The Assam Secretariat ultimately evolved as a three-tiered structure—
the upper, the intermediary, and the lower.

The upper tier being responsible for the formulation of policies and
decisions making. Naturally it is manned by a hierarchy of covenanted and
statutory civil servants with the Chief Secretary at the apex and the
Assistant Secretaries at the bottom the additional Chief Secretary, Secretaries
Additional Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries in the middle.

All these grades were not there always at the same time. There had been changes
and adjustment causing abolition and creations of posts at different times.
These changes were in consequence of the changes in the Administrative pattern
as detailed earlier. Here the history of each of these grades is traced
individually.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

The highest Secretariat post was that of the Chief Secretary. The office
of the Chief Secretary was first created on the formation of the new province
of Eastern Bengal and Assam on October 16, 1905 on Rs. 3,000 a month plus a
local allowance of Rs. 250 a month.

No. 276-287.
P.G. Lyon, the first Chief Secretary of the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, had been on the eve of the formation of the new Province, an officer on special duty in the Assam Secretariat for organizing the new provincial administration.

Percy Comyn Lyon joined services in September 1883 and his services were placed at the disposal of the Chief Commissioner of Assam in January 1884. He became the Political Assistant to the Chief Commissioner in 1885. He went to Bengal as the Private Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal in 1885. He had his first Secretariat experience in Bengal as an Under Secretary in the Judicial and Political Department in June 1890. He became Secretary, Board of Revenue in 1903 and next year he was the Commissioner of the Presidency Division. On the formation of the new province of Eastern Bengal—he was the natural choice as the Chief Secretary in the office he held till May 1907. He became subsequently the Member Board of Revenue Eastern Bengal and Assam. He became Chief Secretary once again in 1909.

On the reconstitution of the new province of Assam in 1912, the Government sanctioned a local allowance of Rs.400 for the Chief Secretary.

2. History of Services of Gazetted Officers Assam 1909.
3. Appointment A. August 1912. No.8.
The office of the Chief Secretary was superior to that of a Commissioner of a Division. It was the centre of decision making, policy formulation and policy execution. The vigour and drive of the Administration depended upon the Chief Secretary. Further, the Chief Secretary alone could discuss certain formulation and take decisions which no one else had power to do in the Administrative hierarchy. For instance, he had power to despatch Foreign State Telegrams to all places and persons except the Secretary of State and India Office. In those circumstances the choice of W.J. Reid as the first Chief Secretary of Assam in 1912 was very wise. He was an outstanding civilian whose services were appreciated by his appointment as the Governor of Assam—the prize post of all civilians.

Sir William James Reid joined services in September 1891. He held the routine appointments of Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner. He was appointed as the Inspector-General of Police, Jails, Registration, etc. in 1902. He became the Financial Secretary of the Eastern Bengal and Assam in April 1907.

On the reformation of Assam into a Chief Commissionership in April 1912, the choice was W.J. Reid for the post of first Chief Secretary of Assam. He had to organize the shifting of the Secretariat from Gauhati to Shillong and to put it on firm foundation during his tenure of only fifteen months.

4. Appointment A March 1916 marked Volume. Letter No. 824-4 dated 4 March 1916 from I.D. Elliot, Under Secretary, Commerce and Industry, Govt. of India to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.
He became the Commissioner of Division in May 1914. With the introduction of Dyarchy in 1921, he became a member of the Assam Executive Council on January 3, 1921. He was affiliating Governor of Assam twice in 1925.

The Chief Secretaryship was held during the pleasure of the Governor or Chief Commissioner as the case might be. Any Chief Secretary could be reverted to a post in the ordinary line corresponding with his length of service. This principle was intended to enable all Secretariat officers to obtain practical field experience of district administration, although this was a personal and confidential nature of the relations between the Head of the Government of Province and his Chief Secretary. Accordingly the Government of India declared that the liability to revert at any time to the regular line of the civil service was an essential incident, not only of the Chief Secretaryship, but also of all Secretaryships held under local Governments and Administration.

He was given a special status and position with the introduction of the Government of India Act 1935. The oaths of office and secrecy were administered to the Ministers under the provincial autonomy by the chief Secretary.

5. History of services of Gazetted officer 1925.

6. Letter No. 342 dated 2 May 1904 from Home Secretary India to the Chief Secretary, Bengal Home A May 1904 No. 152-152.

7. Ibid.

He was also the ex-officio Secretary to the Council of Ministers and attended all Cabinet meetings. He was responsible for maintaining the Book of Transactions of the Government. He was the principal spokesman of the Government.

In the meetings of the Council of Ministers, the Chief Secretary was required to record the decisions arrived at in the Book of Transaction. He communicated to the Secretaries in the various departments concerned of the decisions of the Cabinet. But no decision of Council of Ministers was final until assented to by the Governor of Assam.

Under the Government of India Act 1935, the superior officers had the constitutional right to look to the Governor for the protection of their service rights and privileges. They could approach the Governor for the removal of their grievances. There is no recorded case of this nature. However, in Assam the members of the superior services admirably adjusted themselves to the changing social and political climate. They looked to the Chief Secretary for leadership. The Chief Secretary's adjustment to the changing political and constitutional position was complete in Assam. This is typified by the Chief Secretaries like J.A. Dawson and H.S. Donohoe.

J.A. Dawson M.A. joined the civil service in October 1904. After the routine appointments as Assistant Magistrate and Collector, and later on Joint Magistrate, he became the officiating District Judge of Tipper and Sylhet. He was appointed Secretary to the Committee to enquire into the

---

10. Ibid Rule 12.
11. Ibid Rule 14(11)
the condition of Tea Garden labour in November 1912. He was also appointed in 1929 Secretary to the Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee and subsequently became its chairman. These two reports are treatises in Economics. He held temporarily the office of Commissioner Surma Valley and Hill Districts Division in 1931. Earlier he was also Commissioner of the Assam Valley division.

The responsibility of organising the Assam Secretariat for the introduction of the Provincial autonomy fell on J.A. Dawson. He was appointed as the Chief Secretary in November 1933 and held the office till May 1937 when he was appointed the Member of Board of Revenue for Assam.

Sir Harold George Denny officiated at a comparatively early age in 1924 as the Chief Secretary of Assam Government and subsequently also in 1936, 1938 and in 1939.

He was the Secretary of the Transferred Department in 1936. From 1927 to 1947 he was attached to the Secretariat in some capacity or other.

As Chief Secretary he saw the transfer of power in 1947. He made the services ready for the new political and constitutional changes in Assam. When the conditions of service, pensions, rights in respect of appeals, compensation etc. of persons recruited by the Secretary of State for India was materially modified by the India (Provincial constitution) order 1947—many British elements of the Civil Service left India, but devotion to

...112...

service and his love for Assam kept Sir Harold to his post till his retirement in 1947.

The Chief Secretary had to perform manifold functions. He was the principal adviser of the Government in matters of policy and administration. He was responsible for efficient administration of his departments. He had also to do a good amount of political work. He was a link between the Government and the Governor.

He was the chief amongst the equals. Other Secretaries to the Government looked to him for help and guidance. His proximity to the final seat of power and his presence in the Cabinet meetings as its Secretary, assured him a special status in the administrative hierarchy.

The Chief Secretary occupied an anomalous position. He was a Secretary to departments under a Member of the Executive Council or a Minister. He was not a Secretary to the Chief Minister. He was a Secretary to the Government of which the Governor of Assam was the head. The Ministers were advisers with executive power and control till 1946-47. This is clear by virtue of the tradition of direct access of the Chief Secretary to the Governor. This he could do over the shoulders of his Chief Minister.

In Assam, however, the relationship between the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary was one of mutual confidence and loyalty. The Chief Minister like Saiyid Sir Muhammad Sandulla and Gopinath Bordoloi held
high regards for Chief Secretaries like J.A. Dawson and H.G. Deshayes. They helped to create the tradition and practices to ensure a smooth relationship between popular Government and the Civil Service. No set rules in this respect were laid down as these were matters of personal equation.

The Chief Secretary besides acting as the Secretary of certain departments dealt with all matters not allotted to other departments, particularly Political matters and generally co-ordinated the work of all the secretariat departments. As Chief Secretary, he had the power to ask for papers relating to any case in any department.

The Chief Secretary usually dealt with all important communications with and from the Government of India. This extra-constitutional authority over the years consolidated its position in the administrative set up of Assam.

As the Secretary to the Chief Ministers' department he occupied an important position in the Secretariat. On all matters relating to the Chief Minister's decision, the Chief Secretary normally acted as the principal adviser. Consequently he had an important say on all administration matters.

The Chief Secretary was above all other Secretaries to the Government. He was the driving force, the motive power behind all Secretariat action. He had an overall charge of the provincial administration. In the Warrant of Precedence he held thirty-sixth position. The crowning position of the Chief Secretary was assured by his close association with the Cabinet on one hand and the Governor on the other.
Chief Secretaries for the period of 1905-1947 were the follows:

P.C. Lyon ... 16 October 1905-1909
H. Lafeurier ... 1910-1912
R. Nathan and N.D. Beaton Bell officiating ... 1911-1912.
W. J. Reid ... April 1913-1914.
J. C. Allen ... 1915-1917
J. E. Webster ... 1912-1919
A. W. Botham ... 1920-1925
G. E. Stonem ... 1926-1930
W. A. Cosgrave ... 1931-1933
J. A. Dawson ... 1934-1939
J. H. Hutton, H. G. Denney, G. A. Rhodes, officiating time to time.
H. G. Denney ... 1940-1947
S. P. Desai ... 1947

Additional Chief Secretary.

This post was created on the eve of Indian Independence in August 1947. On 13 August 1947, S. P. Desai was appointed as the Additional Chief Secretary. This was the first appointment of the kind in Assam. On Sir Harold Denney's retirement, S. P. Desai took over as the Chief Secretary.
...115...

SECRETARY

In accordance with the view of the Secretary of State, it was decided not to give the Chief Commissioner of Assam, a full Secretariat establishment, but for the existing office of personal Assistant to the Commissioner of Assam was substituted a single Secretary on a salary of Rs. 1,200 a month.

The Government of India determined in 1874 that in the permanent organization of the Assam Commission the appointment of the Secretary should stand separate from the graded list as in other similar commissions and should not be graded in the ranks of Deputy Commissioners.

Secretaries to the Chief Commissioner for the period of 1874-1905 were the followings:

H. Luttmann-Johnson ... February 1874-1875.
S. O. B. Ridsdale ... May 1876-1884
C. J. Lyall and E. Stock officiating from time to time.
C. J. Lyall ... 1885-1889
F. C. Daukes ... November 1890-1893.
E. A. Gait officiating in 1891.
P. C. Melitus ... February 1894-1898.
F. C. Manniker and E. A. G. it officiating time to time.
P. J. Monahan ... December 1878-1906.

The first Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam Henry Luttmann-Johnson B. A. of the Civil Service drew a salary of Rs. 1,333-5-4 a month.

19. Quarterly Civil List Assam 1874.
He was an officer with executive drive and a judicial mind. He started functioning as Secretary while on his way to Assam from Calcutta on board the Steamer 'Jaboon'.

The heavy task of organising a new Secretariat fell on this civilian of only seven years service.

The salary of the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner was revised and fixed at Rs.2,000 a month under the orders of the Government of India in 1876.

The Government of Assam represented to the Government of India in 1901 for upgrading the Secretaryship to that of a Deputy Commissionership and draw the salary of his grade plus a local allowance of Rs.250 a month. This recommendation became necessary in consequence of the reorganisation of the Assam Commission under which first grade Deputy Commissioner drew a salary of Rs.2,250 a month and therefore were in a better position financially than the secretary whose pay was limited to Rs.2,000 a month. The Inspector-General of Police, Inspector-General of Jails etc. and of Director of Land Records had already been promoted to the grade of Deputy Commissioner.

The proposal was not a new. The Chief Secretary in the Central Provinces occupied a similar position. For obvious reasons the Chief

---

21. Home Department Order No. 2301, 14 April 1876.
23. Home A November 1901 No. 22-37 and order No. 2301, 14, 4. 1874.
24. Home A November 1901 No. 22-37.
Commissio\nre, Henry J. Cotton recommended further that a local allowance of Rs. 250 which was granted to the Chief Secretary, Central Provinces should also be given to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner.

The importance of the office and the responsibility of a Secretary to the Government were higher than those of a Deputy Commissioner or other officers graded with a Deputy Commissioner. It was therefore reasonable that there should be a distinction between the Secretary and the Deputy Commissioner.

The recommendation made by H. J. Cotton involved an increase in the emoluments of the Secretary by Rs. 50 a month. Even then the cost of the office would be less than that of the Central Provinces.

The Secretary of State for India approved the proposal. In consequence the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam was graded as a Deputy Commissioner with effect from 26 August, 1901. In the warrant of precedence Secretaries held the thirty-seventh position.

All Secretaries of the Assam Administration from 1874 were members of the Civil Service, the only exception was Major W. J. Kenedy who on the reformation of the Province of Assam in 1912 was appointed the second Secretary and affiliated as the Chief Secretary later.

26. Letter No. 427 F.D. dated 16th April from the Assistant Secretary, Assam to the Home Secretary, India.
27. Despatch No. Financial 1213 dated 27th June 1901 from the Government of India to the Secretary of State.
29. Notification No. 6904 dated 20th September 1901 and Telegram No. 629 from Simla 26th September 1901 Govt. of India.
31. Assam Civil List 1912.
ADDITIONAL SECRETARY AND JOINT SECRETARY

Additional Secretaries and Joint Secretaries were also secretaries in the full sense of the term. They could also dispose of Government business under the authority of the Minister-in-charge.

In 1935, the Assam Secretariat was strengthened by the appointment of G. J. Mullan as Additional Secretary and Reforms officer in March 1935. With the introduction of Provincial autonomy in 1937, the Inspector-General of Police was made ex-officio Joint Secretary in the Judicial Department. The Furze thus became the first Joint Secretary to the Assam Government. The Judicial Department became re-designated as Home Department and M.D.A. Cumming as Inspector-General of Police became its Joint Secretary in 1936.

The Director of Industries M.H. Hassain was appointed as an ex-officio Additional Secretary in the Local Self-Government (Industries) Department in 1943.

Another post of Joint Secretary was created in the Home Department. Mr. R. B. N. was designated as Joint Secretary Home (Civil Defence) Department. But the number of Joint Secretaries was reduced to one in 1946, and the Inspector-General of Police remained as the lone Joint Secretary to the Government of Assam in the Home Department.

32. Assam Civil List 1938.
33. Assam Civil List 1943, 1944.
34. Assam Civil List 1944.
35. Assam Civil List 1945.
DEPUTY SECRETARY

The appointment of Deputy Secretary was not made in Assam till 1937. With the introduction of Provincial autonomy A.V. Jones, then Assistant Secretary in the Financial and Revenue Department was appointed as the first Deputy Secretary to the Government in the Finance and Revenue Department and S. Gohain in the Education and Local Self-Government Department in 1938. The number of Deputy Secretaries was increased to three in 1939 when a Deputy Secretary was appointed in the Home Department. C. B. C. Paine was the first Deputy Secretary in the Home Department. Thus there were three Deputy Secretaries. In 1945, their number was reduced to two viz. one in the Supply Department and the other in the Education and Local Self-Government Department.

The Deputy Secretaries to Local Governments were not assigned a place in the warrant of Precedence. Separate provision was made for the precedence of Secretaries, Additional Secretaries and Joint Secretaries to a Provincial Government, all of whom took rank in the same article 35 and the Government of India did not consider it appropriate that Deputy Secretaries should be given the same rank as a Secretary to the Provincial Government. But in the Government of India, Deputy Secretaries working directly under a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council were given a rank lower than that of Secretaries, Additional Secretaries and Joint Secretaries.

The Provincial Governments could if they so desired, describe the Deputy Secretaries as ex-officio Joint Secretaries though if this were done, the anomaly might arise that an ex-officio Joint Secretary might occupy a rank, senior to a Secretary to the Provincial Government. They could suitably find a place under Article 55 with Deputy Commissioners outside their own charges as they could discharge any of the functions of the Secretary other than those specifically excluded from them. Whatever may be the official status of the Deputy Secretary, he exercised the powers of the Secretary during the latter's absence. He was also entrusted with the management of specified subjects under the General orders of the Secretary of the Department.

The Post of Deputy Secretary of a department was a much more responsible one than that of the Under Secretary, yet the pay was the same. Therefore, an Under Secretary on appointment as Deputy Secretary got no increased emoluments for his additional responsibility.

There were two alternatives open, either to increase the special pay of the Deputy Secretary or to fix a definite scale of pay for the Deputy Secretary. The increment of special pay could be considered objectionable in view of the fact that the Assam Resources and Retrenchment Committee 1938-39 in their recommendations were against the grant of special pay.

The Government of Assam decided to fix the pay scale of Deputy Secretary at as follows:

Rs.850-50-1100 in case of E.A.C. on the old scale.

Rs.750-50-1000 in case of E.A.C. on the new scale.

39. Assam Government letter No. Apptt. 1550/9692 dated 21 October 1932 from J.L. Scott, Officiating Chief Secretary to the Home Secretary, India.

40. Memo No. 4 F(a) dated 2.1.1940 to the Comptroller.
As long as Deputy Secretary and Under Secretary's posts were on the same scale of pay and special pay, fundamental Rule 30 barred any relief to an Under Secretary officiating as Deputy Secretary. This was remedied by having a definite pay for the Deputy Secretary.

As under Secretary.

Insipite of the addition of an Assistant Secretary, the officer element was inadequate in the Assam Secretariat. The Chief Commissioner Sir William Ward found it necessary in 1894 to place an Assistant Commissioner on special duty in the Assam Secretariat for six months under the provisions of Articles 85 and 98 of the Civil Service Regulations.

But this arrangement was unsatisfactory from the point of view of the disposal of public business. One of the effects was that, at the beginning of each cold season, when the period of deputation of the special officer terminated, the branches of business with which he had been dealing were made over to the Assistant Secretary, who had no previous acquaintance with the subject matters. This resulted frequently in serious delay in the disposal of cases. Moreover, a junior officer placed on special duty for six months had no time to acquire the habit and procedure of Secretariat work nor a thorough grasp of the duties which he was called upon to perform.

The Chief Commissioner H.J.S. Cotton recommended the appointment of a permanent Under Secretary who should be an Assistant Commissioner and draw salary according to his standing in the commission with a local allowance of Rs.100 a month. The Government of India approved the proposal subject to

41.Home Proceeding Assam May 1901 and Letter dated 8 December 1899.

No. 1285 P.S. G from F.Johnston Secretary Assam to the Secretary of Home Deptt. India.
the condition that the number of inferior appointments in the Assam Commission was not raised thereby and that the total emoluments of the officer appointed as Under Secretary, including local allowance of Rs.100 a month, did not exceed Rs.1000 a month. James Donald was appointed as permanent Under Secretary on 26 April 1901 on Rs.500 plus allowances.

In Eastern Bengal and Assam Secretariat the Assistant Secretarieship was abolished. There were three Under Secretaries. After 1912, it was found necessary to have two Secretaries, one Chief Secretary and a Second Secretary, with two Under Secretaries in their respective departments. The principle, presumably, was that a Secretary was to have automatically an Under Secretary to help him.

A special pay of Rs.200 was sanctioned for the Under Secretaries. This was not enough to warrant the conclusion that the post had been already reserved for the I.C.S.—although it had always been filled by junior I.C.S. officers. Though the posts of Under Secretaries were intended for junior civilians, they had at times been held by members of the Provincial Civil Service or by officers promoted from Secretariat establishment like G.F. Smith who was once Registrar of the Assam Secretariat.

42. Despatch No.193 dated Simla 21 June 1900 from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State.
43. Civil List Assam 1902.
44. Appointment A August 1920 No.10-32.
45. Appointment B September 1931 No.42-45
46. Appointment B June 1922 No.3
Under Secretaryship provided extremely useful training opportunities to the junior officers. An Under Secretary also relieved his secretary of a considerable amount of routine work, for example, passing the commands of other departments, signing establishment bills, contingent bills, etc., and dealing with unimportant cases.

But a junior I.C.S. officer coming from sub-divisional charge knew nothing of the subject and a year was too short a time for him to learn the work until he had seen the drafting of one budget. He should not possibly be fully acquainted with the work involved.

The Assam Retrenchment Committee 1921 (India Committee) suggested that in the interest of economy, one of the Under Secretaryships should be given to a member of the Assam Civil Service when a suitable junior officer was available. The Government saw no objection to one Under Secretaryship under the Second Secretary being thrown open to, but not reserved for, a suitable member of the A.C.S. But the Political Under Secretary under the Chief Secretary was to be a member of the I.C.S.

The Chief Secretary A.W. Botham opposed the suggestion. But the post of Under Secretaryship should have been reserved for the Assam Civil Service Officers, in view of the advantage which they would gain from Secretariat experience.

47. Appointment and Political 3 June 1922 No. 3.
48. Ibid.
The Assam Government was prepared to try in 1922 officers of the A.C.S. as Under Secretaries in the Second Secretary's Department. The Governor Sir William Morris declined to throw the post of Under Secretary in the Chief Secretary's Departments open to Assam Civil Service officers on account of the nature of work.

The first non I.C.S. officer appointed as Under Secretary in the Chief Secretary's Department was G.S. John temporarily in 193. But Siddeswar Gohain who was appointed as Under Secretary, on 10 October 1930 was confirmed as Under Secretary in this appointment on the order of the Governor Sir Egbert Laurie Lucas Hammond.

Assistant Secretary.

In order that the Chief Commissioner might, as far as possible be relieved of minor details, the post of Assistant Secretary on Rs. 700 a month was created in December 1874. The Assistant Secretary performed the duties of the Personal Assistant with the Chief Commissioner on tours and took the Secretary's place at the Headquarters when the latter was on inspection duty.

In order to assign position of the Assistant Secretary among the officers of the Commission, Col. Keatings had recommended in April 1874 that a special Assistant Commissionership of the first grade should be created and that the Assistant Secretary should be included in that grade. But the Government of India did not accept the recommendation.

49. Appointment B. September 1927 No. 404-406.
50. Civil List Assam 1930 and Notification No. 3574 A.P. dated 8 June 1931.
They thought that the Secretaryship and the Assistant Secretaryship to
the Chief Commissioner should occupy an independent position.

The Government of India directed that should Captain H.J. Poet the
first Assistant Secretary appointed in 1875 revert to the grade rank of
the Commission, he should be placed with the second grade Assistant
Commissioners, taking his place in that grade according to seniority, reckoning his service in that grade from the date of his first appointment to it.

This principle was laid down earlier in the case of first Secretary to
the Chief Commissioner of Assam H. Luttman-Johnson.

Since 1875, the appointment of Assistant Secretarieship was generally
held by a junior member of the Assam Commission, who with the exception of the first incumbent, Capt. H.J. Poet, had invariably been a commissioned civilian.

This arrangement proved unworkable as the field of selection was
so narrow as to render it very improbable that an officer possessing the necessary qualifications would, on the occasion of any given vacancy, be found amongst those available in the Assam Commission. Correctness of this observation becomes apparent when it is remembered that the pay attached to the appointment of Assistant Secretary was Rs. 700 a month and as it had to be held by a junior member of the Commission possessing some amount of experience, the field of selection was practically limited to the holders of the seven appointments of second grade Assistant

---
Commissionship. With the field of selection thus limited, it was impossible to expect that the services of a qualified officer should always or generally be available.

The practice of frequently changing the Assistant Secretaries though useful to the incumbent themselves had drawbacks which resulted in lack of direction and intelligent supervision. It was felt consequently that it would be advantageous to have Assistant Secretary for a long period to keep up a continuity of experience in the affairs of the Secretariat. This led the Chief Commissioner D. Fitz Patrick strongly to recommend for the appointment of a permanent Assistant Secretary for the Assam Secretariat the appointment being held by an unavoananted officer on Rs. 700 a month as before. It was expected that this remuneration coupled with the advantage of permanent residence in Shillong would suffice to attract the service of European or Eurasian officers of a superior class whose experience whether in large Secretariat offices or in other capacity would be of great value.

The Governor-General in council supported the proposal as the circumstances under which this appointment was created in 1874 had now changed and the arrangement of selecting a junior officer of the Assam Commission for the post did not work. The Secretary of State sanctioned the appointment of Assistant Secretaryship of Assam Administration

56. Note by C. J. Lyall File No. 2451 G of 1888.
57. Letter No. 5775 dated 15 October 1889 from F. C. Dakuks officiating to the Home Secretary, India.
60. Despatch No. 31 Financial dated 14 February 1889 from Secretary of State and letter No. 189 dated 28 March 1889 to the Chief Commissioner of Assam from Govt. of India.

61. Assam Civil List 1892 and Home Proceedings June 1904.

62. Despatch No. 71 Public from Secretary of State dated 27 April 1904.


64. Assam Civil List 1898.

65. Eastern Bengal and Assam Civil List 1910.

The post was now Gazetted as a special post and it fell under list II of the special services. When this post was created it was decided that in view of the technical nature of the work of the Finance Department, an officer of considerable experience in Finance in the Secretariat or in the offices of Accountant Generals should be appointed.

The post was senior in grade to Registrarship which was in turn senior in status to the Head Assistantship. For example, Mohendra Kumar Gupta, Registrar, Assam Secretariat was appointed to act as Assistant Secretary in the Finance and Revenue Department during the absence of A.V. Jones in 1930. Surendra Nath Datta, Examiner of Local Accounts who was earlier Registrar of Assam Civil Secretariat was also appointed to officiate as Assistant Secretary in Finance and Revenue Department when A.V. Jones went on leave in 1934.

67. Appointment B. December 1927 No. 570-571.
68. Appointment A. December 1927 No. 19-43.
69. Appointment and Political B. June 1934 No. 252-269.
70. Appointment B. 1930 June 144-148.
Section 98 of the Government of India Act 1915 reserved Secretaryship and Under Secretaryship in all provinces, Regulation and Non-Regulation, and certain other posts in Regulation Provinces only for the members of the India Civil Service. The Government of India Act 1919 removed this restriction in the Non-Regulation Provinces.

The effect of this was in Assam no posts under the Government of India Act 1919 remained reserved for the members of the I.C.S.; it was a non-Regulation Province except as far as Sylhet was concerned. The position was therefore that in theory the Secretaryships and Under Secretaryships could be filled by an officer of any service.

When Assam formed a part of Bengal, all the districts except Sylhet were treated as Non-Regulation areas. When the Province of Assam was constituted and Sylhet and Cachar were added to it, the whole Province came to be treated as a non-Regulation Province by the extension to Sylhet of the provisions of Scheduled Districts Acts with the exception that in Sylhet Civil justice continued to be administered by the members of the Bengal Provincial Judicial service sent to Assam. No military officer was ever employed as a district officer in any Regulation Province.

Not a single post in Assam was reserved to the I.J.S. but the Assam Government in 1921 was not prepared to appoint anybody from other services to Secretaryship and Under Secretaryship. They preferred an I.J.S. man for these two posts.

With the introduction of dyarchy, there was a change in the situation. The secretariat lost much of its importance in a province like Assam. As long as the Chief Commissioner was responsible for the formation of policy, it was the Secretary that assisted him, in the framing of policy. But with the introduction of dyarchy, the policy was framed not by the Head of the Province. He had to share this power with two executive Councillors and the Ministers and the Legislature. As a consequence, the Secretaries, the naturally reverted to their normal duties of playing the part of statistical monitors to the Government and of assisting them in drafting bills, reports and resolutions on lines indicated by the political executive. This diminished the importance of the Secretary and the Under Secretary and ensured the admission of non-I.C.S. Indians into the Secretariat progressively. It was only fair that the partial Indianization of the Secretariat by non-I.C.S. Indians should have synchronized with the introduction of partial Indianization of the provincial Government under the Government of India Act 1919. It was only in 1923, that partial Indianization by non-I.C.S. began.

---

when Muhammad Choudnury of Assam Civil Service was appointed as an Under Secretary in the Departments under the Second Secretary. Siddheswar Gohain was the first non-I.C.S. to officiate as Secretary to Government. He officiated as Secretary to Government Education and Local Self-Government Department in 1939. Till independence in 1947, no non-I.C.S. officer ever held the post of Secretary to Government excepting Siddheswar Gohain and S.J. Duncan who was appointed Secretary, Revenue Department on the eve of Independence in 1947.

74. Assam Civil List 1924.

75. Assam Civil List 1939 and Assam Gazette dated 8 January 1947.
The Royal Commission on Decentralization remarked that they had received evidence of a tendency to keep an officer who had shown himself useful in secretariat work in secretaria, with the result that secretariats did not understand the difficulties of district officers and the needs of the districts. As a consequence the Government was a paper government marked by uniformity and rigidity. It was, therefore, necessary to correct this tendency.

The Commission therefore recommended (a) that the necessary qualification for appointment as an Under Secretary should be at least four years service in the district work (b) and that at least 8 years actual district service, periods of furlough being excluded, should be an indissoluble qualification for the post of Secretary. They regarded the service in the district as an important qualification. It was essential for an officer to have done a certain amount of district service in order to qualify for further secretariat employment.

The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam accepted the principle that four years' district work should be a necessary qualification for appointment to the post of Under Secretary. So far Assam was concerned the rule was that one should have had 4 years total service from the date of his arrival in India for selection for the post of Under Secretary.

77. Appointment A December 1909 No. 1-5 (Letter No. 754 dated 23rd June 1906, from H.A. Stuart Home Secretary India, to the Chief Secretary E.B. and A."
78. Letter No. 4973 A. Shillong 18th November 1909 from the Chief Secretary E.B. and A. to Home Secretary India.
79. Appointment A December 1909 No. 1-5.
As regards the proposal that one must have had 8 years district service for appointment as Secretary, Lieutenant Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam held that the period should include the entire service except at the Head Quarters of Government, special duty being considered in each case on its merits. Tenure of such Head Quarter posts as those of Director of Land Records, Director of Agriculture, Inspector-General of Registration, Commissioner of Excise, Registrar of Co-Operative credit Societies, should be considered as equivalent to only half the same period spent in charge of district. He favoured the proposal of limiting the tenure of Secretariat appointment to 3 years and had already prescribed it as a rule in the case of Under Secretaryships in the East Bengal and Assam Government.

But the Lieutenant Governor Sir Lancelot Hare was of opinion that it would be impossible for Eastern Bengal and Assam Government to adhere to this principle rigidly.

The Government of India did not accept the recommendation of the Decentralization Commission on the ground that it was not practicable. They contended that it was essential to the smooth and efficient running of the Government, Local Governments should have a free hand in the selection of officers to man their Secretariat.

The Governor-General-in-council defined Secretariat service. It included besides Secretariat work in the accepted sense, service as Secretary to a Board of Revenue or Financial Commissioner or employment on a special duty of a Secretariat kind. They excluded from the definition, those appointments which, though they had their Head Quarters in the Capital, yet required the incumbent to tour, and thus brought him into

80. Ibid.
...134...
touch with the actual working of a district administration. For example the Inspector-General of Agriculture, Director of Land Records and Commissary of Excise were not Secretariat appointments.

It is undesirable that an officer should enter the Secretariat as Under Secretary before he had mastered the details of the district organisation and working or became familiar with the people and language.

The Government of India resolved that at least 3 years district service should be insisted before an officer was appointed to the Secretariat. It also resolved that the tenure of Under Secretaryship should ordinarily be limited to three years, the period being reckoned on continuous employment, whether officiating or substantive, as Under Secretary or might be extended beyond that period only in very exceptional circumstances. An interval of 3 years district service should ordinarily be required between two periods of Secretariat service.

The Government of India did not consider it desirable to prescribe any minimum period of district service as a qualification for appointment as a Secretary to a Local Government. Nor did it seem to the Governor-General in council to be necessary to lay down any time limit for the tenure of the post of Secretary. These matters should be left to the discretion of the Local Government.

The Government of Assam suggested that four years' district service from the date of arrival in India should be insisted on for appointment as an Under Secretary. Second, eight years' district service was necessary prior to the appointment as a Secretary. Third, the tenure of such Local Quarter posts which required the incumbents to tour, be reckoned as only

82. Resolution by Govt. of India No. 594-601 Establishment dated 27th May 1910. Appointment A June 1910 No. 50-51
half the period spent in charge of a district. Fourth, the tenure of office
of the Under Secretary and Secretary shall be three years.

The Government of India agreed with the views of the Government of
Assam in some respects. It said that three years district work should ordi-
narily be sufficient for appointment as Under Secretary. He should hold
office for a tenure of three years. At the end of three years, he should be
sent back to the districts. Only in exceptional circumstances, the term
might be extended. As regards Secretaryship the matter must be left to the
discretion of Local Government as it was felt not desirable to fix any
minimum period of district experience.

As regards his tenure of office, it should be left to the discretion
of Local Government.

The Government of India considered that an interval of three,
district service should ordinarily be required between two periods of Secretariat
Service. Directorship of Agriculture and Registrarship of Co-operative
Credit Societies were excluded from the definition of Secretariat service.

In the Assam Administration the following posts were tenure posts:

(a) Under Secretary to the Government—3 years tenure in Civil Secretariat. They reverted to their position in the Cadre.

(b) For Secretaries—there was no limit of period.

(c) Secretary P.W.D. and Chief Engineer P.W.D.—The term of service appears to be limited to 5 years.

(d) Under Secretary P.W.D.—3 years tenure.

---

83. Appointment A June 1910 No. 50-51.
84. Appointment A June 1910 No. 50-51
85. Finance B December 1925 No. 688-689.
86. Article 647 Civil Service Regulation and India's letter No. E 81 of 11.9.1924.
87. Appointment A June 1910 No. 50-51.
Nobody was quite sure if there were separate orders in the P.I. as to the tenure of this post.

The General principles regarding the tenure of Under Secretaries were prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor Llare. He laid down the following general principles.

(a) The appointment of an Under Secretary would ordinarily be for a period of three years.

(b) When an Under Secretary would vacate his appointment, he might retain his lien only if he proceeded on privilege leave and only for the period of that leave. If he vacated it on transfer to another appointment, he would lose his lien.

68. Financial 2 December 1925 No. 668-669.

89. Deposit A. June 1909 No. 1.
In Assam two different but well recognised systems had been working from the formation of Chief Commissionership in 1874, one in which a Secretary along with the entire hierarchical paraphernalia was interposed between the executive head of the department and the political head and the other in which the executive head of the department himself functioned as the Secretary. The Head of the Department did the work of secretary in the Public Works Department.

Now the question is who should be the Secretary to Government, a Generalist or a specialist. There are two schools of thought. The first school favours that the specialist should be the Secretary to the Government because it facilitates speedy execution of policies and programmes. It avoids delay and unnecessary expenditures.

The second school contends that the total integration of the two offices, Departmental Head and Secretary to Government blurs the line of demarcation between policy making and policy execution. As a consequence short term considerations overwhelm the long range policy.

Second, such integration deprives the Government of the benefit of a broader, impartial and dispassionate scrutiny of policy proposals so essential from the point of view of the Government as a whole and so seldom expected from the head of a line agency.

Third, it does not make available a second and an objective opinion in important cases.
The usual model where the Secretariat is distinct from the Directorates makes a better provision for strategic or policy-making functions, enables a scrutiny of policy proposals from a broader angle and furnishes a second opinion necessary in many cases. On the other hand, it frequently leads to repetitive noting on the proposals of highly qualified heads of departments. This leads to unnecessary delays and a psychological climate is created where directorate feels itself to be an inferior entity removed from the decision-making apparatus of the Government and a sense of frustration develops.

In Assam there is a volume of opinion in favour of the plan making the Heads of Departments Secretaries to the Government. There is much attraction in the suggestion that Heads of Departments should be Secretaries to Government in their own departments. There was already the case in the P.J.D.

The question of combining the duties of the Heads of Departments with those of the Secretaries was considered in the report of Retrenchment Committee in 1921. But no action was taken in the matter.

When Sir John Kerr was the Governor of Assam (1925-1927), the question of having a separate Secretary for the Public Works Department was mooted at the instance of the Government of India, but the proposal was not accepted.

---

90. Finance A December 1922 No.1-18.
91. Appointment B. September 1927 No.41-42
The Assam Resources and Retrenchment Committee 1930-1939 recommended by a majority that the Chief Engineer should be relieved of his duties as Secretary which should entrusted to one of the other Secretaries to the Government.

With the enormous increase in the role and constructional activities of the Public Works Department, it was essential that the Chief Engineer should be utilised fully for technical supervision in the field and should not be tied down in Secretariat work at Shillong. Design, methods of construction, interviews with the Heads of other Departments on schemes they put up as to particular building etc., what type of construction would be suitable, were some of the technical matters for the Chief Engineer. There was also a large Drawing office that had to be supervised. Then there was the question of cost consideration, working of boilers etc. These were enough work for a Chief Engineer. The Chief Engineer had such a work-load that both the technical supervision aspect and secretariat work tended to suffer.

This arrangement whereby a Head of a Department also functioned as Secretary is not satisfactory. The Governmental activities require a co-ordinated look which can be provided by a detached non-technical Secretary. So the P.W.D. Secretary cannot be chief of an operational agency for the latter was a wholetime charge and cannot be combined with that of the Secretary. This amalgamation of the functions of the Head of a department


94. The Assam Pay Committee Report 1964, Page 236.
or line agency and Secretary is not rational even if such an Head
functioning as ex-officio Secretary is to have a senior side in the
form of an Additional Secretary. A technical person as Secretary
who is also the Head of that technical Department would fail to bring
to bear a sufficiently broad and detached view in the working of department.
This separation of functions between the Head of a Department and the
Secretary may not bring about greater delay in sanction, because in any
case, all proposals had to go through the non-technical Finance Department.

Apart from the inherent objections to the system of making the Heads
of Departments Secretaries to Government, it may be pointed out that
although some Heads of Departments may send up their cases in the most
complete manner, there can be others whose cases might not be so sent up
and it would be difficult for the Government to deal with such cases
without the assistance of a separate Secretariat.

THE II. ISTER-SECRETARY R IATIONSHIP

The Secretary to Government is the principal adviser to the Minister
on all matters relating to a department. He is primarily and directly
responsible for the proper management of his Department. Under the rules
of Business, cases should ordinarily be submitted by the Secretary to the
Minister.

The Authority to dispose of or cause to be disposed of cases belonged to the Minister. The Secretary under the authority of the Minister could also dispose of unimportant cases. In case of extreme urgency in which the order of the Minister could not be obtained in time, the Secretary in the Department concerned might in his discretion take such action as he considered necessary but all such cases had to be submitted to the Minister as soon as possible.

The authority of the Minister was limited by the Business rules which required the submission to the Governor all cases in regard to which the Governor was required to exercise his individual judgment, cases which affected the peace or tranquillity of the Province and periodical and special reports relating to Political condition and to law and order, situation and service condition of all India Officers, strength and distribution of police force etc.

The Secretary attended the meeting of the Council of Ministers. He was under an obligation to draw the attention of the Minister to all cases which should be submitted to the Governor under the Business rules and might also advise the Minister that the Governor should in view of his special responsibilities or for any other reason, see any case before orders were issued. The Secretary was also under an obligation, on a requisition from the Governor to furnish all papers or records of Government in his charge or under his control or such information relating to any
matter connected with the business of Government, of which he had knowledge as the Governor required. Copies of important communications were submitted by the Secretary to the Minister-in-charge and also to the Governor when they affected his special responsibility or individual judgment.

Now the question arises why the Secretary should submit certain cases direct to the Governor. A Secretary was the Secretary to the Government of which the Governor was the Head and not Secretary to the Minister-in-charge.

A Minister was a political Head of a Secretariat Department. The Secretary of the Department was the principal adviser of the Minister on all matters of policy and administration. The work of the department was controlled by him. He advised the Minister on various policy matters. He was also concerned with the defence of departmental policy not only in the legislature but also outside. He sat in the Legislature's lobby and took note of the criticism and comments regarding the working of the department.

The position of the Secretary was analogous in relation to the Member of the Governor's executive Council or the Minister, to that of the permanent Under Secretary of a ministry in the British Government. But this was apparent than real.

Dyarchy and Provincial autonomy in no way affected the character of functioning and the position of the Secretaries who were members of the Indian Civil Service.

For the successful working of parliamentary democratic government, it is important to have a complete understanding and co-operation between the political and administrative executive. In Britain, the traditions and practices of loyal co-operation between ministers and their permanent Secretaries in the Whitehall gradually built up.

In India, particularly in Assam, difficulties were noticed in running the provincial Government from the days of dyarchy till independence as the relation between the I.C.S. Secretaries and the popular ministers were not too happy. There was no built-up tradition of parliamentary Government in Assam demanding loyalty of services to the ministers. The reason was that the ministers had no real control over the I.C.S. Secretaries, which vested ultimately in the distant Secretary of State for India. Moreover, the Secretaries had direct access to the Governor. A Secretary could take a file over the head of his Minister direct to the Governor.

The power of the Secretaries differed inversely with the strength of the Minister. If the ministers were new or lacked office experience— they were naturally more dependent upon their respective departmental Secretaries. On the other hand, the influence of the Secretaries were much less, in the case of Sir Sayid Muhammad Sandulla who had long office experience in various capacities in the Government of Assam. He resisted the interference of the Secretaries in policy matters. The fact remains that the Secretaries were incapable of interpreting the mind and thinking of the ministers and carry out the work of administration accordingly. Personal equations play a very important part in determining the Minister-Secretary relationship. No case study can be made in the absence of illustrative material at present.