TRIBAL BELTS AND BLOCKS

Large areas in the plains districts are inhabited by plains tribal people. Simple in nature these people were living in primitive conditions, and due to lack of education and material advantages, they could not look after their own welfare and were incapable of protecting their own interest. A large number of outsiders mostly from East Bengal began to pour in large numbers into Assam from the beginning of the present century. They began to spread into the areas occupied by these tribal people. The tribal people being naturally shy and unable to live in peace with
these new comers began to recede into the in-
terior. To protect these people from the on-
slaught of these land hungry outsiders, imagi-
nary lines were drawn dividing the areas occu-
pied by the tribals from the areas occupied by
these outsiders. This was known as the Line
System, which, however, did not work satisfac-
torily. Later colonisation schemes and devel-
opment schemes were taken up. But these also
did not give the necessary protection to these
tribal people and their lands were passing into
the hands of the outsiders and they were gradu-
ally driven into the still interior places. In
order to give them necessary protection, there-
fore, the Tribal Belts and Blocks were consti-
tuted. The provisions for these Belts and
Blocks are contained in the newly added Chapter
X of the Regulation. The principle followed in
constituting them is that the majority of the
population in these areas must be tribals and
that there should be sufficient waste lands
available in that area. When these conditions
are fulfilled in a continuous stretch of land,
a Belt is constituted; otherwise Blocks are
constituted. The lands within these Belts and
Blocks can be disposed of only after taking into consideration:

(a) the bonafide needs of those who are permanently residing within the areas;

(b) the bonafide needs of those who are temporarily residing as settlement holders of land but who are likely to become permanent residents;

(c) the bonafide needs of the tribals who were living elsewhere in the district.
160.(1) Notwithstanding anything herein­before contained, the State Government may adopt such measures as it deems fit for the protection of those classes who on account of their primitive condition and lack of education or material advantages are incapable of looking after their welfare in so far as such welfare depends upon their having sufficient land for their maintenance.

* Added by the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation (Amendment) Act, 1947 (Assam Act XV of 1947).
(2) The State Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, specify the classes of people whom it considers entitled to protection by such measures as aforesaid.

161. The protective measures may include the constitution of compact areas, in regions predominantly peopled by the classes of people notified under the provisions of sub-section (2) of section 160, into belts or blocks. The boundaries of the areas so constituted shall as far as possible coincide with mauza boundaries or be otherwise easily distinguishable.*