CHAPTER VI

EASTERN FRONTIER BRIGADE

Until August 1857 the Local Corps on the North-East Frontier remained unaffected by the mutiny of the Bengal Army. The Agent had reported that the men had expressed their loyalty to the Government. Some of them even offered their services against the rebels. The Commander-in-Chief found sufficient grounds for directing the raising of two irregular levies for general service, one drawn from the Manipuris and Cacharees and the other from the frontier tribes. The defection of Raja Kunwar Singh of Jagadishpur soon produced a restlessness amongst the men of the First A.L.I. serving in Upper Assam, particularly those serving from the Arrah district in Bihar. Already in the Sibsagar district a conspiracy was set on foot to seize power. These conspirators actually succeeded in tempering with the loyalty of some sepoys.

1. See Minute, 30 September 1858, by Halliday, F.J. on the Mutinies as affected the Lower Provinces under the Government of Bengal, vide Buckland, O.E.: Bengal under Lieutenant Governors, Vol.1. See also Barpujarl, H.K.: Assam: In the days of the Company, Pp. 165 ff. Dr. Barpujarl thus observes: 'the heterogeneous nature of the Regiments - consisting as they did of the Nepaleses, the Manipurees, the Rabhas, the Jarrowas and the Doannehs - Combined with the comparatively settled and peaceful life enjoyed by them made even the upcountry sepoys, rather indifferent to the occurrences in Northern India'.

2. G.O.O.O.: No. 523, 24 August 1857. Since the Hill Tribes were adverse to enlisting for general service, only one Regiment called the Kaarup Regiment was raised. It was employed in the Lower Provinces and later against the Jayantias.
and Native officers, notably in the detachment at Golaghat. The prompt arrest of the ring leaders had the effect of preventing the spread of disaffection. In Dibrugarh, the Headquarters of the Regiment, precautionary measures were taken by Major Hannay, its Commandant, by mixing the Gurkhas and other classes with the Hindustanis*. Some of the suspect Hindustanis were dispersed to the frontier outposts thereby making combination impossible.

EUROPEAN ARTILLERY

The Government of India, alarmed by the sudden change in the situation in Assam, sent a small reinforcement of 104 European seamen under Lieutenant Davis in September 1857. This small force failed to allay the fears of the European community in Upper Assam. On 24 October, D.C. Mackey, the Chairman of the Assam (Tea) Company, petitioned to the Government for a further force of Europeans for the security of the tea planters. The Government was not in a position of spare any more European troops for Assam; but when Major Hannay himself pressed for some European

* The class composition (of all ranks) of the First A.L.I. in June 1857 was: Hindustanis - 600; Gurkhas - 250; Manipuris, Jurwas and others 260. B.J.P. 10 August 1857: No. 313.
2. B.J.P. 1 October 1857: No. 306.
3. B.J.P. 19 November 1857: No. 218 A.
Artillery and Infantry, another batch of 100 seamen was despatched under Captain Browne. Of these two Naval Brigades, the first was stationed in Dibrugarh and the second in Sibsagar.

Shortly afterwards, in view of the Government of India's orders against further recruitment of natives into the Artillery, Hannay proposed to replace the Native Local Artillery by a Local Company of European Artillery. Half of these he proposed to station at Dibrugarh and the others at Tezpur. Major Reid, the Commandant of Native Local Artillery recommended a Regular Company of European Artillery or a Local Company of Eurasians. Jenkins, the Agent to the Governor-General, saw no reason for European Artillery so long as the Naval Brigade was retained. If, however, the Government agreed to despatch European Artillery he pointed out that it should be a Regular instead of a Local one. He also agreed to an Artillery composed of Eurasians or partly of Eurasians and partly of Africans or wholly of Africans with European sergeants. On 12 June 1857 he recommended to the Government that the men of the Native Local Artillery should be absorbed into the two Local Corps. In its place there should be a full Company of Regular

1. B.J.P. 14 January 1858: No. 163.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
European Artillery, furnished with Enfield rifles, to be stationed at Dibrugarh. With a similar arrangement at Cherrapunjee for the Khasi Hills, Sylhet and Cachar there would be no necessity for any other European troops on the North-East Frontier.

The principal object of an European Artillery in Assam was to afford confidence to the Tea Planters. The discomfiture of the Abor expedition in 1858 and the stiff resistance met by the second sent to salvage British reputation, soon convinced the local authorities that it would be imprudent to rely solely on natives in any military operations against such hill tribes. Since Artillery was indispensable in these operations, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Hopkinson, Jenkins' successor as Agent, reported on 20 April 1861 that a European Artillery was more desirable than an Infantry. An Artillery Company was more powerful and complete than an infantry Regiment. In a campaign against a hill tribe a handful of European Gunners would be sufficient, while at the same time they would give confidence to the Native troops. For fixed outpost and station duties Hopkinson strongly recommended the retention of the Native

1. Ibid.

2. The Abors' wrote Major Hannay, who commanded the second expedition, 'offered a stubborn opposition to our advance, which the enemy's knowledge of the ground, his skill with bows and arrows and spears, and his formidable stockades rendered easy. Of the latter several were defended to the last, while in three cases it was necessary to use the howitzers to open a way for the assault'. Cited in Shakespeare, L.W.: History of the Assam Rifles, Pp. 42-43.

Local Artillery. He made it clear to the Government that European troops could not be permanently stationed at Sadiya or Tezpur. If Artillery were required at these posts they must be provided from the Native Company. He proposed to get rid of the militia manning the guns at Sadiya and the Artillery detail attached to the Second A.L.I. and make the Native Local Company of Artillery take the duties of Sadiya, Tezpur and Gauhati. He proposed to station the European Artillery in Dibrugarh. Soon after a European Artillery Company was added to Upper Assam.

REORGANISATION : NATIVE INFANTRY REDUCED

Meanwhile, the reorganisation of the Bengal Army following the recommendations of the Peel Commission 1859, was extended to the North East Frontier. The proportion between Indians and Europeans in the Army was fixed at 2:1, the composition of each Regiment of Native Infantry was in future to be mixed. The control of arsenals and practically the whole of the Artillery were kept in European hands. Each Native Infantry Regiment was to consist of eight companies of one subadar, one jamadar, five each of havildars and naiks, two drummers and 75 sepoys per company, making a total

1. Ibid.
2. For further details see Singh, H.L.: Problems and Policies of the British in India, Ch. III.
of 600 sepoys or 712 rank and file\(^1\), compared to the former establishment of 1160 of all ranks. Hitherto the Local Corps were under the control of the Civil authorities. In May 1861 the First and the Second A.L.I. and the S.L.I. were brought on the strength of the Line. They were numbered, respectively, the 46th Regiment (Assam) Native Infantry, 47th Regiment (Assam) Native Infantry and 48th Regiment (Sylhet) Native Infantry\(^2\). When the Gurkhas corps were withdrawn from the General List and numbered separately, from 1st to the 5th under the direction of Secretary of State\(^3\), the Regiments were renamed respectively the 42nd, 43rd, 44th Regiment Native Infantry. In 1858 the strength of the Regiments stood as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regiment</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First A.L.I.</td>
<td>1000 sepoys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second A.L.I.</td>
<td>1000 sepoys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.L.I.</td>
<td>800 sepoys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1860, during the Jayantia disturbances, the last Regiment was raised to 1200 men. These Regiments were ordered to be reduced; the first two by 400 men each and the S.L.I. by 600, the total reductions amounting to 1400 men.

As regards composition, the Regiments fell under the category of 'General Mixture Regiments'\(^4\), that is, indiscriminate

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2. Ibid: Although the old title of 'Assam' was granted officially, it was not used in the Army List until 1865. See Ryan, D.G.J. Historical Record of the 6th Gurkha Rifles, p. 22.
mixture of troops and companies of all ranks. It was not con­
didered desirable by the Governor-General in Council to lay down
minute rules as to the proportion of each class to be enlisted.
The Military Authorities were directed that these Regiments, being
intended principally for service on the North-East Frontier should
recruit in their own neighbourhood and from hill men; but the
Hindustani element should be restricted one fourth of the strength
of the Regiments. Subsequently, in December 1865, the 42nd Regi­
ment was organised into class companies. It was then composed of
two Sikh companies; four Gurkhas companies, each company composed
of twenty five percent Jurfwas; two Hindustani companies, one Mussal­
man and one Hindu.

Although the Native Infantry Regiments were subjected
to radical changes no alteration was made in the Native Local Com­
pany of Artillery. Influenced by Hopkinson's report of 20 April
1861, as well as by the experience of the effects of the climate
on the Europeans of the Naval Brigade, the Government of India
decided to retain the Native Local Company of Artillery. In making
this departure from the Peel Commission's recommendations it was
explained to the Secretary of State that the Native Artillery com­
pany was entirely local in character and was posted in remote fron­

1. Ibid: See also Huxford: History of the dth Gurkha Rifles, P. 23.
tier where the climate was congenial to the health of Europeans. The employment of Native gunners was therefore not open to the objections which generally applied to the plains. Further, the presence of the European Artillery was a sufficient security against future trouble.

REDUCTION PROVED IMPRacticABLE

When the reductions in the Native Infantry Regiments were to be carried into effect, the local authorities were faced with practical difficulties in Lower Assam. From the dearth of troops, the 43rd Regiment could not be relieved from its outpost duties. Unlike Upper Assam, there was no Police Militia. Captain Campbell, the Commanding Officer, could reduce it only by 150 men. With a large number of the men scattered about in numerous outposts and an equally large number on furlough he found it impossible to reduce his Regiment to the specified strength. The reduction of the Regiment, keeping up at the same time numerous posts on frontier, would have seriously overburdened it. The other alternative, it was pointed out, was the sacrifice of many important posts hitherto considered indispensable for the defence of the frontier. In

2. B.J.P. June 1861: No. 387, Campbell to Jenkins, 22 May.
3. B.J.P. July 1861: No. 252, Campbell to Hopkinson, 22 May.
bringing these difficulties to the notice of the Government of India, Colonel Jenkins, then in charge of the defence of the North-East Frontier, warned that if Government insisted upon its orders for reduction being carried out in full, the number of fighting men on the frontier would be reduced far beyond what could be considered safe.

The Police Commission set up in August 1860 to look into the question of police administration in India, in their preliminary resolutions had drawn a broad distinction between the functions of the police and the army. The task of protection and repression had become the duty of the army when the 'breakers of the law are strangers to the District' Hopkinson pointed out that on this principle the frontier outposts had to be considered as military rather than police posts. They were intended to provide against external aggression and not internal disorder, each post commanding some road or outlet by which the hill tribes descended to ravage the plains. Under these circumstances the outpost duties of the Regulars were likely to increase. Further, it was also presumed that the Police Militia and the Kuki Levy would, like the Bengal Military Police Battalions raised during the Mutiny, soon be abolished or absorbed into a Police Constabulary.

2. For details see Misra, B.B.: Administrative History of India, P. 537.
3. B.J.P. July 1861: No.252; Hopkinson to Campbell, 5 June 1861.
EARLY PROPOSALS

The order for reduction came at a highly inopportune moment. The Jayantias, who had revolted in 1860, still required a large force to keep them under control. The Abors and the Nagas continued to be a source of considerable anxiety. In the winter of 1860-61 two military expeditions had to be undertaken, one against the Garos and the other against the Chittagong frontier tribes. Sir J.P. Grant, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, therefore found sufficient grounds for taking up the question of the troops required for the defence of the North-East Frontier. Before a representation was made to the Government of India on the subject, on 15 July the Commissioner of Assam was asked to submit a report on the military requirements of the province.

Accordingly, Hopkinson drew up in September 1861 a detailed report on the number of frontier posts that required military guards. The report showed that there were no less than 40 posts which required 1328 men of all ranks. Many of these posts were held by the Police Militia, but he had considered them as military posts on the basis of the distinction drawn between the functions of the police and the army by the Police Commission. None of these

posts could be taken by any Constabulary that was not equal to the Native Infantry Regiments in pluck and discipline, and superior to it in mobility. The Agent added that in his opinion the eighty thousand rupees worth of Police on the Bengal model and the three Native Infantry Regiments should be dispensed with. Instead, the defence of the frontiers should be entrusted to a two thousand strong Constabulary organised, armed and equipped according to the different work required on different parts of the frontier. These should have their own Inspector General and subordinate officers in each district. To act against the tribes on the Lakhimpur frontier as well as to give confidence to the Tea Planters two or three companies of European Infantry would be required. The European Infantry would also act as a check upon the Constabulary. Such an arrangement would, on the whole, be less expensive and more efficient than the existing one. The Lieutenant Governor held similar views. He agreed with Hopkinson that the cheapest, most effective and convenient manner of protecting a province like Assam was by a moderate European and Native force, and an adequate number of Civil Corps organised and disciplined on the lines of the Bengal Military Police Battalions and composed of martial frontier tribes. The Police under good organisation should act, not as soldiers, but as a real Constabulary.

1. Ibid.
2. B.J.P. July 1861: No. 452.
bulary\textsuperscript{1}. But, he added, with the notions prevalent with the Government of India, it would be a hopeless task to endeavour to obtain such a reliable and useful protecting arrangement, though such a plan may eventually be possible when further experience had been obtained and when the fashion of opinion once more changes.

DEFEENCE OF NORTH EAST FRONTIER : JENKINS' RECOMMENDATIONS

The reductions in the Regiments in the meanwhile had been carried into effect. In Lower Assam, as a result, the 43rd Regiment Native Infantry became overburdened. There were more men at the outposts, some 289 men, than the 250 at Headquarters could relieve. This state of affairs did not go unnoticed by the Military authorities. Sir Hugh Rose, the Commander-in-Chief, observed that it was impossible to enforce discipline in the Regiments if they were in such a state of continuous overwork and when a large proportion of each was broken up into small detachments away from European supervision. While impressing upon the Bengal Government the need to relieve the Regiments from outpost duties, the authorities called upon the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to submit a report on the military defence of the North-East Frontier. There were then no disposable troops in the Presidency; the Lieutenant Governor was therefore asked to state the extent to which he could provide the

\textsuperscript{1} B.J.P. December 1861: No. 185.
force from the Military Police Battalions at his disposal. In accordance with this the Bengal Government called upon its local officers to submit their recommendations.

Colonel Jenkins, Officer Commanding the North-East Frontier, submitted his report in November 1861. He proposed that the 42nd and 43rd Regiments should be restored to their former strength of 1000 men each, and the 44th to 1200. The peace of the frontier from the rivers Dhansiri round to the Bhorali on the north, inhabited by the Nagas, Singphos, Khamtis, Mishmis, Abors, Miris and Daflas, could never be secured with a Regiment of 600 private. The frontier or Lower Assam was equally long and the tribes equally numerous. From the Bhorali to the Manas there were the Daflas, Akas and Bhitias; on the south, from the river Dhansiri to Mymensing the formidable Angami Nagas, Khias and the Garos had to be watched. Apart from these the 42nd and 43rd Regiments were always required to be prepared to put down any internal commotion of the Assamese. The 44th Regiment, likewise, had to watch over the peace of Sylhet and Cachar, and guard against the Khias, Jayantias, Nagas, Manipuris and Kukis. These duties could not be adequately provided for by a Regiment of 600 strong. For Upper Assam Jenkins also recommended that instead of the European Artillery there should be an irregular

2. Ibid: Jenkins to Hopkins, 7 November 1861.
Company of 100 Europeans trained in the use of Enfield Rifles as well as in Field Guns. He pointed out that without such European troops the Tea Planters would feel insecure. If such an European Company were allowed the Native Artillery could be dispensed with, retaining only fifty Gunners for the outpost duties at Jaipur and Sadiya.

Jenkins at the same time brought to the notice of the Government the importance of the Police Militia to the defence of the frontier. The principal object in view in raising these corps was, he reminded the authorities, to save the Local Corps from being broken up into endless small detachments and to occupy posts which were found to be too unhealthy for them. When the Native Infantry Regiments were relieved by other Regiments composed of Hindustanis and like classes the question of the Police Militia would be of greater significance. Fresh Regiments would suffer greatly on coming to Assam, and if they were to take the border outpost duties they would, from sickness and death, become totally inefficient. The usual complaints, fever and dysentery, were so severe on all unacclimatised upcountry sepoys, wrote Jenkins, that none perfectly recovered until sent back to their own Provinces. Further, the Militia were organised in 'the cheapest possible manner'. They had never been furnished with camp equipage, nor carriage cattle or commissariat establishments. Always stationed within their res-

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
pective districts, the men were content with their small pay,
Jenkins therefore not only recommended their retention but even
proposed to raise another Militia, 150 strong, to relieve the 43rd
A.L.I. in the Goalpara division.

HOPKINSON'S PROPOSALS

Hopkinson, the Agent to the Governor-General, objected
to the retention of the Police Militia on the ground that Civil
authorities could never raise troops for the defence of the frontier
except through defective organisation. 'Where the Military Authori­
ties furnish the description of troops', wrote Hopkinson, 'the Civil
Power will not be anxious to extend its functions beyond their proper
sphere'. Even if the frontier defence could only be undertaken in
communication with an more or less under the control of the Civil
authority, there was no necessity to employ a force completely under
the orders of the Civil Power. The Military in a district was always
subordinate to the Magistrate or the Agent. Hopkinson also disagreed
with Jenkins that the Militia were hitherto sufficient for the defence
of the frontier. Their drill and discipline were not properly provided

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid: Hopkinson to Lushington, 13 December 1861.
for since there were many obstacles to the Magistrate supervising them properly even when he was a military man. Above all, the retention of the Militia would have violated the broad line drawn by the Government of India between bodies having civil functions to perform and military bodies. Hopkinson therefore advocated the employment of Military Regiments instead of Police Militia for the defence of the North-East Frontier. He observed that although commanding officers never liked to fritter away their Regiments and harass their men on outpost duties,

"these duties are just what we principally want soldiers for in Assam. Breaking up a Regiment into small detachments is injurious to discipline; so are great battles and campaigning; but outpost duties may be as essential in one series of military operations, as fighting great battles are in another, and in such case to evade them on the score of deterioration of discipline seems to me like subordinating the end to the means".

If the organisation of the Bengal Army did not permit the defence of the frontier by Regulars, in that case he was inclined to have no Native troops but an organised Police or Constabulary for all purposes of defence, external or internal.

On the increase to the strength of the troops Hopkinson agreed with Jenkins. But instead of raising the 42nd, 43rd and 44th Regiments to their former strength he recommended two additional

1. Ibid.
Native Infantry Regiments. These he proposed to distribute as follows:

1. One Regiment for Nowgong and the Khasi and Jayantia hills.
2. One Regiment for the Garo frontier and Bhutan duare.
3. One Regiment for the Naga frontier.
4. One Regiment for the Abor and Singpho frontiers.
5. One Regiment for the Manipur, Cachar and Sylhet frontiers.

The first Regiment should have its headquarters at Shillong and should detach 100 or 150 men to Asalu to protect North Cachar against the Angami Nagas. It should also furnish 100 men to the Sadar station of Nowgong from which a guard should posted at Shungdijia. Another 150 would be required for three small posts in the Khasi and Jayantia hills; the rest should remain at headquarters and support Nowgong if necessary. The Regiment for the defence of the Garo and Bhutan frontiers should have its headquarters at Goalpara. It was required to occupy the outposts at the principal passes on the Garo frontier and keep the Garos in check. The Regiment should also supply detachments which may from time to time be required to be sent against the Garos. For the duties of the northern duare 150 men from the Regiment would be constantly required. The third Regiment for the Naga frontier should have its headquarters at Golagnat from where detachments should be posted at Jaipur and Sibsagar and

1. Ibid.
at one or two smaller outposts. The Regiment should also protect Teapur and its adjacent regions against the Abors and Shutias. The fourth Regiment from its headquarters at Dibrugarh should be required to send a hundred men to Sadiya, provide another fifty for the various small outposts, garrison Pobamukh and keep two or three hundred in reserve to act against the Abors when necessary. The last Regiment, its headquarters to be fixed later, should take the duties performed by 44th S.L.I. In addition to the Native Infantry Regiments and the European Artillery there should always be a European Infantry of 100 men at Dibrugarh and a few companies at Shillong.

Finally Hopkinson pointed out that no system of defence could be complete without improved communications. Since roads could not be immediately opened out, he strongly recommended the services of some steam vessels on the Brahmaputra. With a couple of good steamers on this river, wrote Hopkinson, the distance of a threatened point from relief would simply be the distance from the river bank.

Sir J.P. Grant, the Lieutenant Governor, did not take up the question of the Police Militia since the Government of India had already determined upon their abolition as part of a general

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
measure of Police reform. He agreed with Jenkins that the troops would be of little use unless they contained men who could stand the climate. He therefore suggested the recruitment of hill tribes if they could be got to serve. The need to defend more than a thousand miles of uncertain and difficult frontier as well as to provide against internal commotion also convinced the Lieutenant Governor that the North-East Frontier required a much larger Military garrison. On 23 January 1862, Grant fully endorsed Hopkinson's proposal for five Native Infantry Regiments and a few companies of Europeans, both Infantry and Artillery, as 'absolutely necessary' for the defence of the North-East Frontier.

PROPOSALS NEGATIVED

The distribution of the Native and European Regiments, following the reorganisation of the Bengal Army was made after a careful examination of the problem of the military occupation of the Presidency. A reallocation of extra Regiments for the North-East Frontier would have upset the arrangements made lately. Not unnaturally, therefore, the Governor-General in Council saw no reason to make an addition to the troops in Assam. A few Native Infantry

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid: No. 313; From H.W. Norman, 10 February 1862.
Regiments were likely to be made available for Bengal and Assam when once relieved from the Central Provinces. Until these were set free, there was little chance of additional regiments being sent to Assam. Likewise, the Government also thought it expensive and inconvenient to send a detachment of Europeans to the Jayantia hills, where an uneasy feeling was reported to have prevailed among the people. Since the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and the local authorities made repeated representations for additional regiments, the Government of India decided to send a Military Officer to the North-East Frontier to report on its military defence. In early February 1862, Brigadier General S.Q.D. Showers, Commanding the Presidency Division, was directed to proceed to Assam for the purpose. General Showers was particularly instructed to report on a healthy station for a small body of European troops and secondly, how far an armed police may be made the chief guard of the frontier.

SHOWERS' REPORT

Brigadier General Showers submitted his rather lengthy report in early September 1862. He proposed to hold the line of defence...
by a series of detachments from the Native Infantry and Police. These detached posts should be fixed in localities where a thick forest intervened between tribal territory and the British districts. Except at the outposts, where the tribes would never attack, there would be no British subject or village for marauding parties to injure. The police posts should never be more than eight, or at the most ten miles distant from one another. This system was based on the premise that it was impossible to carry on commercial and political relations with the tribes without misunderstanding taking place. It was advisable, he wrote, to avoid all contact with them. With the tribes that acknowledged British supremacy or were economically dependent on the Government, intercourse should be confined to the commercial and border transactions through the frontier posts. As a rule, no tribe should be allowed to pass beyond line of posts. By such a policy an offending tribe could be effectively reduced through economic blockades.

PROPOSED GARRISON : ITS DISTRIBUTION

The proposed military garrison was fixed at five and a half Regiments of Native Infantry, three companies of European Infantry, a company of European Artillery, a company of Sappers.

2. Ibid.
and Miners and the Native Local Artillery. At the time of the report the reorganisation of the Assam Police following the Police Act V of 1861, had not commenced. The Constabulary was yet to be introduced. Showers was therefore unable to report fully on the Police, but merely indicated the frontier where they should be located. As regards European troops either Artillery or Infantry, Showers observed that they were unnecessary for the defence of the frontier. The warlike qualities of the hill tribes and their mode of warfare was such that Native Infantry with muskets were always sufficient to cope with them. Only to satisfy the European mercantile community, to inspire confidence and give a stimulus to their development, European troops would be required. The company of Sappers and Miners were required to keep the frontier roads and stockades and other military constructions in constant repair.

The garrison was proposed to be distributed as follows:

**Bishnath**
- Headquarter's Wing and 3 companies of European Infantry; one company of European Artillery with a 9 pounder Battery attached; one company of Sappers and Miners; one Regiment Native Infantry.

**Gauhati**
- One Regiment Native Infantry.

**Dhubri**
- Wing of a Native Infantry.

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1. Ibid: See appendix B for detailed distribution of troops.
Bishnath was chosen as the military Headquarters of the province on account of its central location with reference to the hill tribes. It offered easy communication with the different posts to which guards would have to be despatched. From the Regiment of Native Infantry stationed there, detachments should be placed at Nowgong, Golaghat and Borpohar. Between these three posts detachments of the Police Constabulary should be located towards the Naga frontier so as to intercept any parties returning from raids into British territory. Very little military arrangements were required for North Gaonar since the tract was an extensive jungle. The posts hitherto held by the Police Militia should be retained in the hands of the Constabulary. On the northern frontier, Showers proposed to transfer the military posts of Balipara, Grung, Odalguri and Tespur to the Constabulary. To the east, towards the Dafla frontier, only a Constabulary post at Lakhimpur and at the smaller villages were required. The Headquarters of one Regiment was fixed at Gauhati for the duties, along with the Constabulary, of Lower Assam and the Garo frontier. A wing of the Regiment from Jalpaiguri
was proposed to be stationed at Dhubri. From this a detachment of 36 men should be posted at Singimari. Dhubri commanded the Bhutan duara on the north; on the south the wing would serve as a support for the Constabulary on the Garo frontier. Similarly, the detachment at Goalpara, from the Regiment at Gauhati, would command the hata at Dumrah, Jeerah, Mibarah and all the northern face of the Garo hills. From the Regiment at Cherrapunjee, three companies should be detached to Sylhet and a guard of 32 under a native officer at Shillong or Yeodo. From Jowai three companies should be detached to Cachar; and strong guards posted at Jayantiapar and Ralional. The other posts, sufficiently close to these for support, should be handed over to the Constabulary.

The force in Upper Assam, Showers said, should never be less than a full Regiment of Native Infantry and the Local Artillery with Mountain Train Battery. A detachment of 63 men should be stationed at Sibsagar under an European Officer. The post of Sadiya should be under the Second-in-Command with a detachment of 120 rank and file. From this a guard should be detached to Mellekopal. Showers also proposed a detail of two Mountain Train Howitzers and 18 men for Sadiya. With these arrangements the Police Constabulary arrangements for the defence of the Sadiya frontier could be considerably reduced. The latter should maintain only

1. Ibid.
Dumow and Sisi and another at Jonaimukh. These will completely command that portion of the line of the Brahmaputra and cover up the Chur lands and the Bihea village on the south bank. Beyond these posts were forests which required no protection. On the south bank of the Brahmaputra towards the South East Frontier, Jaipur was the only post at which a military guard was necessary; the posts at Nakum and Doom Dooma would be relieved by the Constabulary. Showers also pointed out that during the cold season regular patrols should be maintained through the posts.

The military detachments, Showers pointed out, should be regularly relieved. This periodical movement of detachments throughout the frontier would serve the double purpose of exercise and the display of the military power of the Government. The Native Infantry Regiments then in the Province should similarly be relieved by others. The men of the Lower Provinces, Bihār, Sarun, Tirhout and Bengal as well as the Gurkhas and Hindustanis, were found to be capable of standing the climate of the North East Frontier. On this account it was recommended that the system of keeping the three old Regiments localised in Assam should be discontinued. New Regiments on coming to Assam should be provided with pioneer tools so that they could assist in the erection of barracks and other constructions. As regards the Constabulary, Showers pointed out that the duties of the frontier line should be considered special and the men so employed should be armed and trained accordingly.

1. Ibid.
CONSTRUCTION OF MILITARY ROADS

General Showers observed that the principal difficulty in maintaining the defence of the frontier was the want of roads and the difficulty of moving troops rapidly from one place to another. To improve this, three recommendations were made: (1) A road connecting Assam with Sylhet, the proposed base of communications of the North East Frontier, (2) A military road through the Brahmaputra valley, (3) Frontier roads in every district. Since navigation on the river Brahmaputra was always uncertain and hazardous, Showers recommended that Assam should be linked with the Presidency through the Khasi and Jayantia hills. There was then a road from Terriaghat at the foot of the hills in the Sylhet valley to Gauhati. To turn it into a cart road, the gradient of the ascent from Terria to Cherrapunjee and the descent from Mungkhlow to Gauhati should be reduced. A cart road was also in progress from Shillong to Gauhati; he proposed that this road should be extended by thirty miles to Lakat on the Sylhet side. From Lakat a raised road should be constructed up to Fenchugunge which had river communication with Sylhet and Dacca. The railroad from the latter place to Calcutta, then in progress, would complete the line of communications from the Presidency to Assam. General Showers also proposed a military road between Sylhet and Oaohar. The military road across Assam should run from Dhubri to Sadiya. There should be staying

1. Ibid.
barracks for troops at distances of fifteen miles. At Dhubri, the river Brahmaputra will be crossed and the road should be carried along the left bank to Goalpara and then to Gauhati. From Gaunati it should run through Nowgong to the left bank of the river opposite Bishnath, and from here to Sadiya via Golaghat, Jornat, Sibsagar and Dibrugarh. A branch road was recommended from Gauhati to Mangaldai and from there to Tezpur and Bishnath. A steamer on the river Brahmaputra should at all times be available. Finally, Showers considered it very essential to have roads on the frontiers. These should be between all the military and Constabulary posts. By this, rapid communication between post to post would be secured and at the same time the movements of the marauders, when they crossed the line, would be exposed. These roads would facilitate the maintenance of a system of regular patrols. Reliefs of the detachments would also become easier. The roads should be kept clear by a suitable establishment. If this was not done the roads would become overgrown with jungles since vegetation was very rapid.

APPOINTMENT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL PROPOSED

Other recommendations related to improvements in military transport and supplies, and the establishment of a small magazine and Artillery depot in the province. But by far the most important

1. Ibid.
recommendation which was made by Showers was the appointment of Brigadier General to Command the North East Frontier. The frontier was so much distant from its resources, and communications at all times so difficult that it was important, Showers wrote, to have an officer of experience and ability on the spot to deal with the hill tribes and assist the Commissioner with his advice. Such an officer was also necessary for the drill and discipline of the Regiments in the province. Hostilities with tribes will often be averted, Showers said 'by the effects of an efficient discipline among the troops throughout the district, and by the prompt demonstrations which the judicious foresight of an experienced officer would lead him to adopt'.

SIR HUGH ROSE : HIS RECOMMENDATIONS

Sir Hugh Rose, the Commander-in-Chief, strongly supported the policy advocated by Showers towards the hill tribes. But he had some misgivings of the proposal to occupy the line of defence by mixed detachments of military and Constabulary. He emphasised that it would be impossible for the Military Officer to conduct successful operations on the frontier he has to defend if he exercised only a partial command of it. It would be very difficult for

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid: Quarter-Master General to Military Secretary, 29 October 1862.
him to combine operations with numerous police officers who were not under his control. Important operations might be completely marred by the demur of one police officer to cooperate with the Military authorities. A united command on frontier line of defence was indispensable and this condition could not be fulfilled, he said, if the command and responsibility were divided between the military and police on the same line of operations. He suggested that the Constabulary would be most useful in 'suppressing crime and disorder within the Territories enclosed and guarded by the Military Garrison, ready to assist the Civil power in case of need, from either external enemies or agrarian insurrections; but the fighting part should be left to the Military'. There was, therefore, no need to drill the Constabulary in musketry. The Commander-in-Chief also brought to the notice of the Government the advantages of employing some of the frontier tribes for the defence of the frontier.

With this exception Sir Hugh Rose approved of the proposed strength and distribution of the garrison and the several recommendations made by General Showers. He supported the proposal regarding European troops on political and sanitary grounds and suggested that Shillong would be the proper place to locate them. This place should also be the military Headquarters of the province. Bishnath appeared to him not sufficiently central; it was off the proposed military road with a difficult river intervening. When the military roads were completed, the establishment of the Headquarters at
Shillong would enable the Brigadier General to exercise a general control over the whole frontier. At the same time the health and efficiency of the Europeans would be assured. In addition, Sir Hugh Rose recommended that a detachment of two companies of European Infantry should be located at Dibrugarh. This would have the effect of keeping the Native Local Artillery, to be converted into a Mountain Train Battery, in check. He also proposed that a few guns should be placed in the Dibrugarh fort which would then serve as a security and refuge to the European Tea Planters and settlers. With these comments Hugh Rose forwarded Showers' Report to the Governor-General in Council.

BENGAL GOVERNMENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

General Showers' proposal to station five Native Infantry Regiments on the North East Frontier was in accordance with the earlier recommendations of Colonel Hopkinson, the Agent to the Governor-General, and Sir J.P. Grant, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. To this opinion, Sir Cecil Beadon, Grant's successor as Lieutenant Governor, also adhered. But on the question of European troops, both Artillery and Infantry, Beadon took an entirely different view. He disagreed with Showers that there were any considerations:

1. Ibid.
2. B.J.P. April 1863: No. 211.
tions which should induce Government to locate European troops on the North East Frontier. He saw no reason for stationing them in the Khasi hills where they were not required for military purposes and where they would be isolated for several months of the year. He had 'no wish', he said, 'to see an European soldier stationed anywhere to the eastward of Calcutta or Dum Dum'. But if it were thought imperative to have European troops to give confidence to settlers, the Lieutenant Governor was prepared to recommend Showers' proposal to locate them in Bishnath or in the Khasi hills.

Similar views were expressed by Colonel J.C. Haughton, the Officiating Agent, in a letter dated 16 April 1863 conveying his observations on Showers' report. Only if it were considered advisable with reference to the general defence of Bengal, he would quarter an entire corps of Europeans at Bishnath with a sanatorium for them at Shillong. Haughton's most important observation related to the police. He had no doubt, he wrote, that the police proper organised would not only be able, in all ordinary times, to maintain the peace of the frontier but would be the best force for the purpose. The common practice of scattering about Regular troops at distant outposts was a wasteful expenditure of the Regiments and

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
injurious to their discipline. When once the Assam Police was organised, disciplined and complete all small outposts may be safely withdrawn. The duty of the Police on the frontier should be to keep a vigilant watch on the tribes beyond, maintain order amongst those frequenting the markets and repress inroads. The Regiments should give support to the Civil force when threatened, be ready to resist any organised inroads on the frontier as well as punish when it took place. With these views the Lieutenant Governor entirely concurred. Beadon further wrote that it would be unnecessary to have anywhere detachments of less than a company of Regiment. The duty of the smaller posts where troops had hitherto been located, the Lieutenant Governor added, could be for better performed by the Assam Police.

In a subsequent letter on 22 August 1863 Colonel Haughton wrote the relief of the 42nd, 43rd and 44th Regiments as recommended by Showers, was not desirable. These Regiments contained a very large element of Gurkhas and local soldiers who, it was reported, would prefer their discharge if removed from Assam. Since the men were very useful, and the 'best suited for the petty border warfare', Haughton wrote that it was important to retain their services. Sir Cecil Beadon accordingly recommended to the Government of

1. Ibid: No. 380.
2. B.J.P. October 1863: No. 236.
India that these Regiments should be kept as near the North East Frontier as possible.

EASTERN FRONTIER BRIGADE

The absence of Lord Elgin, the Governor-General, at Simla and his ultimate death delayed the decision on Showers' report. On 23 March 1864 the Governor-General in Council directed that the force for the defence of the North East Frontier shall consist of one Battery of Artillery with six Guns and four and a half Regiments of Native Infantry. It was decided not to locate European troops in the province. To command the Frontier a Brigadier-General was appointed. The Headquarters of the Command was fixed at Guwhati in order that the chief Civil and Military authorities could be in intimate communication with one another in all matters connected with the security of the frontier.

The Garrison was to be distributed as follows:

Dibrugarh : A Battery of Native Artillery
One Regiment Native Infantry

1. Ibid: No. 238.
2. B.J.P. May 1864: No. 19; Military Secretary to Secretary, Government of Bengal, 23 March 1864; also M.L.T.S.S. No. 161, 3 April 1864.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
Qauhati : One Regiment Native Infantry
Bishanath or : Half Regiment Native Infantry
Tezpur
Cherrapunjee : One Regiment Native Infantry
Jowai : One Regiment Native Infantry

The men composing the 42nd, 43rd and 44th Regiments Native Infantry, it was observed, knew the country, were well acquainted with the ways and usages of the people and were inured to the climate. They wished to remain on the frontier. The Commander-in-Chief was therefore informed that although General Service corps the Regiments should remain ordinarily on the North East Frontier. The Commander-in-Chief was also informed that it was not necessary to have a regular Arsenal in the Province. Instead an extra supply of arms and ammunition should be placed under the officer Commanding the Regiment at Gauhati, consisting of 150 or 200 muskets complete with 30000 rounds of ammunition in excess of the usual service supply. Likewise, the Battery of Artillery at Dibrugarh may have 100 rounds beyond the regulated proportion.

By this time the reorganisation of the Assam Police had been carried into effect. The Militia, including the Kuki Levy,

1. Ibid: No. 20.
2. Ibid.
were absorbed into the Police Constabulary. Some of the frontier posts held by the former were then maintained by the police, including certain small posts formerly held by the Regiments. In order to prevent difficulties arising out of mixed commands, the Governor-General in Council instructed that,

"all matters of importance such as raids by the Hillmen, or anything tending to disturb the security of the Frontier, should be promptly reported to the Military Authorities of the nearest post or cantonment and in the event of actual hostilities breaking out the police holding such (posts) must be in direct communication with and when necessary even under the orders of the Military Commander".

2. B.J.P. May 1864: No. 19.
APPENDIX B

Distribution of Troops on the North-East Frontier as proposed by General Showers, September 1862.

I. Native Troops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>European Officers</th>
<th>Native Officer</th>
<th>Havildar</th>
<th>Hakim</th>
<th>Sepoys</th>
<th>RELIEFS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bishnath (HQ)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howgong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golaghat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Every two months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borpathar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohungdijua</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dibrugarh (HQ)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>Every two months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibsagar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaipur</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Every four months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadiya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lallekopol</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhubri (HQ)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>266</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singimari</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherapunji (HQ)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Every six months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jami (HQ)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>Every six months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gachar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralimg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayantiapur</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|              | 45    | 88    | 210   | 210   | 3300  |
II. Native Troops (Artillery).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>European officers</th>
<th>Native officers</th>
<th>Havildars</th>
<th>Natives</th>
<th>Sepoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bishnath</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dibrugarh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadiya</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Sappers and Miners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Sergeants</th>
<th>Corporals</th>
<th>Privates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bishnath</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With two Sergeants and four Corporals.

IV. European Troops (Infantry)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Sergeants</th>
<th>Corporals</th>
<th>Privates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bishnath</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. European Troops (Artillery)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Sergeants</th>
<th>Corporals</th>
<th>Privates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bishnath</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>