Chapter 1.

Historical Background.

The Place: The Garo Hills which were formed into a district in 1866, is now one of the constituent districts of the State of Meghalaya. It lies between 25° 9' and 26° 1' of north Latitude and between 89° 49' and 91° 2' of east Longitude. The district contains an area of 8160.86 square kilometers. It is bounded on the north and west by the district of Goalpara; on the east by the Khasi Hills and on the south, by the Mymensing district of Bangladesh.

Physical features: The greater portion of the district consists of hills, which form the western extremity of the range dividing the valleys of the Brahmaputra and the Surma. These hills rise sharply from the plain on the south, and attain their highest elevation in the Tura and Arbela ranges, which lie parallel to one another, east and west near the centre of the district. The highest peak, Nokrek is 4,652 ft. high. On the north, a succession of low hills fall away towards the Brahmaputra. The ranges include many steep ridges separated from one another by deep valleys, and except where they have been cleared for cultivation, are covered with dense forest. At the foot of the hills is a fringe of level land, into which outlying spurs project, but which otherwise does not differ from the adjoining plains.

The principal river is the Someswari which the Garos call Simsang. It rises in the north of the Tura town and falls into the Kangsa river in Mymensing. Other important rivers flowing towards the south and falling into Bangladesh are the Bugai, Nitali and Moheshkali while from the northern side of the watershed the Krishnai, Dudhnai, Ildek, Jinjiram and other small rivers fall into the Brahmaputra. Some of these rivers flow through rocky gorges, which are overgrown with trees, creepers and giant ferns to the water's edge.

1. Letters received from Government, Vol. 53(b), No. 4098 of 1866.
Around a place called Phulbari, there lies a large marsh which is leased as a Fishery.

On the whole, the general appearance of the district is wild and picturesque.


The People: A great majority of the people are the Garos. Other inhabitants of the district are the Rabhas, Hajongs, Kochs, Rajbansis, Dalus, Meches, Kacharis and a few Mussalmans and Nepalis. After partition, a sizeable number of Bengalis have also come and settled mostly in Tura. Most of these non-Garo population is concentrated along the edges of the district, leaving most of the interior almost ethnically pure. In fact, the only people other than the Garos who are at all dispersed throughout the district are a few Nepalis living in widely scattered settlements. They are of recent immigrants who maintain large herds of cattle and sell milk or manufacture ghee. The other recent immigrants are from different parts of northern India who have settled down in Tura and in other parts of the district as traders, shop-keepers and as daily labourers, but they are few in number.
No enumeration of the inhabitants of the Garo Hills district was made in 1872, but the Deputy Commissioner estimated the population of the district from 80,000 to 100,000. The former estimate is recorded in the Census report of 1872.

From the above, it is clear that within one hundred years, the population has increased five times. The reasons were:—the early marriages, absence of family planning and better medical facilities. But the greatest factor was the influx of refugees from East Pakistan during partition in 1947, in 1964 and in 1971.

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Origin and migration.

Ethnically and linguistically, the Garos belong to the great Bodo family, which at one time occupied a large part of the valley of the Brahmaputra, and were probably driven from the plain into the hills by early Hindu invaders from Bengal. They are a section of the Tibeto-Burman race, whose cradle is said to have been the north-western China between the upper waters of Yang-tse-kiang and Ho-ang-ho. The Tibeto-Burmans sent forth successive waves of emigrants, who spread down the valley of the Brahmaputra and the great rivers, such as the Chindwin, the Irrawady, and the Mekong, that flow towards the south.

The Garos are akin to most of the aboriginal tribes of the Assam valley like the Kacharis, Rabhas, Mechis and other tribes, but belong to quite a distinct stock to that from which the Khasis sprung.

According to their own tradition, the Garos originally came from Tibet and settled down in Koch Behar for about 400 years. Thence they moved on to Dhubri whose king received them warmly, but being afraid of them, did not allow them to settle down there permanently. So they moved towards Jogighopa, from where again they were compelled to fly towards the south. Then they moved towards Gauhati, but they were not treated properly there also by the king of that country. So they wandered and settled in the neighbourhood of Boko. This place was, however, infested with tiger-men. The Garos then moved into the Habraghat pargana. It was in the course of this journey that the tribe broke into different branches. In the neighbourhood of Habraghat pargana, the Garos appear to have become rich and

4. Imperial Gazeteer of India, 1909, P. 504.
prosperous, and according to general belief among them, a Garo kingdom was established, of which the first reigning prince was Abrasen. He had his palace and capital at Sambol Ading, a detached hill near the Dakaitdol village, not far from the Goalpara town. About this time, dissension appears to have sprung up among the Garos, and perhaps for this reason, some of them set out on their travels again and entered the hills which are now called the Garo Hills. One party under the leadership of a chief named Abing-noga, moved from place to place until it settled on Nokrek, the highest peak of the Tura range.

Political history.

Ancient Period.

Very little is known of the early history of the Garos. Their history before the British occupation is a sickening series of raids on the plains and feuds among themselves; of bloodshed, misery and muddle. They had an evil reputation for numerous raids. From time to time they would sally from their mountainous recesses, attack an unarmed, unsuspecting village in the plains; murder, plunder and burn, and swiftly retreat again into the jungle, leaving behind only the headless corpses of men and women. On return they would collect the whole village round the captured heads, eat, drink and dance, chanting songs of triumph. But it was rarely possible to bring the offenders to book owing to the difficulty experienced in moving troops through such a wooded tract of mountainous country.

Besides raiding a common foe in the plains, the Garos were addicted to internal warfare, and that many blood feuds existed among individuals and villages. The latter, which were much bigger than are now, were all protected by chevaux de frise of sharp pointed bamboo stakes, and the main approaches were carefully guarded. When opportunity offered for a successful raid on an enemy's village, it was quickly taken advantage of and the heads of the victims were brought home in triumph as coveted trophies.

The culture of the plains had not yet penetrated into the interior of the hills, and the Garos had all along maintained complete independence ruling their own areas in their own feudal system. Each village had a village Chief and several villages owed allegiance to one Chief called Nokma. These offices were hereditary approved by common consent, the claim of the oldest family in the locality having the first preference. One such Garo Chief who lived in the southern plain area of the Garo Hills appears to have been ousted from his kingdom by Padmanava, the fugitive king of the Kapili valley in the middle of the 14th century, and he fled westward to Mymensing where he established the small kingdom of Susang which he sold afterwards to a Brahmin.

The earliest notices of the Garos describe them as being in a state of intermittent conflict with the Zamindars of the large estates lying at the foot of the hills. These Zamindars were, in all probability, themselves sprung from the great Bodo stock to which the Garos belong, but in power and civilization had advanced far beyond their highland kinsmen. The exactions levied by the sub-

11. Ibid.
ordinates of these border Chiefs irritated the hillmen, and the belief that the spirits of their headmen required the souls of others to attend them in the next world acted as a further incitement to the despatch of raiding parties. At the end of the 10th century, the Garos inhabiting the outer ranges, had been brought to some extent under the authority of the Zamindars, but the villages in the interior were entirely independent.

Moghul Period.

During the Moghul times, the whole of the north-east parts of Bengal were divided into great estates held by a few powerful landholders of Hindu or possibly of mixed Hindu and Garo blood, to whom the Muhammadans gave the title not of Zemindar but of Choudry. The revenue settlements made with these Choudries were assessed not upon the land as elsewhere but upon certain transit and market dues, the bulk of which was realized on the trade carried on with the Garos of the hills at the 'kotes of passes' or frontier markets established at the foot of the hills. The main staple of this trade was cotton which the Garos brought down annually in large quantities to barter for cloth and salt. So long as the Choudries paid their tribute at Rangamati and squared the Muhammadan Faujdar there with occasional gifts of elephants or sandalwood, they were left to manage their estates as they pleased. In fact, they were bound merely to supply a certain number of elephants or a small quantity of the precious wood called aghur, to support certain petty garrisons, and to contribute to the maintenance of the Dacca Artillery park, and to collect and pay Sair or miscellaneous duties.

Accordingly, the more ambitious of them entered upon a career of conquest in the hills, and on the side of Goalpara, several of them succeeded in annexing such outlying spurs as ran into their Zamindaries on the plains. On the Garo villages so conquered they levied a house-tax and generally took as much as they could manage to get. The natural consequences of these proceedings, and of the never ending chicanery and oppression practised on the hill Garos at the frontier markets, was a chronic enmity between the Garos and the Zamindars, relieved occasionally by wild murderous raids of the hill Garos into the plains, or tax-gathering forays of burkandazes into the hills.

The Choudries of Karaibari, Kalumalupara and Mechpara now within Goalpara, were the chief landholders of this kind. They held all the low country under the Garo Hills on the Assam side, and it was their principal duty to repress the incursions of the savage tribes of the uplands, who even then were a source of terror to the cultivators of the plains. The Garos of the upper hills only came down annually to trade after the people of the villages near the foot of the hills had given hostages who were detained in the hills till the fairs were over. The Garos stipulated that these hostages should be always smiths that the hill Garos might have their services to make weapons in case war broke out.

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British ascendancy.

On August 12, 1765, the titular Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, granted to the East India Company the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. This secured to the Company the superintendancy of all the lands, and the collection of all the revenues of these three provinces. This establishment of the de facto authority of the Company in the province of Bengal necessarily brought it into contact with the independent and semi-independent tribes in the north-east frontiers. Accordingly, the three estates of Karaibari, Mechpara and Kalumalupara in the eastern part of Rangpur passed under the direct control of the authorities of Fort William. With regard to the collection of revenues, the place of the Moghul Faujdar was taken by a Sezawal, who was annually appointed, and who contracted to pay the district revenues to the government, making his own arrangements for collecting them from the Zamindars. The Zamindars in their turn, as independent as before, collected the revenues of their Zamindaries and up to the year 1787-1788, paid them over to the Sezawal in cotton. After 1788, however, the Company abolished Sayer dues and made the collection of such miscellaneous cesses illegal. The Zamindars who had always enjoyed a percentage of the revenues they collected, were compensated for the loss of the Sayer dues, but they continued secretly to levy them illegally. Cash payments by the Zamindars were introduced in 1788 and this was followed by the Permanent Settlement in 1793.

Part of the Garos brought within Zamindars' estates.

In 1775, the Zamindars of Mechpara and Karaibari, to avenge some Garo raids of more than usual severity, invaded the hills bordering on their respective estates, and entered on a career of conquest. They remained two or three years in the hills and brought the tribes of a large tract entirely under their control. They maintained their authority over the hill people for many years. Even the great Chief of the southern part of Garo Hills whose name was Renghta became in course of time subject to the Zamindar of Karaibari. This, however, brought the Zamindar of Karaibari into conflict with the Zamindars of Sherepore and Shosung. But the Zamindar of Karaibari, Mohendra Narayan, was not a man to brook Sherepore interference. He built forts in the passes on the Mymensing side to stop the Garo trade, and arrested Renghta himself when on his way back from a visit to the Sherepore hats. This was in 1789 when Mr. Elliot, Commissioner of Dacca, was on the Mymensing frontier. Mr. Elliot got Renghta released, and he and all his people then offered to become government ryots, provided they were protected from the Karaibari Zamindar. Mr. Elliot, eager to avail himself of the great trade advantages, promised by such an arrangement, strongly supported the proposal. The government in 1790 accordingly directed that Renghta should be made a Zamindar under the Company, and that the Karaibari Zamindar should be forbidden to molest him but he offered a remission of revenue should he be unable, in consequence, to pay the government demand. This negotiation fell through owing to the unparalleled audacity of the Karaibari Zamindar who simply arrested the messengers sent to Menghta to conclude the arrangements. He also

* Renghta can not be a Garo name. It must have been a distortion of the word 'Lengta'. Lengta in Bengali means 'Naked'.
occupied all the passes leading to Mymensing and defied the Company's Officers. In 1798, government had to send troops to realize the arrears of revenue. In 1794 and again in 1805, he even invaded Sherepore itself. All attempts to define the boundaries of his zamindary were defeated by him. At last in 1809, the estate was sold, by the orders of the Board of revenue, for arrears of revenue, and his influence gradually dwindled.

David Scott and the birth of the Non-Regulation System.

In the meantime, the raids of the Garos on the plains continued. The following is an extract from a statement of Garo raids between 1807 and 1819.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Villages burnt</th>
<th>persons killed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1811</td>
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<td>1812</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>1814</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to stop these atrocities and have peace in the frontiers, Thomas Sisson, the Joint Magistrate, Rangpur, in a lengthy report on 15 February, 1815, recommended the appointment of a native of the rank who was to be aided in his duties by a deputy.

20. Ibid. p. 250.
or two and a local corps to be raised for the purpose consisting of the Hajongs, the Meches and the Rajbansis. He also suggested that an experienced Officer be deputed to collect information necessary for the formulation of a scheme for the security and peace of the frontier. Maxwell, the Joint Magistrate of Mymensing, was accordingly directed by the government of Bengal to carry on the proposed investigation, but on his transfer to Dinajpur, the task fell on David Scott, 21.

Thus Scott's attention was drawn to the various outrages and acts of violence, committed by the Garos in January and February of 1815, upon the inhabitants of the frontier Zamindaries of Kalumalupara and Karaibari.

Scott's first measures against the Garo raids were military action and installation of an economic blockade by closing the hats. He also suggested a few changes in the jurisdiction of the various thanas and their present location and made it convenient for the Darogah to take immediate cognizance of a crime.

The British government approved Scott's punitive measures, noted his suggestions about change in the Regulations, but asked him to make further enquiries into the topography of the country, the habit and the character of the tribes and their motives before endeavouring to make any change in the existing order. The Governor-General, Lord Hastings, further asked Scott whether a system of internal management similar to that applied by Cleveland in the hills of Bhagalpur, could be introduced into the Garo Hills. In particular, he asked Scott to consider the establishment of a small corps, mainly by Garo hillmen, to be stationed on the frontier hats and passes;

the permanent posting of an Officer, vested with civil and criminal powers; and the regulation of trade so as to encourage commercial intercourse with the Garos and other frontier tribes.

After months of touring the Garo areas, Scott found that the four great Zamindars of the frontier sought to oppress the Garos.

In Karaibari, the former Zamindars reduced nearly all the Garos living in his estate to the condition of ordinary ryots. A few of the Garo frontier chiefs were allowed to remain tributary, on condition of supplying cotton on terms highly favourable to the Zamindars, and making considerable money payments on the occasion of Hindu festivals.

In Kalumalupara, the original zamindary family was less vigorous. The Garos on its borders were virtually independent though some of them paid a nominal tribute in cotton.

In Mechpara, the Zamindar especially in 1776-77, carried out extensive conquests but since he was succeeded by a minor-boy, most of these had been lost by 1816. Only a few outlying Garo villages in the plains remained tributary to him. In the hill tracts, the chiefs were merely tributary, paying cotton on terms favourable to the zamindar and occasionally admitting him as their criminal Judge.

In the Habraghat pargana, the Garos living on the slopes of the hills and the lands adjoining it, had been reduced to unconditional subjection to the Laws and Regulations of Bengal, but they were treated leniently. Their Sardars had been transformed into Jagirdars, charged with the defences of the passes against the tribes of the interior hills. The clans further within the hills, had been released from all dependence on, or connection with, the zamindar, except such as resulted from their resorting to the hats on this estate.

23. Barooah, N.K., David Scott in North-east India, p. 41.
Scott's Proposals, 1816.

Scott proposed to separate all the tributary Garos from the zamindars' control, and take them under government management, compensating the zamindars for any losses which they might show that they had sustained; to appoint the Chiefs of the villages thus brought under the British jurisdiction to be responsible for the peace and the collection of revenue; and to bring the sub-mountainine hats under government control, all duties being abolished there, except upon independent Garos frequenting them.

Regulation X of 1822.

These proposals were approved by the government and the Regulation X of 1822 was passed on the 19 September, 1822, embodying Scott's proposals. Its preamble declared that: "The condition of the Garo mountaineers and of the other rude tribes of the frontier, has, for some time past, attracted much of the attention of the Governor-General in Council, and the circumstances which have conducted to check the progress of civilization amongst them have been fully investigated and ascertained. With a view, therefore, to promote the desirable object of reclaiming these races to the habits of civilized life, it seems necessary that a special plan for the administration of justice, of a kind adapted to their peculiar customs and prejudices, should be arranged and concerted with the headmen and that measures should at the same time be taken for freeing them from any dependence on the zamindars of the British provinces, compensation being, of course, made to the latter for any just pecuniary claims they may have over them".

Accordingly, the territory comprising the thanas of Goalpara, Dhubri and Karaibari had been separated from the jurisdiction of the district of Rangpur and declared the operation of the existing Regulations to be suspended except in the cases of subjects other than the Garos and other hill tribes.

The Regulation also declared that the administration of civil and criminal justice, collection of revenue, superintendence of police and every other branch of government within the areas described above, are vested in an Officer appointed by the Governor-General-in-Council, and denominated the Civil Commissioner for the northeastern parts of Rangpur. The Commissioner shall conduct the same agreeably to the principles and spirit of the existing Regulations, subject to the restrictions and modifications provided thereafter, and to such other alterations and amendments as may from time to time be ordered by the Governor-General-in-Council.

A beginning was thus made of a new form of administration commonly known as the Non-Regulation System. With a highly centralised and all-powerful Executive, the system characterised by a simple and direct procedure was well-intentioned and had the wholesome effect of bringing the authorities well within the reach of the people. The success of the scheme, however, depended on the extent of personal contacts, continuity of policies and mainly on the character, vision and promptitude of the man at the helm of affairs.

To hold the responsibilities of this newly created office, there could hardly have been a better choice than David Scott. As the Commissioner of Cooch Bihar and Joint Magistrate of Rangpur already he had functioned as the channel of communication on behalf of the British government for all business of a political nature.

with Assam, Bhutan and other independent States and Chieftains on
the north-east frontier of Bengal. The negotiations in which Scott
was subsequently employed with some of the tribes and the intimate
knowledge which in consequence he acquired of them eminently fitt-
ed him for the new office. Thus when in December, 1821, Scott was
nominated as the first Civil Commissioner of the north-eastern pa-
rts of Kangpaur, the government spoke of the zeal and intelligence
displayed by Scott, and expressed their desire to make use of his
"talents and local experience". After assumption of office as the
Civil Commissioner, Scott entered into engagements with the indepen-
dent Chiefs and up to 3rd December, 1824, 121 or about two-thirds of
the whole of the independent Chiefs west of Someswari river had att-
tended and signed the requisite engagements. The independent Garo
Chiefs bound themselves in acknowledgement of British authority for
punctual payment of tribute, to report criminal cases to the police,
to assist in their apprehension, investigation, and to endeavour to
suppress the murder of human beings for their skulls. On the fulfil-
ment of these terms, the Chiefs would receive presents from the off-
icers of the government.

29. Barpujari, H.K., Problem of the Hill Tribes North-East Frontier,
   P.25.
32. Assam Secretariat, General Department; No. 618(a) of 1805-66.
So long as Mr. David Scott was able to give his personal attention, the Garo frontiers seem to be quite peaceful and it really seemed as if the Garos would be one of the first races to accept British rule. But the outbreak of the war with Burma called away Scott from his work among the Garos as he was appointed Governor-General's Agent for North-Eastern Frontier on 20 November, 1823. His place was taken by the principal Assistant of Goalpara who was aided by a Garo Surbarakar with his headquarters at Singimari. For many years the British government maintained a policy of non-interference with the interior of the hills. The tributary Garos paid with great irregularity the tribute which they agreed to pay. Raids were frequent, and were followed either by expeditions or by blockade of the submontane markets. Some little influence was occasionally brought to bear upon the tributary Garos through visits paid to them by the Principal Assistant of Goalpara, but these annual tours were not regularly carried out as designed by Scott, and any intermission in them was followed by an increase in the number of raids. Therefore, whenever there was any disturbance, fresh or new engagements were made with the offending clans.

Punitive expeditions against the A'bengs or the western Garos, 1822-1835.

The A'bengs are one of the sub-divisions of the Garo tribe that occupied the western portions of the Garo Hills district. They were called the Dussanee and Cheanee Garos by the British.

34. Report on the Administration of Assam for 1892-93.
simply because of their habitations bordering those portions of Ka-llumalupara held by the ten-anna and six-anna share-holders.

The A'bens came into the picture in 1822-23, when they were first assessed at 196 Narainee rupees. But on their throwing off their allegiance to the British government, Scott despatched an expedition under a Garo Surbarakar Mirza Bundally Beg. Mirza carried out his task successfully and all the Garo chiefs came in, submitted and agreed to pay their dues through the chief of their village. But the amount of revenue was raised to 200 Narainee rupees in 1824-25. The A'bens continued to evade the payment of revenue up to the year 1832. Besides, the A'bens of Kangtupara murdered four Burmese hunters who went into their hills for the purpose of shooting wild elephants. Therefore, Major Davidson sent a force under the command of Mirza Bundally Beg, consisting of a Company of Sebundies and 100 Burmese settlers at Singimaree. The party proceeded via Tikrikilla and then to the east and reached Cherangiri village where Mirza stockaded the party and commenced clearing a road towards Rangtupara employing 120 coolies. The Garos suddenly attacked the party but was repulsed with a loss of one sebundy and two Burmese and two sebundies and one Burmese wounded. The loss on the Garo side was 25 men. After this, the Garo Chiefs came in and surrendered and promised to pay a fine of Rs.1000/- which was imposed on the village of Rangtupara for the crime committed.

In spite of their promises, the Chiefs, on one excuse or another evaded paying their arrears and fines. Therefore, in 1834-35, Lieutenant Brodie was deputed to make enquiries into the reason of their non-payment and to reduce them to submission. On his arrival at Bangalkatta, the Chiefs came in and tendered their submission,
and entered into agreement with the government as shown in Appendix A. On enquiry, it was discovered that some of the Garos did actually pay their revenues to the Chiefs appointed to collect it but the latter never credited it to the government. Lieutenant Brodie, therefore, made arrangements that the revenues be paid direct to Hongring Laskar, who was made responsible for the whole amount. The revenues would also be paid in Company's rupees instead of in Saraine rupees.

Peasants' Insurrection on the Garo-Mymensing borders

in 1825 and 1833.

In 1825, peasants' insurrection broke out in the Sherepur pargana of the Mymensing district in which the Garo plain dwellers were also involved. The areas lying between the Sherepur and the Karaibari zamindaries were claimed by both the zamindars of Sherepur and Karaibari and its inhabitants including the Garos were oppressed by them. The rent of these plain lands cultivated by the Garos was put down in the settlement of 1793 at Rs. 20/-.

But the zamindars of Sherepur had never carried out the permanent Settlement rules, and always collected cesses from their tenants at their discretion. In November, 1824, when called on by government to provide supplies for troops passing to Assam to fight the Burmese, they made this as an excuse for imposing heavy exactions on the ryots. The ryots appealed to Tippoo, son of a Muhammadan Fakir, who claimed to possess miraculous power, who advised them to pay only nominal rents. On this, the peasantry took up arms and refused to give the customary labour or pay rent. In spite of these, the total rent was increased to Rs. 20,000. In view of an enhancement of rent, these peasant cultivators rose...

36. Reynold, C.S., A Narrative of our connections with the Lusanne and Cheanee Garrows; vide J.A.S.B., Vol. 18, part 1, 1849.
in arms. In January, 1825, a body of 700 men under Tippoo, assembled to attack the zamindars of Sherepur, and serious fighting took place. The district authority then intervened and after some trouble, suppressed the riots, by putting Tippoo and his followers in jail. The grievances of the Garos were met by a resettlement of the tract which was held not to be within the permanently settled estates of the zamindars, and for sometime the district was quiet.

In 1833, however, the Garo ryots again stirred up a Peasant insurrection, but nothing serious came of this. The rent grievances had been settled by the revenue authorities.

Renewal of Disturbances on the Assam side, 1836.

In 1836, it was reported that the independent villages of Hullal and Khoorgaon were in arrears. Though they were willing to pay their dues, they were prevented by the Garos of the independent village of Subkeejora. Considering independence of the Garos a "mere lawlessness of the banditti", Jenkins was determined to subdue these turbulent hillmen to strict obedience at the earliest possible opportunity.

The government of India concurred with the views of the Agent, but expeditions into the hills could not be sent out during the rains. In winter, Jenkins directed J. Strong to advance with a detachment under Lieutenant Abbot en route to Hullal and Khoorgaon. He was also to bring home to the independent Chiefs of Subkeejora that their interference in the collection of government dues could

not but be treated as an act of insolence on their part, which might however be condoned on the payment of a fine together with the expenses of moving troops within a specified period; failing this, he was to treat them as enemies. As regards Hullal and Khoorgaon, if they withhold payment under false pretence, he was to impose a fine upon them. Should they desert their villages, he was to burn their dwellings, destroy the crops and such grains as could not be consumed or carried off. Likewise, he was to proceed against all those who were in arrears and refused to come to terms. The amount of arrears payable by the defaulters was insignificant, yet the Agent was determined to realise it. What he wanted was the assertion of the rights of the paramount power.

In December, the Agent to the Governor-General paid a visit to Singimari. He was awaited upon by the Luskars and headmen including the Chiefs of the A'beng Garos whose relations with the government were far from being friendly. On enquiry, it was found out most of the disturbances had arisen from the oppressive conduct of the native officers appointed by the government at the frontier markets. Not only they paid their dues but some of them volunteered their services against the Garos of Amjang who continued to be refractory. Coercive measures against Hullal and Khoorgaon had therefore become unnecessary. Even the Chiefs of Subkeejora paid the fine and also agreed to pay the same revenue that was paid by their neighbours. Jenkins not unreasonably believed that if these chiefs had been brought in more frequent and intimate contact with European Officers, the occasion for sending troops would not have occurred.

42. Ibid., No. 394.
He, therefore, suggested to the government of India that the officer in-charge of the Garo hats should make Singimari his headquarters at least for 3 months in a year and that the Kutchary should be rebuilt.

In order to supervise the collection of tribute and also to ensure security of the frontier, in March, 1835, John Strong, a sub-Assistant, was placed in-charge of the Garo mahals under order of the Principal Assistant, Goalpara. About that time, there was a certain amount of unrest along the frontier. An expedition was sent up into the hills in 1837 under John Strong. The arrears were realised, many of the Garo villages tendered their submission, and all this was effected without any loss of life on either side.

Troubles about new Coins, 1838.

In January, 1838, Company's new currency was circulated at the frontier hats of the Garos. The Garos, however, refused to accept them and returned to their homes with all the cotton they had brought to the market. Therefore, Mr. Strong paid a visit to a number of hats and persuaded them to take the new rupee but they determined not to take them. In consequence of this, Mr. Strong apprehended that some affray might be committed by the Garos. To avoid this, he allowed both the Garos and the traders to make their bargains in any coin mutually agreed upon. The only order given was that the traders must pay the duty to the government in the Company's new rupees.

43. Barpujari, H.K., Problem of the Hill Tribes, pp. 80-81.
44. Ibid., p. 69.
45. Mackenzie, A., North-Eastern Frontier of Bengal, p. 256.
46. Letters received from Miscellaneous Quarters, Vol. 3, No. 37 of 1838.
Mr. Strong was instructed that in the event of anything like a general rising on the part of the Garos, he should call for the military aid.

On 17th January, 1836, however, Strong reported that "as they are now at liberty to accept or reject any coin they may think fit", the Garos had already taken the new rupee. Thereby the expected troubles had been averted.

Murders and Raids, 1839-1847.

In July, 1839, two Assamese women were murdered while returning from a market in Laki duar by the Garos of the hills near Damra. The same people had also long shown a contumacious attitude and refused to pay the government tribute but in consequence of the reduction of the strength of the 1st Sebundy Regiment, the government has found it impracticable to send any detachment.

In April, 1840, Major Davidson brought to the notice of the government the murder of a whole family consisting of seven members by some hill Garos of the ten-anna mahal. In November, 1840, the murder of two more dependent Garos by the Garos of the Damra duar was reported again.

Instead of punishing them for their outrages and contumacy, Captain Jenkins proposed (i) the appointment of a separate officer to superintend the affairs of the Garos, and (ii) a survey of the hills on which the zamindars encroached much. But the

47. Letters received from Miscellaneous quarters, Vol. 3, No. 108 of 1836.
50. Ibid. Vol. 11, No. 70 of 1840.
52. Mackenzie, A., North-Eastern Frontier of Bengal, p. 256.
Governor-General-in-Council replied that "the appointment of a district officer to superintend the affairs of the Garo tribes as recommended by Captain Jenkins is not called for, but we trust that the conciliatory and civilising policy formerly chalked out by David Scott and Captain Jenkins will be observed." However, the expedition was nominally sanctioned, but did not come off for want of officer and troops.

In August, 1844, there were fresh Garo murders. The government again refused to allow a display of military force. But in the cold season of 1845-46, Captain Sturt accompanied by the Commissioner visited all the frontier markets as in the opinion of the Commissioner, this personal contact was above all things necessary for the purpose of retaining and extending their influence over the Garo Chiefs and gaining their goodwill and confidence. The mission was successful as all the chiefs and Sirdars whom they had met professed themselves ready to obey all commands that might be issued.

Again, in the winter of 1846-47, Lieutenant Dalton renewed the policy of personal contacts with the Garo Chiefs by paying visits to the greater parts of the frontier markets.

54. Ibid. Vol. 11, No. 143 of 1841.
56. Letters issued to Government, Vol. 13 (a), No. 38 1/2 of 1846.
57. Letters received from Government, Vol. 25, No. 607 of 1847.
Renewal of Rebellion of the A'bengs of the Western Garos.

1847-1848.

It may be recalled that in the winter of 1834, a military force under Ensign Brodie was sent against this tribe on account of their open opposition to the government. Since that period, they have been constantly disobedient and in arrears. In 1847, a revolting massacre was committed by some A'beng Garos on the whole family of the Chief of the Rissogiri village for demanding their tribute. A small party of sepoys was at once sent towards Rissogiri with a view to the apprehension or surrender the individuals the-individually accused of the murder of their chief and massacre of the family. The party was however attacked by a large body of Garos, who also killed the interpreter and severely wounded the guide and one of the leading sepoys. The Garos were repulsed but the party was compelled to retire.

In January, 1848, a strong detachment of sepoys of 2nd Assam Light Infantry under Lieutenant Belli was despatched to subdue these rebellious people. The expedition was led by Captain C.O. Reynolds who brought them under subjection after one month of coercions and persuasions.

Raid on the Assam side, 1852-53.

It was reported in June, 1852 that some Garos have attacked the police Burkandazes and Mohurer who came to quell the disturbances created by them at the Mibaree hat. Sub-Assistant Driver, who

59. Ibid.
60. A Narrative of our connections with the Dussanee and Cheanne Garrows, J.A.S.B., of 1849.
was deputed to enquire into the above affray could not identify the principal offenders. It appears, however, that both the independent and the tributary Garos have had a part in it. In August, two Garos named Thuring and Singsing were tried for the murder of one Bishtoo Kachari.

In September, there were reports of fresh outrages and great alarm seemed to prevail in the neighbourhood of the Garo Hills. These frequent outrages can be attributed to the want of constant and periodical visits by the European officers on the frontier markets. In October, there were five cases of murder and robbery committed by the Garos of the interior hills. Lieutenant Agnew, principal Assistant at Goalpara, proposed an expedition into the hills to apprehend the offenders, to inflict fines, to keep as hostages the sons of some of the chiefs. He also suggested the expediency of constructing a good road through the hills, the education of the Garo lads and their employment subsequently under the government.

The government of India approved generally of these proposals. Accordingly, a detachment of the 2nd Assam Light Infantry was sent from Goalpara under Lieutenant McDonell to accompany Lieutenant Agnew in proceeding against the villages implicated in recent outrages. While thus proceeding, the coolies employed to open a road were suddenly attacked by the Garos and Lieutenant Agnew being unable to capture anyone, burned their villages and destroyed their crops. But their firm refusal to submit has convinced Lieutenant Agnew that any attempt to enforce obedience on the Garos by military

63. Ibid. Vol. 18, No. 132 of 1852.
64. Ibid. Vol. 18, No. 154 of 1852.
expedition would be abortive. Therefore he next proposed to the Commissioner, the closing of the frontier markets until they surrender the delinquents. The Commissioner objected to this proposal on the ground that until it will be difficult to shut them up from all intercourse even on the Assam side and much more so to prevent their getting supplies from the side of Mymensing. As a result, it will not effect the Garos themselves so much as it would be to the people of the plains, who mainly depended for their livelihood on the cotton trade carried on with the hill Garos. The Commissioner wrote saying, "However, if Lieutenant Agnew can effect anything like an effectual close of the plains, the period during which it may be necessary to shut the hats may not be long protracted, and His Lordship approve of the measure, I will desire Lieutenant Agnew to enforce the seclusion of the Garrows with the utmost possible vigilance". 67.

Lord Dalhousie’s views on Garo policy: At this time, Lord Dalhousie recorded the following minutes on the Garo policy: “I have already said that I deprecate these extreme measures, while anything else remained untried. But as these savages will neither treat, submit, nor rest, it is due to our own subjects, whose lives and properties are in jeopardy, that we should have recourse to punishment, which though severe, is the only thing that they comprehend or feel. I consider that further military operations would be a waste of life uselessly. It is probable that the exclusion of the Garos from the plains will be effectual. It has been so when tried on the hill people of the opposite frontier to the north-west.

I request, therefore, that they may be rigidly excluded from the plains, and that the chiefs may be informed that the exclusion

will be continued till satisfaction is made by the delivery of the murderers. They are at the same time to be informed that, if they are found in the plains while thus in resistance to the government, they will be seized and disposed of as the government may think fit.

I am aware that these measures will probably inflict injury on the innocent while punishing the guilty. I regret it, but individual interests must yield to the public interests, when there is, as in this case, no alternative." 68.

This measure proved successful to some extent as three of the Garo offenders in the late murders were surrendered and the Lushkars promised to apprehend such offenders as may can succeed in laying hands upon.

Views of Colonel Jenkins and Mr. Mills on Garo policy: Colonel Jenkins, the Commissioner was, however, strongly of opinion that their only hope of securing permanent tranquility lay in taking military possessions of the hills. On the other hand, Mr. Mills was of the opinion that "Unless a European functionary could reside in the interior and superintend the administration ........ we should not attempt to extend our rule over unprofitable hills." Mr. Mills advocated severe treatment of villages concerned in raids; the opening of a road as had been before proposed; and the maintenance of more frequent intercourse with the Garos by the European Officers of Goalpara. Nothing was, however, done in this regard.

Between 1853 and 1856, there seems to have been a break in the story of Garo outrages. In 1856, they recommenced their numerous and atrocious raids on both the Goalpara and Mymensing frontiers. After every such outrage, attempts were made to procure the surrender of the offenders but with no result. Yet the government did not formulate any comprehensive policy towards the Garos. The post of Sarbarakar, a native official entrusted with the maintenance of law and order among the Garos, through whom the British maintained communications with the Garos for many years, was abolished; effected various changes in the hats and in the Garo frontier police, but no radical reform of policy, such as the circumstances called for, was undertaken.

Between May 1857 and October 1859, nine raids were made by the Garos on the Goalpara, and twenty persons killed. The offer of rewards, closing of hats and summons to chiefs were of no use in getting the surrender of the offenders. In 1859, the Commissioner of Assam reported that Garo raids were on the increase, and the policy of closing the hats against the Garos had proved a failure. He, therefore, strongly recommended the return to the old policy of sending punitive expeditions into the hills for chastising the offenders and urged the re-appointment of a Garo Sarbarakar. In February, 1860, an expedition was sent into the hills under Mr. Beckett in charge of Goalpara Division. Though Mr. Beckett did not succeed in arresting any of the offenders having been obliged to return from

a deficiency of supplies, his advance was said to have had a good effect as he has ascertained the extent of the outrage committed, identified many of the persons concerned in it, and obtained all the requisite knowledge of the localities; thus enabling them to take any measure in future. Though the government approved of the re-appointment of the Sarbaghakar, no steps were taken to put it into effect and no definite policy was laid down for the future.

On 21 March, 1860, reports came again of the outrage committed by a body of Garos in Sherepore pargana of Mymensing. Hardly had one month passed, occurrences of two further outrages committed in the Karaiabari pargana were reported, in which, in the first instance, 9 persons were killed and in the second case, 5 killed.

At last, it was decided to send a strong expedition into the hills in the winter season of 1860-61, to re-open communications with the highland Garos and to increase the establishment of Sarbaghakar.

Assam Commissioner's proposals for direct management, 1861:

In February 1861, Colonel Jenkins, the Commissioner of Assam, made the following proposals to the Government with a view to secure peace in the Garo frontiers:

Firstly, to take all the Garo villages from which the zamindars of Sherepore and Shosung claimed to have the right of taking revenues, under the direct management of Government, as had been done on the Goalpara side by Regulation X of 1822;

Secondly, to make a good road all along the Garo fron-
ntiers joining all the hats together;

Thirdly, to raise a police militia of 100 sepoys, with officers for the protection of the frontiers;

Fourthly, to appoint a Sub-Assistant for the special charge of the Garo Hills and frontiers; and

Lastly, to re-impose a duty on Garo cotton to be collected at their hats, in order to meet the expenses likely to attend the adoption for the foregoing measures.

The Commissioner regretted that although the Garos have been nearly a century under their jurisdiction, it is not on record that they ever had a single Officer who could converse with them in their own language. He, therefore, strongly recommended that the Garos must be removed from the jurisdiction of the Zamindars and be brought immediately under the vigilant superintendence of an English Officer.

The Government immediately approved this recommendation, but postponed the other proposals.

Expedition of 1861.

The expedition, having been approved by the Government was sent in 1861 into the Garo Hills. The expedition was proceeded under Captain Morton from the Mymensing and under Lieutenant Chambers from the Goalpara side. Lieutenant Chambers did not meet with any opposition, and though he was unsuccessful in the capture of the murderers concerned in the border feuds on the Goalpara side, the object of his expedition in other respects was sufficiently attained and great credit seems due to him, for the way in which he

conducted it. He showed to the Garos that their fastnesses were not inaccessible to British troops and that they could only find safety by flight leaving their villages and crops at their mercy, and the result was that not only did many dependent chiefs make payment of revenues to him which they withheld for many years, but independent chiefs came into his camps to tender their submission and fealty.

Captain Morton proceeded to Durgapore-Shusong in December 1860, and thence entered upon a course of proceedings which ended in the capture of some forty Garos, all of them more or less implicated in the late massacres in the Mymensing district. Thus the result was satisfactory and most creditable to Captain Morton.

In forwarding the report of this expedition, the Commissioner once again urged the appointment of a Special Officer to have charge of the Garo Hills and the construction of two roads from Goalpara, at the foot of the hills to Karaibari, and thence to the boundaries of Sylhet, and another one right across the Garo Hills. The Goalpara and Karaibari road, the Commissioner said, "would restore bad communications between Assam and Bengal, and through Bengal the rest of the world, and the road across the Garo Hills would what the road across the Cosseah Hills had done, reclaim the inhabitants."

The proposal was then referred to the Public Works Department. At this time, the Secretary of State commented, "However, necessary it may be to teach the inhabitants of these wild districts that they are not inaccessible to the power of Government, it is very clear that we can not hope to reclaim them from their savage habits; or to induce amongst them a higher state of civilization by the more display of military strength."

These objects can only be effected by peaceful means and by gradually increasing our intercourse with them, ......... I shall be glad to learn that the proposed annual visits of the principal Assistant Commissioner ....... have established the desired influence with the Chiefs. Should this not be the case, it will be for you to consider whether the permanent location in this territory of a Special and carefully selected Officer will not be necessary.

I shall await with interest the decision of the Public Works Department as to the expediency of opening the two roads recommended by Captain Hopkins. Should the funds necessary for the purpose be available, it should not be forgotten that, independently of the importance of lending every possible aid to the cultivation of cotton in a district favourable to its growth, there is nothing which will tend more to the general improvement and civilization of the country than the increase of its commerce."

Raid on the Goalpara side, 1864-65.

The conciliatory and civilising policy of the Government has failed to produce the desired effect on the Garos, as they, in June 1864, committed another heinous murder in the Daggal village situated on the Goalpara side. As a punishment, the Commissioner, (i) closed the hats of Damra, Jeera and Nibaree to the people of the Daggal village, (ii) threatened to punish the whole village if the murderers were not delivered up and (iii) sent up the Garo Sarbarakkar to occupy the village of Daggal with 25 men. To these, the Garos replied by committing another act of murders.

82. Ibid. Vol. 16 of 1864.
At last, the Commissioner despatched a police party but it was repulsed. The police party was sent up for the second time, but it was once again repulsed. Therefore, the government sent up a stronger police party under Mr. Dundas, who entered the Daggal village on the 12th January 1865. Daggal was occupied by the police party for several days during which efforts were made to persuade the people to the surrender of the murderers and at the same time, to endeavour to lay the foundation of the conciliatory policy towards the Garos. So, far from using threats of fining, the Commissioner suggested to offer a reward of Rs. 500, to the inhabitants of the Daggal village for the surrender of the murderers to be paid them on their conviction.

Raids on the Mymensing side, 1866.

The raids on the Goalpara side was followed by more serious raids on the Mymensing side. In March 1866, the Commissioner reported about serious raids in which six persons belonging to the village of Sebalgiri were murdered by a party from the village of Dikkrangiri. Besides these raids, a young girl named Dharij was speared as she lay asleep in her mother's arms for the sake of her skull. The Commissioner regretted that on all these occasions, the Garo police have proved themselves timid, unenterprising and incompetent. However, in pursuance of the accepted policy of conciliations, the Commissioner, Colonel Henry Hopkinson wrote, "I again venture to advocate the appointment of a Special Officer as

83. Letters issued to Government, Vol. 27, No. 20 of 1864.
84. Ibid., Vol. 27, No. 23 of 1864.
85. Ibid., Vol. 31, No. 6 of 1865.
Superintendent of the Garrow Hills; there is a high hill called Toora pahar, supposed to be healthy and pretty well above fever range, accessible from the Goalpara district and centrally situated in the Garrow country, surrounded by Garrow villages where an officer might be safely located and whence he might gradually bring all the neighbouring tribes under his influence."

But all these conciliatory measures having failed, an expedition was sent into the hills under Charles Baker, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, who was to be joined by a police party under Lieutenant Williamson. They succeeded in punishing and burning the offending villages, but on enquiry, it was discovered that the main cause of the Garo raids had been the attempts made by the Shoosung Zamindar to exact rents from the Garos.

87. Ibid. Vol. 32, No. 188 of 1866.
In the midst of these prevailing raids and increasing heinous crimes, the Lieutenant-Governor proposed to detach the district of Goalpara and Garo Hills from the control of the Assam Commissioner and place them under the Commissioner of Cooch Behar as two separate districts. Accordingly, it was proposed to appoint a separate Officer to be in charge of the Garo Hills district.

Sanction being accorded to this, Lieutenant W. J. Williamson who had shown special aptitude in dealing with the Garos, was gazetted to the post as Assistant Commissioner on the 12th July, 1866. But owing to his having to officiate as Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara during the year 1866-1867, and to orders defining his jurisdiction and powers, not having been received, he was unable to proceed and settle in the hills until December, 1867.

On the occupation of the Garo Hills, the government drew up a rough judicial system for the administration of the district. It runs as follows:

**Boundary Question:** With regard to the demarcation of boundary of the new district, Lieutenant Williamson has been directed to take for granted the boundary between the hills and the Mymensing district as has been laid down already by the Revenue Survey on the southern side and to depend on the topographical survey party and their demarcations on the other sides.

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88. Letters Received from Government, Vol. 53(b), No. 4098 of 1866.
89. Ibid. Vol. 53(b), No. 5492 of 1866 (Judicial).
90. Ibid. Vol. 53(b), No. 5502 of 1866 (Judicial).
91. Government of Bengal, Papers 6; No. 7 of 1873.
Annual Meetings: The Lieutenant-Governor approved the proposal of
Lieutenant Williamson to have annual meetings with the Garo Chiefs
and sanctioned the disbursement of Rs.3,200, for entertaining the
assembled chiefs and followers and for making presents to them. He
wrote to the Assistant Commissioner saying, "You should yourself en-
deavour to be present at these annual meetings as often as possible."

Duties of Laskar: The offices of Laskar and Zimmadar have been amal-
gamated. As a result, police and revenue responsibilities rested on
one headman and the office of Laskar corresponded with that of
Lollois of Jaintia Hills and of Gaonbura in the Naga Hills. Under
this scheme, the Laskars will, with the assistance of Panchayets, try
within their respective jurisdictions all criminal offences not of
a heinous character or in which persons of other tribes or villages
are not concerned. With the same reservations, the Laskars will try
all civil suits with the assistance of Panchayets. The Laskars will
also be responsible for the collection of revenues, receiving a com-
mission not exceeding 20 per cent.

Powers of Assistant Commissioner: All criminal cases beyond the com-
petence of the village authorities, shall be tried by the Assistant
Commissioner. The Assistant Commissioner shall in all his proceedings
follow the spirit of the Code of Criminal Procedure as closely as
possible. He will exercise the powers of a Magistrate as described
in the Criminal procedure Code. An appeal shall lie from his decision
to the Commissioner. For the trial of all cases punishable by death,
or in which a heavier punishment than seven years' imprisonment is
called for, the Assistant Commissioner will exercise the powers of
a Session Judge with the aid of Assessors, but no sentence of death
is to be carried into effect till confirmed by the Commissioner.

In Civil cases, the Assistant Commissioner should simply
control the action of the Laskars, removing from their hands, at his
discretion any cases of importance. Generally, he should try all civil cases in which persons of different tribes or villages are parties.

**Appeal:** There should be no appeal as of right from the decisions of the village authorities, but the Assistant Commissioner will have the power of calling for any case and trying it himself.

**Nature of Revenue assessment:** The Government directed Lieutenant Williamson to ascertain in a cautious manner the general feelings of the chiefs in regard to the substitution of a capitation for a house tax.

**Police establishment:** The following police establishment was sanctioned by the Government:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Inspectors at Rs. 100 each</td>
<td>200.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sub-Inspectors at Rs. 50 each</td>
<td>100.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Head Constables at Rs. 15 each</td>
<td>90.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 Constables at Rs. 9 each</td>
<td>900.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good conduct pay</td>
<td>60.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Allowance</td>
<td>200.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>40.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery</td>
<td>10.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total --- 1,600.

The Police force will be entirely under the orders of Lieutenant Williamson, who was vested with the powers of a District Superintendent of Police.
Office establishment: The following office establishment for the Assistant Commissioner has been sanctioned by the Government:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
<th>As.</th>
<th>P.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 English writer</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Assistant English writer</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bengali writer</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Garo Sarbarakar</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Interpreter</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Jemadar</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Receivables at Rs.8 each</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Beldars at Rs.7-8 each</td>
<td></td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 482

Medical establishment: The sanctioned medical establishment are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
<th>As.</th>
<th>P.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Native Doctor</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Dresser</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Sweeper</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 34

Conveyance: The Lieutenant-Governor opined that four elephants would be sufficient for the requirement of the Assistant Commissioner.

Selection of Site: The selection of a proper site for the headquarters of the Assistant Commissioner has been entrusted to the Assistant Commissioner.

Buildings: For the construction of civil buildings, a credit of Rs.10,000 has been sanctioned to be placed at the disposal of Lieutenant Williamson.
The Lieutenant-Governor approved the proposal to construct a line of bridle road from Singimari to Toora Pahar, and thence to Hymensing district. The Public Works Department has been requested to place at Lieutenant Williamson's disposal a credit of Rs. 10,000 in 1866-67 and Rs. 10,000 in 1867-68, for this purpose.

The execution of all these works have been left entirely in Lieutenant Williamson's hands.

This experiment proved completely successful. The Deputy Commissioner and his police force brought almost instant quiet to the district. Hearty aid was given to him by the Garos, and the headmen, relieved from the dread of retaliatory feuds, at once began to perform their duty to deliver up offenders, and to enforce the payment of revenues. Raids ceased, and more than a hundred villages, theretofore independent voluntary became tributary. The station at Tura was established, police raised, and good roads between Bankachar and Balu in the plains opened out.

But the policy of consolidating the British authority and demarcation of boundaries of the new administrative district could not be successfully implemented owing to the persistent defiance of the land-holders of Goalpara and Hymensingh.

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92. Letters Received from Government, Vol. 53(b), No. 5502 of 1866.
93. Government of Bengal, Papers 6, No. 7 of 1872.
94. Government of Bengal, No. 70 of 1873 (Judicial).
Act XXII of 1869: To secure this objective, it became necessary to prevent effectually the interferences of the land-holders of the plains and this was effected by the passing of the Act XXII of 1869.

According to this Act, the Garo Hills district is bounded on the north and west by the Goalpara district, on the south, by the Mymensingh district as defined by the Revenue Survey of 1857 and on the east, by the Khasi Hills.

This Act also removed the Garo Hills district from the jurisdiction of the Courts of Civil and Criminal Judicature and from the control of the Offices of revenue constituted by the Regulations of Bengal Code.

The administration of Civil and Criminal Justice and the superintendence of the settlement and realization of the Public revenue and of all matters relating to rent within the Garo Hills were vested in such Officers as the Lieutenant-Governor might appoint.

The Lieutenant-Governor might prevent the collection by Zamindars or other persons of any cesses, tributes or exactations from the inhabitants of the Garo Hills and might make arrangements for their collections direct by the Officers of Government, making such compensation to Zamindars or others justly entitled thereto, for the relinquishment of the same.

With regard to the question of disputed boundary, the Act provided that the Lieutenant-Governor might appoint Officers who would consider and determine in which side of the boundary such place might lie, and the order made thereon by such Officers shall be final.  

95. Calcutta Gazette, September, 1869.
In 1870, the Survey party entered the district, and it was resolved to explore as much of the independent Garo country as was possible, in the course of surveying that which acknowledged British authority. During that year no opposition whatever was offered by the independent villages, of which about 60 still remained in the heart of the district. In March, 1871, however, a survey coolie, who had been sent to clear a station on the summit of the Miminram hill, was seized by some Garos of Rongmagiri, and was tortured and murdered, and his head was kept as a trophy. This put a stop to survey operations for the time, and in the winter of 1871-'72, an expedition was led against the offending villages. In the summer of 1872, some independent villages raided upon the protected Garo villages which has afforded assistance to the expedition against Rongmagiri. But they were attacked and occupied by the Deputy Commissioner. The Government at last decided that the whole of the country which had hitherto been left to its independence should be brought under the same management as the rest.

Accordingly, an expedition was sent to wipe out the last vestiges of local independence. The expeditionary force was divided into three columns. One column, under Captain Davis, entered the hills from the Goalpara district on the north; a second under Mr. Daly, entered from the Mymensingh district, on the south; the main column, under Captain Williamson, marched from Tura. It was arranged that each column should march through independent tracts, visiting and enforcing the submissions of all villages on its way; and it was hoped that all would meet at a central rendezvous.

96. Government of Bengal, Papers 6 - File No. 7 of 1872 (General).
The expedition was singularly successful. All resistance was easily overpowered, skulls were collected and burnt, and Las-kars were appointed. Father Pianazzi mentions an interesting incident occurred during the last resistance offered by the Garos:

One of the last portions of the interior to submit was Rongrenggiri. Humour had reached those independent Chiefs that Government soldiers had hollow spears that spat fire at a great distance; and Gwal, the bravest of them, who acted as a sort of Commander-in-chief, was impressed by the news. He determined to counter-act and so while the other Chiefs and warriors were down-hearted at the unwelcome news, he busied himself in heating up his spear and thrusting it, red hot, into a banana stem. To his great joy, the iron cooled down at once. Therefore every Garo warrior was directed to bind large pieces of succulent banana trunks in two moist layers over his bamboo shield and this discovery swept fear away from the assembled warriors.

It was very early morning. The sepoys had come up and were quietly camping in a clearing in the jungle some way from Rongreng village and the Garos planned to take them by surprise. In high spirits and full of confidence in their new shields, two-edged swords and spears in readiness, they stealthily crawled through the thick jungle and soon were near the camp. They waited and listened but all was quiet. So they yelled and made a wild rush but before they could reach the clearing, the roar of a valley stopped them. Deafened and disconcerted by the noise, they halted and wavered. A second volley thundered and there on the ground prostrate on their banana shields lay Gwal and two of their bravest. Confidence melted away and they gave up their fight.

97. Government of Bengal, File No. 15 of 1873 (Judicial).
Events between 1874 - 1880.

The Annual administration reports of the Garo Hills district for these years were uneventful except for some cases of murder and burning of hamlets.

One such case was the attack on two Bengali travellers, one of whom was murdered and his head was taken by two Garos of Kingigiri. The criminals were however arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The second case was a shocking one. A man named Thoding of Rakmanpara village felt insulted by his fellow villager, Kengkul, but instead of revenging himself by an attack on him, burnt down the village and as the frightened women and children ran out of their burning houses, he cut them down. At the news of these heinous murders, the Deputy Commissioner deputed Mr. Cawley and Dr. Perries to the spot. After three weeks of struggles, Thoding was caught, tried, sentenced to death and executed at Tura on the 5 June, 1875.

Again in 1877, a Barwari merchant and his servant were barbarously murdered while travelling in the hills for trading purposes. The rest of the years under review were markedly quiet and nothing of importance has occurred.

The Inner Line Regulations.

The unrestricted intercourse which existed between the British subjects and the hill tribes frequently led to quarrels and sometimes, to serious disturbances. In order to prevent the recurrence of these troubles, power was given to the local

99. Annual Administration Reports of the Garo Hills for 1875-76.
100. Annual Administration Report on Assam for 1877-78.
authorities by the Inner Line regulations. The first Inner Line 
Regulation was passed in 1873 for all the districts of the east-
ern frontier of Bengal. But since the Inner Line Regulation 
of 1873 was not found applicable to the Garo Hills, it was made 
compulsory that the following persons have a pass or licence 
before they enter the district. They are:— the elephant-Catchers, 
wood-cutters, Hunters, Traders in arms and ammunitions, Collectors 
of rubber and Ivory and the Innoculators. In the meantime, 
the Chief Commissioner was asked to draw up an Inner Line Regul-
ations for the Garo Hills district. Accordingly, in 1875, the 
Chief Commissioner submitted a draft Regulation known as the 
"Regulation I of 1875" which he proposed to introduce in the 
Garo Hills in the place of Regulation of 1873.

The Government of India approved the draft Regulation and 
it came to be known as the "Regulation I of 1875". The regulation prohibited any person not being native of the Garo Hills 
district from cutting wood, hunting animals, trading in arms or 
ammunitions, collecting wax, ivory, rubber or other jungle products 
and practising inoculations, without a licence.

The Regulation also made it unlawful for any British 
subject or other person not being a native of the Garo Hills 
district, to acquire any interest in land or the product of land 
within the limits of the said district without the sanction of 
the Chief Commissioner.

101. Calcutta Gazette, August, 1873.
103. Ibid. A, November, 1874, No. 5.
104. Ibid. A, July, 1875, No. 23.
105. Ibid. A, January, 1876, No. 1.
Further, the Regulation stated that whoever kills or captures, or attempts to kill or capture or abets, the killing or capturing of a wild elephant without written permission shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs. 200 for every such elephant.

Extension of the Regulation I of 1876.

On the expiry of the Regulation I of 1876 on the 31st March, 1881, the Governor-General-in-Council extended its operations for a further period of one year, ending on the 31st March, 1882. This regulation I of 1882 contained the same provisions as the earlier regulations. The implementations were left in the hand of the Deputy Commissioner of the Sario Hills district.

Sonaram R. Sangma and his National Movements, 1899-1908.

The Jaros, under the leadership of Sonaram R. Sangma laid claims to the following:

1. The Habraghat Pargana in the Goalpara district;
2. The Nazarana Mahals;
3. Stopping of Forest Reserves, and
4. Abolition of Begar or Forced Labour.

The movement was first brought to the notice of the local administration in September, 1902 by the receipt of a memorial addressed to the Government of India by the Jaros, in

106. The Gazette of India, March, 1876.
107. Foreign Prog., May, 1881, No. 20.
108. Ibid., April, 1882, No. 1.
which they petitioned against the alleged encroachments by the Bijni and Bechpara zamindars into Garo lands.

It seemed that in order to keep the Garos of the inner hills from raiding down upon the plains, the zamindars made some sort of arrangement with the Garos of the foot hills who in return for keeping out the wild Garos behind them, used to levy various tolls upon the villagers of the plains. But this arrangement had broken down in 1816 when David Scott was deputed to enquire into the grievances of the Garos in consequence of persistent and violent raids by the hill Garos. In 1831, Scott turned his attention again to the Garos and made arrangement with the Garo headmen of the foot hill villages, by which they accepted in extinction of their former claims on the plain villages, the grant of 21 plots of rent-free land, known as the "Bibhagnama Plots", with a promise that in future they would keep the wild hill men out. This promise, however, it has been legally decided was not the essence of the contract, the concession of the rent-free land being granted not for this service but in extinction of the alleged rights to levy dues; and on this ground the Civil Court in 1877 refused to allow the zamindar to resume the grants on the ground that that the service was no longer rendered.

But the immediate cause of the agitation was the resurvey and demarcation of Beckett's and Kelso's lines which were undertaken in 1899 at the instance of the Bijni zamindar. The root of the trouble was that the survey was undertaken without giving notice to anyone in general, or to the Garos in particular, and left the amlahs of the Bijni estate to set up their own marks after the surveyor Mr. O'Donel had gone away. This excited the Garos greatly. They formed the impression that Bijni was again going to move forward and take over the lands in their hills, and as they
were discontented with the administration of the Bijni naj on the north, they determined that it should not penetrate south to the hill district.

Accordingly, when in 1901, the general body of the Garos were excited by what they supposed to be the trespassing of Bijni, the Laskars and Nokmas put themselves at the head of the agitation, and Sonaram R. Sangma, a man of some education, came forward as their agent and representative. Sonaram worked up the agitation into a claim by the Garos, first, to the whole of Habraghat pargana as proprietors and then to the Mazara lands, also as proprietors. In order to increase the sphere of operations, Sonaram appealed to all the hill Garos and offered to secure to them (i) the restoration to them of the reserved forests, and (ii) a complete abolition of all Begar or forced labour.

In December 1902, the Dolguma disturbances occurred. About seven hundred Garos marched from the hills across Habraghat pargana to Dolguma ghat on the Brahmaputra, and notices were posted by their leaders ordering tenants not to pay rent to the Bijni zamindar. But the ring-leaders were arrested, six men were sentenced to terms varying from two months to one year and Sonaram was imprisoned where he remained till April 1904. But the agitation was at once renewed and assumed dangerous proportions. In 1903, Sir Bamfylde Fuller brought about a compromise by which the Nokmas were to receive 25% of the gross rental of the Bijni A lands. But the Nokmas later refused to accept it and demanded the whole pargana. A full enquiry was then ordered by the government and was conducted by Sir J. C. Arbuthnott. 110.

110. Department of Revenue and Agriculture, File No. 507 of 1907.
On the receipt of the reports of this enquiry, the Government of India conveyed its opinion in their letter to the Chief Secretary, to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, on the 20 March, 1904, which stated that "the Garos had suffered a loss of some territory under British rule, but ...... it was impossible to rectify them". With regard to the formation of Forest Reserves, it was stated that "no new areas would be added in future to the Forest Reserves except on payment of full proprietary compensation". As regards the system of Forced labour, the Government of India left it to the Lieutenant-Governor "to see that impressment of labour for this purpose is strictly regulated so as to cause as little hardship as possible, and that full payment is made for the labour".

From the various memorials submitted by the Garos which are still preserved by some educated old Garos, it is clear that the claim on the Habraghat pargana and complaint against the administration of the Bijni zamindar continued in varying degrees till the attainment of India's independence. After independence, the struggle took the form of a movement for amalgamating the pargana with the Garo Hills district and now, with the State of Meghalaya.

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The Indian Freedom struggle and the non-cooperation movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi had affected the Garos very little. And whatever affect it had on the Garos, it affected only the Garos living on the northern face of the Garo Hills adjoining the Goalpara district. The late Tarun Ram Phukan, one of the top leaders of this movement of Assam, visited some of the villages of these areas with some leaders of the plains, but in these areas the Garo population was very little involved directly with the movement. The interior areas of the Garo Hills remained wholly unconnected with this movement.

Along with the rest of India the first general elections were held in the Garo Hills in 1937. Two Garo leaders, Jobang Marak and Benjamin Sangma, were elected by the Nokmas to the Assam Legislative Assembly. But they did not represent any political party as till then no political activity was carried on in the Garo Hills. They merely represented the urban elite class, which had been by that time gradually emerging at Tura. Despite the fact that they remained members of the Assembly for the whole term, no attempt was made by them to form a political party.

In the forties, the late Gopinath Barcoloi toured the Garo Hills, as far as Baghmara, in the south-east of the Garo Hills and impressed upon the Garos the need for a political party, in view of the dawn of India's independence. Even this, there was no immediate effect on the Garos.


113. As told by his son, Sri Birendra Barcoloi in 1963.
The Garo Hills District Council.

Independent India ushered in great changes in the lives of the people of India in general, and in the lives of the Garos in particular, especially, in the field of self-government.

In 1947, the Bardoloi Committee, under the Chairmanship of Late Shri Gopinath Bardoloi, was appointed by the Constituent Assembly, in order to study the peculiar problems of the hill people of Assam. The Bardoloi Committee submitted its report recommending a large measure of autonomy to the District Councils in the administration of their districts. These recommendations were subsequently enshrined in the Constitution of India, in its Sixth Scheduled. Thus, the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India contains the provisions for the administration of the tribal areas of Assam.

The Garo Hills District Council was composed of 24 members.

**Executive Committee:** The overall administration of the District Council is vested in the Executive Committee, headed by the Chief Executive member. The Executive Committee consists of the Chief Executive member, who is elected by the members of the District Council from amongst themselves; two Executive and two Deputy Executive members are appointed by the Governor of Assam, on the advice of the Chief Executive member.

The Chairman of the District Council is elected by the members from among themselves. There is a Secretary to the Executive Committee who is appointed by the Executive Committee and is responsible for supervision of the administrative works of the District Council. The District Council has three main wings of diverse functions, viz., executive, legislative and judiciary.

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114. Sinha, K., Meghalaya, Pp. 257-262; The Bardoloi Sub-Committee Findings.
115. The Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, Acts, Rules, etc.
117. The Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, Acts, Rules, etc.
Powers and Functions.

The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India conferred on the District Councils the following powers and functions:

**Power to make Laws:** The District Council, within the district shall have power to make laws with respect to -

(a) the allotment, occupation or use, or the setting apart of land, which is not a reserved forest, for the purpose of agriculture or grazing or for residential or for any other purpose likely to promote the interests of the inhabitants of any village or town;

(b) the management of any forest not being a reserved forest;

(c) the use of any canal or water course for any agricultural scheme;

(d) the regulation for jhum cultivation or any other form of shifting cultivation;

(e) the establishment of village or town Committees or Councils and their powers;

(f) any other matter relating to village or town administration, including village or town police and public health and sanitation;

(g) the appointment or succession of Chiefs or Headmen;

(h) the inheritance of property;

(i) marriage, and

(j) Social Customs.

All laws made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and until assented to by him, shall have no effect.
Administration of Justice: The District Council, within the District, shall have power to constitute Village Councils or Courts for the trial of suits and cases between the parties all of whom belong to the schedule tribes. The District Council also shall exercise the powers of a Court of appeal in respect of all suits and cases triable by a village council or court.

With the previous approval of the Governor, the District Council also may make rules regulating -
(a) the constitution of village councils and courts and the powers to be exercised by them;
(b) the procedure to be followed by the District Council or court in the trial of suits and cases;
(c) the procedure to be followed by the District Council or any court constituted by such council in appeals and other cases;
(d) the enforcement of decisions and orders of such councils and courts;
(e) on the enforcement of powers by the Governor, under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, the District may try cases of Offences punishable with death, transportation for life, or imprisonment for a term of not less than five years under the Indian Penal Code or any other law.

Power to establish Primary Schools: The District Council may establish, or manage Primary Schools, Dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, roads and waterways in the district and in particular, may prescribe the language and the manner in which primary education shall be imparted in the primary schools in the district.
Powers to assess and collect Land revenue and to impose taxes:

The District Council, within the district, shall have power to:

(i) assess and collect revenue in respect of such lands in accordance with the principles followed by the Assam Government;
(ii) levy and collect taxes on lands and buildings, tolls on persons resident of the district;
(iii) levy and collect taxes on professions, trades, callings, employments, animals, vehicles, boats, entry of goods into a market for sale therein, tolls on passengers and goods carried in Ferries, the maintenance of schools, dispensaries and roads.

Licences or Leases for extraction of minerals:

(i) The Government of Assam may grant and make over to the District Council such share of the royalties accruing each year from licences or leases for extraction of minerals, within the district, as may be agreed upon between the government of Assam and the District Council;
(ii) If any dispute arises as to the share of such royalties to be made over to a District Council, it shall be referred to the Governor whose decision shall be final.

Power to control money-lending and trading by non-tribals:

The District Council may make regulations for the control of money-lending or trading within the district by persons other than schedule tribes resident in the district. Such regulations may:

(i) prescribe that no one except the holder of a licence shall carry on business of money-lending;
(ii) prescribe the maximum rate of interest which may be charged or be recovered by a money-lender;

(iii) provide for the maintenance of accounts by money-lenders and for the inspection of such accounts by the Officers appointed in that behalf by the District Council;

(iv) prescribe that no person who is not a member of a schedule tribe resident in the district shall carry on wholesale or retail business in any commodity except under a licence issued in that behalf by the District Council.

But all these regulations passed will be valid only when they are passed by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the total membership of the District Council.

All these regulations made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and, until assented to by him, shall have no effect.

118. Constitution of India (Text); The Sixth Schedule.
Conclusions: From the foregoing narrative, it is clear that the Garos originally coming from Tibet settled down in the present Garo Hills since time immemorial, where they evolved a distinct civilization of their own. They have settled down in the inaccessible hills and deep valleys, they have never been isolated from the rest. The need to exchange their hill products for that of salt, clothes, etc., drew them to the frontier markets opened by the neighbouring zamindars. Thus the weekly markets at the foot of the hills were the meeting places for the Garos and the plainsmen. But their relations were far from being friendly. The exactions of the zamindars and their subordinates at the markets and the retaliatory raids of the Garos coupled with the belief that the deadbody of a Garo required the head of another man in the funeral ceremonies which incited them to despatch more raiding parties filled the atmosphere with fears and suspicions. This strained relationship between them continued until the advent of the British in the beginning of this century.

The British, under David Scott, decided to separate the Garos from zamindars' influence and to bring them under direct Government management. These measures were embodied in Regulation X of 1822, and David Scott was appointed the first Civil Commissioner to administer under this Regulation. But the appointment of Scott as Civil Commissioner of Assam in 1823 drew him away from Garo affairs, and the Garos were left to themselves again. Thus the British policy towards the Garos between 1823 and 1866 was one of punitive expeditions and conciliations. In 1866, in consequence of the raids which, under the irritation caused by the attempts of the Mymsingh zamindar to levy rents in the hills, were constantly being perpetrated, the Garo hills were formed into a separate district, with Captain J. Williamson as the first Deputy Commissioner.
The change of master, however, could not reconcile the Garos. Rather, they continued to be turbulent on one excuse or the other. As a result, raids were frequent and the lives of the plainsmen in the immediate neighbourhood were unsafe. This led to the despatch of bigger British expeditions against the Garos.

At the beginning of this century, Garo agitations under the leadership of Sri Sonaram K. Sangma assumed an alarming proportion and the British Government had to yield to some of their demands.

The Garos began to take part in the state politics when two of their men were elected to the Assam State Assembly in 1937. Though they did not represent any political party, they represented the Garo Hills district in the Assembly.

Under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, the Garos were granted the autonomous District Council, to run the affairs of their district and to safeguard their tribal customs and traditions.
Appendix A.

A copy of an agreement entered into with the Chiefs of Dusanee, at Bengalkatta. _________•

"Your Lordship having arrived at Bengalkatta, in the Sarrow country, we, the subjects of the hon'ble East India Company, have written and subscribed to the following articles, for the purpose of showing that we are certainly such, and should we ever act in opposition to the said articles, we shall be liable to punishment.

Article 1: we agree to abstain from committing murder either in our own clan or in any other, or will we permit any amongst us to do so, or to commit any other heinous offences, that we may be able to prevent.

Article 2: It was our former custom to hang human skulls in our houses. we hereby agree to abstain therefrom for the future.

Article 3: All disputes which may occur in our jurisdiction requiring investigation, we will endeavour to settle with the assistance of a Panchayat of 4 or 5 of the most influential chiefs amongst us, and in presence of the disputing parties and should we be unable tp settle it ourselves, we will report the same to the hat mohurir, with a view to its being settled by your Lordship.

Article 4: when any officer or Government servant may have occasion to travel through our country, we agree to clear the roads in our several jurisdictions and to furnish him with coolies and render him every assistance in our power.

Article 5: When any Officer or Deputy may arrive at Bengalkatta, and summon us to attend him, we will instantly do so, and if it is necessary for us to attend him at any other place we agree to do so on his summons.
Article 6: We agree to prevent any independent warrows from entering the government territories through our jurisdictions, with intent to murder or commit any other disturbances.

Article 7: When any Officer or Government servant arrives at our door, we agree, on being called on, to pay without delay the revenue due by us.

Article 8: The road which has been cleared from Bhajamara to Kuntanangiri, and Bengalkatta to Ripoogiri, we agree to keep clear every year throughout our respective jurisdictions from 24 to 30 ft. wide.

Signed by the Nokma of Rungtopara, Chitskiri, Jersegiri, Dudingiri, Kagulpata, Dulinggiri, Channapara, Korungiri, Buldagar, Bokongiri, Jungrapara, Cherangiri, Dongapara, Chaunangpara, Majogiri.

True translation.

(Sd.) C.S. Reynolds,
Principal Assistant.

The undermentioned were not present, but they had previously made their submission to Captain C.S. Reynolds:--

Doorang, Nokma of Tepatangiri,
Monka " Kunseigiri,
Koonsing, " Champakpara,
Tezing, " Kuntanangiri, and
Kensang, " Rupoogiri.