Chapter I

OUTLINE OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

The scene that met the eyes of the Ahoms, a people of the Jparse from Burma, when they reached Kamarupa and the surrounding regions, in 1220 A.D., was one of comparative confusion and rivalry between the Kochs and the Kacharies for pre-eminence. The prevailing conditions easily enabled them to gain a footing in the country, which they gradually expanded and ultimately became the masters of the country for a period of about 600 years. Thereafter, after a brief interlude of Burmese Rule, in 1826, a new power, the British, gained supremacy on the conclusion of the first war with Burma (1824-25).

Till 1874 Assam was a part of the province of Bengal and was administered by an Agent to the Governor General from Calcutta. That year saw the constitution of the province of Assam as a separate entity from Bengal and it was carved out to relieve the Lt.Governor of Bengal of a part of his, at that time, very vast charge. Assam was then made into a Chief Commissioner's province with Colonel R.W. Keatings, C.S.I. at its first Chief Commissioner. This set-up continued up till the year 1905, when, on the partition of Bengal, it was decided to tag on the province with the newly created Eastern Bengal. By a Government of India Notification in 1905, the new province was designated as the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam with Headquarters at Dacca. After a lapse of another 7 years a further mutation took place in the year 1912 when Assam was again taken out of the province of Eastern Bengal and reformed once more into a Chief Commissionership by a Government of India Notification in the exercise of powers conferred by Section 3 of Government of India Act 1854. This Unit comprised of 2 divisions, namely, the Brahmaputra Valley Division and the Burra Valley Division. The former contains
of (1) Darrang (2) Garo Hills (3) Goalpara (4) Kamrup (5) Lakhipur (6) Nowgong and (7) Sibsagar districts and the latter was made up of (1) Gachar (2) K. & J. Hills (3) Lushai Hills (4) Naga Hills and (5) Sylhet districts. The first Chief Commissioner of the Province Shri Archdale Earle, K.C.I.E., took charge on 1/4/1912.

Before the advent of the British there appears to have been no specific or organised machinery for the maintenance of internal peace and harmony. Even after the advent of the British, initially Law and Order was held to be the general responsibility of the army and other officers of the Government. In the early days of East India Company rule, the company did not take over the administration of the entire area of Assam but had instructed Mr. David Scott, the first Agent to the Governor General in India, to hand over the portion then known as Muttock i.e. Upper Assam from Golaghat to Dibrugarh, to Purandar Singh, the last Ahom Ruler, who had accepted the Company's suzerainty. In return, he was granted protection against invasion and invested with uncontrollable Civil Power. The Sadiya and Bangapara Tracts, however, remained in British hands and the Assam Light Infantry was entrusted with the task of defending the area against incursions by the Burmese and the Chinese.

**BRITISH TAKE-OVER OF ASSAM**

The end of the first Burmese War in 1824-25, saw the taking over of a large number of British troops into the region for maintenance of Law and Order. The troops were deployed in Goalpara, Bijnor, Lakhimpur and Sadiya in the Assam Valley and Sylhet, Cherrapunji, Jaintia and Jaintia in the Surma Valley. This state of affairs continued until 1839 when the Hmar Karoti - Singpe rising took place in which Colonel White and some troops of Sadiya Garrison lost their lives. This incident along with Purandar Singh's mis-management resulted in the taking over of the whole of Assam Valley under the direct control of
the Company. In 1845 Dibrugarh became the Headquarters of Upper Assam and Gauhati up till 1860 the Headquarters of the Agent to the Governor General.

**THE CACHAR AND JORHAT LEVIES**

From 1830 the strength of troops was gradually reduced and by 1839-40 only 4 regiments were maintained. Side by side with this diminution in the size of the Army took place an accretion in the strength of the Armed Civil Police. Also, along with it rose the idea of a "LEVY" or Militia, as a separate Force under the Civil Government, quite apart from the Armed Police Branch. On its formation the levy was placed on a better footing than the ordinary Police, as it was required to perform military tasks, in addition to civilian duties, of an arduous nature involving fighting in jungle terrain. The first unit of the levy was raised in 1835 by Mr. Grange, who was in charge of the Civil Administration of Nowgong District. This was designated as the "Cachar Levy" with a strength of 750 comprising of all ranks i.e. Inspectors, Head Constables and Constables. Three years later a similar body, the "Jorhat Militia," was formed with lesser strength for the protection of the Sibsagar Border, recruited mostly from the Shans, who had settled in that area. This unit, was sometimes called as "Shan" and sometimes as "Police Militia," but ultimately was amalgamated with the "Cachar Militia."

The Cachar Levy was thus the earliest embodied unit of what eventually became the "Military Police" or "Frontier Police" of Assam. The present Assam Rifles have their origin in these units.

**CREATION OF THE GENERAL POLICE DISTRICT**

Under a Government of India Notification in 1874, the first General Police District under Police Act V of 1861 was created with the following districts i.e. (1) Kamrup (2) Darrang (3) Nowgong
Initially i.e. from 1876 to 1905, the Police was administered from Shillong and the first Inspector General of Police was Mr. Chichele Plowden, C.S. The Police at that time was divided into four branches i.e. (1) the Frontier Police (M.P.), (2) the Civil Police, (3) the Municipal Police and (4) the Rural Police. The total strength of the Police in 1877 was 3355 men of all ranks and the sanctioned Police grant for the year was Rs. 6, 34,000. In those days, there was no Civil Police in the Naga Hills and Garo Hills where its duties were performed by the Frontier Police or Military Police. In the Khasi and Jaintia Hills there was no Armed Police and Civil Police had to perform both the duties. The Police Act V of 1861 was introduced in Assam in 1862 and the Criminal Procedure Code was also made operative in the region the same year.

MUNICIPAL POLICE

The Municipal Police first took birth in Assam under the Bengal District Municipal Improvement Act, 1864. This Act authorised the Lt. Governor of Bengal to extend the Act to any town at his discretion and to determine the amount of house tax to be levied for the maintenance of Municipal Police and the improvement of sanitation. The Act was extended to the towns of Guwahati and Silchar on May 1, 1865. At the time of the constitution of the Chief Commissionership of Assam in 1874, Municipal Police existed in Kamrup, Sylhet and Cachar districts. During 1876 Municipal Police was entertained in the town of Goalpara, in 1877 in the town of Dibrugarh and in 1878...
in Shillong. In the early part of 1881 there were Municipal Police operating at Goalpara, Gauhati, Dibrugarh, Sylhet, Sibsagar, Silchar and Shillong towns, but from the 18th April of that year the Municipal Police, excepting at Sylhet and Shillong towns, were amalgamated with the ordinary Civil Police.

**FRONTIER REGULATION OF 1882**

The Assam Police Frontier Regulation of 1882 provided for the maintenance of proper discipline in the Force and fixed the terms and conditions of service in the Assam Frontier Police. Further changes were witnessed in 1883 when the Frontier Police was reorganized to give it a distinct military role and the defence of the whole Frontier was placed in its hands. The Frontier Police was organised into four corps and these corps were stationed in the districts of Cachar, Lakhimpur, Garo Hills and Naga Hills. Excepting in these four districts the duties of guarding the Jails, Treasuries, etc were taken over by the Civil Police.

**PAY AND PROSPECTS REVISION : 1894**

A proposal for improving the pay and prospects of the Armed and Civil Police submitted to the Government of India was sanctioned in 1894. It included among other things the raising of the pay of the Constables in the plains districts from Rs. 6 to Rs. 7 per month, excepting in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts where the maximum pay was fixed Rs. 8 per month. The grant of clothing allowances to Head Constables was also sanctioned. Under a reorganization scheme that came into force in 1900, the status and qualification of the investigating officers were raised and the Armed Civil Police and the Civil Police were amalgamated. The same year the Military Police was also armed with Martini Henry Rifles. During the period 1882 to 1900, the Police force was increased gradually and in the year 1900 the Police budget reached the figure of Rs. 16,41,185/-.
As mentioned previously the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was formed in 1905 and the Provincial headquarters was shifted from Shillong to Dacca. For the new province, a cadre of two Deputy Inspectors General, 23 Superintendents of Police and 20 Assistant Superintendents of Police was sanctioned.

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Indian Police Commission of 1902-03 more reforms were introduced from 1905 to 1907. Some of these were as follows:

1. Increase in the pay of Sub-Inspectors and Constables.
2. Improved scale of pay for the superior Police cadre.
3. Increase in the number of Sub-Inspectors.
4. Formation of the Provincial C.I.D.
5. Substantial increase in the number of Constables.
6. Grade promotions for the rank of Constables upto that of Inspector.

EXPANSION OF 1911

A scheme for the re-organisation of the Civil Police received the sanction of the Secretary of State in 1911. It resulted in an increase in the number of officers and men employed and in the number of investigating centres. The River Police Scheme also received sanction this year. Under it, provision was made for 27 launches, a separate force and 36 launches.

NEW ASSAM PROVINCE FORMED: 1912

The year 1912 saw once again the rebirth of Assam as a separate province. During the year the formation of a new Battalion for the North East Frontier was sanctioned. Also a scheme for the reorganisation of the then existing 4 Battalions of Military Police Force into four uniform Battalions of equal strength was drawn up and submitted to Government. In addition a Finger Print Bureau was set up at Shillong.
CREATION OF THE C.I.D.

In pursuance of the recommendation of the Indian Police Commission of 1902-03, a Criminal Investigation Department was established in Assam in 1913 under Special Superintendent of Police. Mr. A.E.H. Shuttleworth was the first Special Superintendent of Police, C.I.D. This department consisted of (1) Special Branch – which was concerned with intelligence and activities of political extremists, (2) Investigation Branch, and (3) the Finger Print Bureau. The post of the Deputy Inspector General of Police, C.I.D. was subsequently created in 1935 and Mr. R. R. Cumming, I.P. was the first Deputy Inspector General of Police, C.I.D. The objects of the C.I.D. were:

1. To promote co-operation between the Police of the different districts and Provinces.
2. To compile and publish the Criminal Intelligence Gazette with a view to:
   (a) Check crime by prompt publication of the arrival of criminal gangs and suspicious criminals and to disseminate information about the prevalence of any particular class of crime and absence of veteran criminals from their houses.
   (b) To secure the detection and arrest of persons wanted for serious offences.
   (c) To trace property stolen and recovered.
   (d) To publish the identity of wanted criminals and absconders with a view to tracing them out.
   (e) To publish miscellaneous criminal intelligence likely to be of value to the police.
3. To investigate criminal cases committed by organised gangs or groups.
4. To conduct miscellaneous enquiries as may be ordered by the Government, the Inspector General of Police or the Dy. Inspector General of Police, C.I.D.
ASSAM RIFLES

The sanction of the Secretary of State for the reorganization of the Military Police Force was received in 1915. The Principal improvements related to the raising of the strength of each battalion to 800 rifles and better pay.

In 1917, the Military Police was christened as the Assam Rifles. Those years 1919-20 saw a number of important changes and improvements. These included the provision of '303 Rifles to the Assam Rifles and a decision to confine recruitment to the force as far as possible to the people of the Province.

In 1923 all the 5 battalions of the Assam Rifles were re-armed with SMLE Mark I '303 low velocity charger loading magazine rifles and in the following year they were reckoned as on a par with the Gurkha troops of the Indian Army. This is no way affected the position of the Assam Rifles as a Military Police Force under the control of the Government of Assam.

RAILWAY POLICE

The jurisdiction of the Railway Police was also redistributed in 1923 in conformity with the Provincial boundary. This involved the handing over of the A.B.Railway line from Chittagong to Srimangal to Bengal and taking over of the B.B.Railway line from Golokganj to Pandu. The headquarters of the Superintendent of Railway Police was temporarily located at Gauhati, though later in 1927 it was shifted to Haflong. An officer of the rank of senior Supdt.of Police was appointed to head the Railway Police in 1927 and the system of fixed travelling allowance for the subordinate staff of Railway Police was also introduced that year.

TOWN POLICE

A separate Town Police was constituted in 1926 to which Constables were permanently posted with a special pay of £. 2/- per month.
This measure, however, did not prove to be popular with the men and the previous decision of permanently posting Constables to the Town Police was reversed and the term of a Constable for service in the Town Police was fixed at 2 years only.

**PAY REVISION OF 1930**

At the beginning of 1930, the Government sanctioned revision of pay of all ranks of the Assam Rifles and also accepted the recommendations of the Assam Civil Police Committee set up in 1929 for increase of pay of Constables, Head Constables and Assistant Sub-Inspectors with effect from April 1, 1930. The system of granting deferred pay of Rs.150/- to each Constable for 5 years continuous approved service was introduced from April 1, 1929.

**RETrenchMENT AND RESTORATION**

The economy drive necessitated by the financial crisis of 1931-32 led to large scale retrenchment in the Police as in the other Govt. Departments and this badly affected the efficiency of the force. Shortly after 1933 a considerable restoration had to be made to cope with the increase in crimes and deterioration in the law and order situation within the State.

**ADMINISTRATION OF M.V.ACT.**

The administration of the Motor Vehicles Act was transferred from the P.W.D. to the Police in 1936, bringing with it a considerable volume of work. The Police tackled the new job entrusted to them with credit, resulting in a large increase in revenue and virtual elimination of evasion of Motor taxes. The new Motor Vehicles Act, 1939 brought in its wake additional work and responsibilities on the Police. (From the year 1951, however, administration of the M.V. Department was transferred to the Transport Department).

**PROLIFERATION DURING WORLD WAR II**

The burden of additional duties thrown upon the Police enormously increased with the progress of the war. Control over foreigners,
vigilance over lines of communications, counter espionage and antisabotage activities, maintenance of internal security and formation and working of A.R.P. were the main extra tasks the Police had to shoulder during 1940. The dangers of underground activities helpful to the hostile powers were countered by the employment of a small Intelligence Staff. In 1941 a temporary force consisting of both Gazetted and Subordinate ranks was entertained to meet the war demands. The same year also saw the Police engaged in the administration of Motor spirit rationing and tyre licensing schemes.

The contours of war underwent a dramatic change in 1942. The, till then reckoned, invincible might of Britain began to totter and by the early part of the year it became manifest that the triumphant march of the Japanese armed forces could not be held and the fate of Burma hung in the balance. The flow of refugees, which began towards the end of 1941, gathered in volume. The task of requisitioning motor transport for use on the Imphal-Dimapur Road was quite suddenly trust upon the Police and the Superintendents of Police were directed to requisition a large number of motor vehicles for the transport of supplies, labour, etc., to Manipur as well as for the evacuation of the refugees to the railhead of Dimapur. With the rapid march of the war to the borders of Assam it soon became apparent that the Police force, as then constituted, was quite inadequate to meet the new situation. Various sanctions for additional force were asked for and received during the year for security duties, such as, protection of the railways, guarding of aerodromes etc. etc. As a consequence the Police Force increased by nearly one half of its original strength. This excluded the "Railforce", a para-military organization formed in 1944 to protect the lines of communications against enemy sabotage, and which was transformed after the war to the Reserve Police Battalion in 1946.
PROVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES FOR THE FORCE

The war years conferred the boon of increased mobility on the Police by the grant of motor vehicles to the department. In 1942, for the first time in its history, the Assam Police was provided with 4 motor vehicles, which were increased by additions in the subsequent years. The responsibility for organising a Fire Brigade also developed on the Police and a start was made in some of the important towns of the Province.

CREATION OF THE POST OF D.I.G. (ADMINISTRATION)

Upto the end of 1944, the total additional temporary staff sanctioned was 5113. The cost of the Department rose very high and a large part of the increase was borne by the Central Government on account of the services rendered to the Defence Department.

After the cessation of hostilities, in 1945, the question of reduction of the temporary force entertained during the war arose, but it soon became evident, that the need for the bulk of the forces still remained and the crying need of the hour was the reorganisation of the force and not its reduction. To implement the decision Mr. J. E. Reid, I.P. was appointed as Deputy Inspector General of Police, Administration to draw up a comprehensive scheme for the reorganisation of the Police of Assam.

POST-WAR REORGANISATION

The general reorganisation scheme for the subordinate police force, which was drawn up in 1945, was sanctioned in August, 1948. The Chief ingredients of the scheme were an increase in the rank and file and the subordinate officer cadre, re-establishment of the Police Training College, as well as the nominal replacement of the temporary "Railforce" by the Assam Police Battalion. Under the scheme, the strength of the subordinate police stood at 7755 on 31st December, 1948 as against 3679 at the end of 1947. In addition there
was a temporary sanction of 890 officers and men. Also, the revised scales of pay fixed on the recommendation of the Assam Pay Committee of 1948 came into force the same year. (Here it may be mentioned that because of the unprecedented political and social changes between the years 1945 and 1948 the scheme before it could be implemented had become outmoded.)

STATE-LEVEL ORGANIZATION BY 1947

By 1947 the State-level police administration consisted of the Inspector General of Police, who was vested by Government under the Police Act V of 1861 with the administration of the Police in the General police Districts of Assam constituted in 1874, and the two Deputy Inspectors General of Police, namely the D.I.G.CID, created in 1935, and the D.I.G.Administration, created in 1945. There were no Deputy Inspectors General of Police, Ranges, as in other Provinces. The I.G.P. in his office was assisted by the A.I.G.P. (Assistant Inspector General of Police), which post was held by an officer of S.P's rank. A most important development following the recommendations of the Police Commission 1902-03 had been the formation of provincial cadres of I.P. officers, who were recruited centrally and appointed by the Secretary of State like I.C.S. officers, for manning superior posts in every province. The first officer belonging to the I.P. cadre of Assam took over as I.G.P. in 1919 and after that till 1947 this top post in Police administration was always held by I.P. officers, who were professional police officers, unlike prior to 1919 when the post used to be held by I.C.S. officers. The state-level police organizations and institutions were the Finger Print Bureau established in 1912, the Criminal Investigation Department established in 1913,
the Provincial Police Training School established in 1916, River Police, Railway Police, the Reserve Police Battalion formed from Railforce in 1946, the nucleus Fire Brigade formed during World War II, and the Assam Rifles which were soon to part company as a centralized force under the Union Government during 1947 itself.

DISTRICT-LEVEL ORGANIZATION BY 1947

From 1874 to 1947, the office of the District Superintendent of Police as envisaged under the Police Act V of 1861 did not undergo any change and became fully established as an important institution of public administration. His relationship with the District Magistrate, under whose general direction and control he was to function, also remained fully intact as originally envisaged in the Police Act. But various other changes in the organization and staffing pattern of the District Police took place. Thus, against the five district types of District Police as organized by 1883, namely the Civil Police, the Municipal Police, the Rural Police, the Armed Civil Police, and the Frontier Police, only two types of district police now emerged by 1947. These were the Civil Police which was subdivided into the Armed Branch and the Unarmed Branch, the later having a further subdivision in the form of Town Police, and the Rural Police of the Chowkidari system which existed only in the three districts of Sylhet, Cachar and Goalpara. Excepting Sylhet where the post of Additional Superintendent of Police existed, the District Superintendent of Police was assisted by a Deputy or Assistant Superintendent of Police at the HQ. and Inspector in charge of Police Circles, each circle consisting of a convenient number of Police Stations.
REFERENCES


2. Government of India (Home Department) Notification No. 2832 dated 1st September, 1905.


5. Government of India (Home Department) Notification No. 291 dated 22nd March, 1912.


7. See Chapter on "Financial Administration."