for many years past the Britishers appeared to be reluctant to interfere with the affairs of Assam. When their (British border territories were directly threatened by the Burmese, the British intervened and conquered Assam expelling the Burmese. Once Assam was conquered, it was considered expedient by the British authorities to annex adjoining territories to their own dominions for ensuring the security and good administration of their newly-acquired territory. Thence whenever there appeared the slightest possibility of either losing revenue or any harm to the British interests, the alien authorities did not hesitate to annex any area to their territory by means fair or foul as evident in the cases of Upper Assam, Cachar, Jayantia and Matak. Thus with the occupation of Assam, the British authorities adopted the policy of annexation and in course of three decades (1824-54) different parts of both the valleys of Brahmaputra and Surma, were annexed to the British dominions. The Supreme Government imposed a heavy tribute on Purandar Singa without considering his limitations flowing from deplorable conditions of the country and the presence of a tax-free Matak country. The act of imposing of such heavy tribute on Purandara Singha gave rise to suspicions that the Supreme Government did not at all wish to work out honestly the agreement concluded with Purandar Singh. Moreover, Jenkins did not allow a reasonable time to Purandar Singha to grapple
with the matters. Jenkins did not try to cure the sickman (Purandar Singha) applying remedies and did kill "the sickman at his bed." So also was the case of Govinda Chandra, the king of Cachar, upon whom the Supreme Government imposed a tribute of ten thousand rupees on the mere assumption of derivable revenues of rupees three lakh a year. Further, their questionable partiality towards Gambheer Singha of Manipur was not a justified act. Gambheer Singha was alleged to have his hand in the murder of Govinda Chandra. The Supreme Government was also responsible, though not directly, for leaving Govinda Chandra heirless although he intended to adopt a child, an act which was denied to him by the Supreme Government. He was eventually murdered as noted earlier. In case of the Jayantia kingdom, the Supreme Government wanted to impose arbitrarily, on the death of Raja Ram Singh, a tribute of rupees ten thousand upon his heir Rajendra Singh on the ground that the tribute-free agreement made by Scott with Raja Ram Singh came to an end with the death of Ram Singh. But it was verily an injustice on the part of the Supreme Government to treat the agreement as a provisional one. Moreover, the Supreme Government did not show any sign to consider any reasonable points submitted by Rajendra Singh in support of his inability to shoulder a heavy burden. It was centering round the question of tribute, that ultimately Rajendra Singh was compelled to surrender his territories to the British. The pretext the Supreme Government utilised in the case of Jayantia was applied in the case of the Matak territory also. After the death of Matibar Barsenapati of Matak, the Supreme Government intended to impose on the sons of the Barsenapati a tribute of ten thousand rupees in place of eighteen hundred only a year on the ground that with the death of the Barsenapati the agreement of paying only eighteen hundred a year came to an end. It was again an unjustified act. Thus it is seen that while the British assumed control over some areas

191. ADC., P. 124.
for the pretended purpose of better administration and security, major areas were annexed outright merely to serve the imperial cause of the Company Raj.

The British acted on the maxim that "there is no room for morality in politics". By the middle of the Eighteenth Century, the Ahom showed signs of weakness. Their administration had gone from bad to worse and hence the Burmese could defeat them with no great effort. Judging the state of the Ahom Government and also the internal feuds among their nobles, one may be prone to concern with the view that "had the British forces retired from that unhappy valley at that stage as did Welsh half a century ago, not only the eastern frontier of the British Empire would have been imperilled Assam would not have recovered from the blight of mediaeval theocratic rule." At that time Assam sorely needed an efficient Government which for historical reasons came to be provided by Company's Government. But this was an alien Government and even if the British did not come, the helpless people would have certainly found their way to deal with the problems like 'mediaeval theocratic rule' and anarchy following the Burmese invasions. The Company Government restored a semblance of law and order and gradually introduced a system of uniform laws and principles of administration transforming most of the traditional institutions mainly to suit the British Empire's interest. Whatever good was done for the people of the newly-acquired Province was but a by-product of things which were primarily designed for serving the cause of the British Empire.

192. AXA.,p.224.
APPENDIX 6

TREATY and AGREEMENT concluded between Mr. Thomas Campbell Robertson, Agent to the Governor-General on the North-East Frontier, on the part of the Honourable Company and Rajah Poorunder Sing, now residing at Gowhatty, in Assam-1833.

Article 1

The Company give over to Rajah Poorunder Sing the portion of Assam lying on the southern bank of the Burrumpooter to the eastward of the Dhumsiree River, and on the northern bank to the eastward of a nullah immediately east of Bishenath.

Article 2

The Rajah Poorunder Sing agrees to pay an annual tribute of 50,000 Rupees of Rajah Mohree coinage to the Honourable Company.

Article 3

The Rajah Poorunder Sing binds himself, in the administration of justice in the country now made over to him, to abstain from the practices of the former Rajahs of Assam, as to cutting off ears and noses, extracting eyes or otherwise mutilating or torturing, and that he will not inflict cruel punishment for slight faults, but generally assimilate the administration of justice in his territory to that which prevails in the dominions of the Honourable Company. He further binds himself not to permit the immolation of women by suttees.

Article 4

The Rajah Poorunder Sing binds himself to assist the passage of the troops of the British Government through his territory, furnishing supplies and carriage on receiving payment for the same.

* Source: TRS., 139-41.
Article 5

Whether at Jorhath or elsewhere, wheresoever a spot may be required for the permanent cantonment of the troops of the British Government, the Raja agrees that, within the limits assigned to such cantonment, he shall exercise no power whatever; all matters connected with such cantonment to be decided on by the Officer of the British Government.

Article 6

In the event of a detachment being stationed at Sudder or elsewhere, the Rajah Poor under Sing binds himself to render it all the assistance that it shall require in regard to provisions and carriage.

Article 7

The Rajah binds himself even to listen with attention to the advice of the Political Agent to be stationed in Upper Assam, or to that of the Agent to the Governor-General, with a view to the conduct of affairs in the country made over to him in conformity with the stipulation of this agreement.

Article 8

The Rajah binds himself not to carry any correspondence by letter or otherwise, or to enter into any contract or Agreement with the Rulers of any Foreign States. In all cases of necessity he will consult with the Political Agent or Agent to the Governor-General, by whom the necessary communication will be made.

Article 9

The Rajah binds himself to surrender, on demand from the Agent to the Governor-General or Political Agent, any fugitive from justice who may take refuge in his territory; and always to apply to those Officers for the apprehension of any individuals who may fly from his territory into that of the Honorable Company, or of any other State.
Article 10

It is distinctly understood that this Treaty invests Rajah Poorunder Sing with no power over the Moamaria Country of the Bur Senapatee.

Article 11

It being notorious that the quantity of opium produced in Assam is the cause of many miseries to the inhabitants, the Rajah binds himself that, whatever measures may be determined on with a view to checking this source of mischief in the territory of the Honourable Company, corresponding measures shall be adopted in the territory made over to him.

In the event of the Rajah's continuing faithful to the Articles of this Treaty, the British Government engages to protect him from the aggressions of any foreign foe, but if, which God forbid, he should in any depart from a faithful adherence to the same, and be guilty of oppressing the people of the country entrusted to his charge, then the right is reserved to the Government of the Honourable Company, either to transfer the said country to another ruler, or to take it into its own immediate occupation.

Dated the 2nd March 1833, or 20th Phagoon 1239, B.E.
(A true translation).

(Signed) T.C. Robertson,
Agent, Governor-General.

...
APPENDIX 7

Terms of Agreement concluded with Toola Ram Senaputtee of
the 3rd November under the orders of Government, dated the
16th October, 1834.

First:.- Toola Ram foregoes all claims to the country between the
Morihur and Dyung and the Dyung and Keopoli rivers, from which he was
dispossessed by Govinda Ram and Doorga Ram.

Second:.- Toola Ram is to hold the remainder of the country formerly
in his possession, of the tract of country bounded on the west by Dyung
river, and a line to be determined hereafter, from the Baree ford or the
Dyung to a point on the Jumoona river, between the cultivation of Sel
Dhurmpore and of Duboka and the Hajaee (excluding the two latter); by
the Jumoona and Dyung rivers north, by the Dunsira river east, and to
the south and south-west by the Naga Hills and Mowheir river, and he ag­
rees to hold the above tract in dependence on the British Government,
and to pay a yearly tribute, for their protection, of four pairs of ele­
phants' teeth, each pair to weigh thirty-five seers.

Third:.- Toola Ram, during his life, shall receive from the Brit­
ish Government a stipend of fifty Rupees a month in consideration of the
foregoing cessions and these Agreements.

Fourth:.- The British Government shall have the right of placing
Military posts in any part of Toola Ram's country, and should there be
occasion to march troops through it, Toolaram engages to furnish them
with all the requisites of carriage and provisions in his power, he be­
ing paid for the same.

* Source: TES, pp. 150.
** This was subsequently commuted to a money-tribute of Rs. 490/- a
year.
Fifth. - All petty offences committed within Toola Ram’s country shall be taken cognizance of, and do justice according to the custom of the country but all heinous crimes shall be transferred to the nearest British Court, and Toola Ram engages to bring such to notice, and endeavour to apprehend the offenders.

Sixth. - Toola Ram shall not establish any custom chowkies on the rivers forming the boundaries of his country.

Seventh. - Toola Ram will not commence any military operations against neighbouring Chiefs without permission of the British Government, and in case of being attacked, he shall report the same and be protected by the British troops, provided the British Authorities are satisfied that the aggression has been unprovoked on his part.

Eighth. - Roouts shall not be prevented from emigrating to, and settling on, either side of the boundary they may prefer.

Ninth. - In case of failing to abide by these conditions, the British Government shall be at liberty to take possession of my country.

(Sd.) Toola Ram Seenaputee

Witnesses:
Bapoor Ram Muntree
Burrah Phzokan
Habeerain Mozoomdar,
Bowoah
Madhorain Rajah Khon.

(Sd.) Frans Jenkins,
Agent to the Governor-General.