CHAPTER -II

EVOLUTION OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SECRETARY IN ASSAM

The office of the Chief Secretary is a unique position created by the British. During the British rule elaborate administrative machinery had developed at various levels. British Indian Civil Service was regarded as the ‘steel frame’ of the British Empire. Thus it would be appropriate to give brief historical account of the British administrative system in India. Such an analysis will provide a fairer understanding of the role of the Chief Secretary in its proper evolutionary background.

2.1 Administration of India during the British Rule

The pattern of British Administration in India started with the establishment of the East India Company on 1600 A.D. In the beginning the Company had a commercial purpose, but later it became interested in empire building. Particularly, after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughal Empire began to disintegrate and the central administration was almost paralysed. Moreover, there was a rise of innumerable small rulers fighting among themselves. The Company took advantage of the deteriorating situation and entered the political sphere. Soon it had a strong hold over several parts of the country. The battle of Plassey in 1757 paved the way for the territorial aggrandizement of the Company, when the real authority passed into its hand. Similarly the defeat of the Mughal Emperor’s forces at the battle of Buxar in 1764 led to the grant of Diwani, i.e., the right of collection of revenue collection and judicial administration of the State of Bengal by the Emperor to the Company. The authorities of East India Company were not concerned with good administration. Though its servants were amassing huge fortunes, the Company itself was advancing rapidly to bankruptcy. The British Parliament thus appointed a committee to inquire into the affairs of the Company and submit its report, on the recommendations of which the famous Regulating Act of 1773 was passed. The Regulating Act of 1773 marked the first constitutional advance over the earlier system of government, a Supreme Government was constituted with a Governor-General and four ‘Councillors’ having controlling authority over the Presidencies of Fort St. George and Bombay. The Regulating Act constituted the first landmark in the transformation of the Company’s commercial council into a political
apparatus of government. It laid the foundation of a Central Administration and marked the beginning of the Company’s transformation from a trading corporation to an administrative concern.²

In 1784, Pitts India Act was passed which brought about certain changes in the administrative system of British India. Under this Act a Board of Control was constituted consisting of six Commissioners for the affairs of India. These Commissioners were the Secretaries of State, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and four Privy Councilors. They were authorized and empowered under the law to superintend, direct and control all acts, operations and concerns which in any way were related to the civil or military government or revenues of the British territorial possession in East Indies³. The powers of the Supreme Government were also enlarged and specified but the powers and position of the Governor-General remained unaltered. Later, by the amending Act of 1786 the Governor-General was invested with more powers to override the decision of his council and act without its concurrence in extra-ordinary cases which ultimately reduced the members of his council to the position of advisers.

2.2 The Central Secretariat of the East India Company

Before the year 1786 the President and Council at Fort William transacted all their business in one General Department with the help of a Secretary and few assistants. In 1764, on the basis of the proposals of John Graham, the then Secretary to the Government, the business of the Council was divided into two departments – the Public Department and the Secret Department. Both these Departments were jointly managed by a Secretary and an Assistant Secretary with a separate Sub-Secretary attached to each Department. The Secretary was to draft all the letters sent from both departments to the Court of Directors, the other Presidencies and subordinate factories; take full minutes of consultations and issues all general orders in the settlement.⁴ In 1765 the functions of the Secret Department were taken over by a Select Committee which consisted of the Governor and four members of the Council. In 1774, the Governor-General and Council took over the entire civil and military government of Bengal and put an end to the Select Committee, and hence, all matters of political nature were now to be considered by the
Council in the Secret Department. This system continued with minor changes till 1787 when the Secretariat was reorganized on the principle of concentrating power and responsibility in the hands of a single Secretary. Under this new system a Secretary-General was appointed in 1787 for the Public, Secret and Revenue Departments who was vested with the overall responsibility for all departments.

2.3 Creation of the office of the Chief Secretary

When Lord Wellesley became the Governor-General in 1798 he reconstituted the Secretariat. Under this new scheme a post of Chief Secretary was created and the then Secretary George Hilaro Barlow was made the Chief Secretary who was appointed on an annual salary of Rs 55,000. The Chief Secretary was vested with powers of general control authority to make such distribution of the establishments of the different departments as might appear to him best calculated for the proper conduct of business. But the execution of detailed did not form part of his responsibility.

The post of a Sub-Secretary was upgraded to that of a Secretary who was now made exclusively and avowedly responsible for the transaction of business in his respective department. The Chief Secretary, however, by virtue of his general authority as the head of the office or in consequence of special directions from the Governor-General acting upon his authority under general control vested in him by law, could perform certain acts relating to different departments as well. The Chief Secretary was also held responsible for performing some of the most important despatches in each of the departments.

Administration during the British Crown

This system of administration prevailed with certain minor changes in the departments till 1858 when the rule of East India Company came to an end. Legislation for improving the administration of Government of India was passed in 1858 which transferred the reign of the Government of India from the East India Company to the British Crown. Indian administration henceforth became the direct responsibility of the British Parliament. The Board of Control and the Court of Directors were abolished and all their powers were handed over to the Secretary of State for India—a Minister of the British Cabinet. A Council of India was created to aid and advice the Secretary of State. The Governor General now became the direct representative of the Crown and was given the authority
to superintend, control and direct the civil and military administration of India with the aid of his Executive Council. During the period of British rule India was virtually divided into two parts-British India consisting of semi-autonomous Governor’s Provinces and Centrally Administered Commissioner’s Provinces, and Princely States.

In the Governor’s Provinces, the Governor was initially given limited powers relating to the administration and he worked under the direct control and superintendence of the Governor-General. Gradually by the various Government of India enactments, more and more powers were devolved on the Governor as far as Provincial Government administration was concerned. As for Secretariat administration, the system of having a Chief Secretary prevailed in all the provinces. Though the exact dates of the creation of the Provinces /States of India are difficult to be traced through the available chronicles, the various writings on British and Indian history clearly show that the office of the Chief Secretary had come upon to enjoy a pivotal position at the State level administration during the British times. Philip Woodruff has observed; “The Chief Secretary was the channel through whom the orders of the government were conveyed to their officers. He was traditionally the source of posting, to most district officers he was in fact the government”.

In the 1930s, the position of the Chief Secretary became relatively more critical. During this period, in some of the Provinces of India the Congress party governments came into power. Thus, the Chief Secretary had now to serve a body whose basic assumptions on almost every point were generally opposite to those which he had been nurturing till then. For instance, till now the Chief Secretary was made to believe that the district officer being responsible for the district administration should be given wide discretionary powers and should be given wherever possible. But the new popular governments had a feeling of distrust for the district officers. Hence, the Chief Secretary found himself engaged in continual remonstrance on account of the status and position of the district officers. Likewise, there was controversy about the powers and status of officers of the Provincial Services and the Chief Secretary could not remain aloof from these controversies. Woodruff, while narrating the dilemmas before the Chief Secretary, writes, “There were some officers who were regarded by the old government as particularly trustworthy because they had not been afraid to give sentence to men who were
supporters of the Congress. The Chief Secretary had to be very careful in deciding how far he should go in for their protection.”

2.4 Administrative developments in Assam during the British Rule:

It was since the acquisition of the Diwani of Bengal that the East India Company came into direct contact with the kingdoms of Jaintia, Cachar and Assam as well as the tribal communities of adjoining hills. These sparsely populated territories did not have enough worth or surplus revenue yielding potentiality to attract the attention of the British annexationists. These were therefore left undisturbed until the Burmese invasion of Assam (1817-24) and Cachar plains brought an end to this policy of indifference. In November 1823 David Scott, the magistrate of Rongpur and Civil Commissioner for the district of Goalpara and Garo Hills (formed in 1822), was also appointed Agent to the Governor-General on the Northeast Frontier of Bengal. The Burmese were finally forced to surrender their claim over Assam under the treaty of Yandaboo, 1826.

During the following decade and a half, the kingdoms of Jaintia, Cachar and Assam, along with their dependencies, and all the petty, independent tribal states of the Khasi Hills were annexed. Further annexation of the remaining hills was subsequently completed step by step in the face of stiff tribal resistance. The North Cachar Hills were organized into a separate administrative unit, after their subjugation was completed by 1854. A part of the Naga Hills was annexed in 1866; the country of the Lotha Nagas, in 1875; of the Angami Nagas, in 1878-80; and of the Ao Nagas, 1889. The Garo Hills, long under loose political control, was made a separate district in 1869; but the Garos could not be brought under full control until 1873. The Lusais (Mizo) were brought under the control during the years 1871-89, but the formation of the Lushai Hills district took place only in 1898. The boundaries of the British power in Northeast India were in fact always moving, always in a flux, right up to its last days in India. Nevertheless, the British province, that came to be known as Assam, took shape more or less by 1873.

After the retreat of the Burmese from Rangpur in January 1825 the whole of the Brahmaputra valley came under British military occupation, and the Supreme Government found it necessary to make arrangement for the temporary administration of this region also, pending final decision regarding the disposal of the country. David Scott
and Lieutenants -Colonel Richards were appointed Joint Commissioners, the former to remain in charge of Western Assam with Headquarter at Guwahati, and later of Eastern Assam with Headquarter at Rangpur.\textsuperscript{11}

As soon as Western Assam was brought under British occupation Scott began to find ways and means for enhancing revenue collection of the area under British occupation even though the decision on final disposal of the country was yet to be taken. It was evident that the British had a fixed policy of retaining Assam permanently under their control.\textsuperscript{12}

Thus the period from the Treaty of Yandaboo (1826) to the formation of the Province of Assam (1874) witnessed intensive development in the field of public administration and tea industry, enactment of different legal measures and Revenue laws and Regulation which were to influence the State administration for a long time.

As mentioned earlier the outlying parts of the North-Eastern Frontier of Bengal were brought under the regular Agent to the Governor -General when David Scott was posted in 1823. Soon thereafter the post of the agent was to be modified as Commissioner of Assam. David Scott was not in the direct charge of Upper Assam consisting of Lakhimpur and Sibsagar, where Col.Cooper, a separate assistant was in charge. Afterwards, in 1828, Captain Neufville was posted. The Headquarters of the office was first at Rangpur near Sibsagar, but were afterwards moved to Jorhat, while David Scott in charge of the administration of Lower Assam, Goalpara and Garo Hills, stationed himself at Guwahati. Guwahati remained as the headquarters of the Commissioner of Assam and from then onwards for the administration of entire Assam until 1874 when the headquarter of the new province was shifted to Shillong.

David Scott (1823-1831) is well remembered for his valuable services in laying down the foundation of British rule in Assam. David Scott died at a young age of 45yrs in 20\textsuperscript{th} August, 1831. T.C.Robertson succeeded David Scott as Agent and Commissioner of Assam and continued till 1834. It was during his time that Purandar Singh was installed as Raja of Upper Assam in 1833 with headquarters at Jorhat. Robertson was succeeded as Commissioner and Agent to the Governor-General by Captain, afterwards, General Jenkins in 1834.
In 1834 there were four districts under the Commissioner of Assam namely, Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Nagaon. With the removal of Purandar Singha in October 1838, the districts of Lakhimpur and Sibsagar were brought under the direct control of Commissioner of Assam in 1839 by a separate proclamation. Thus, from 1839 onwards, the Commissioner of Assam had six districts under his charge, namely, Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nagaon, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. Very soon the tracts of Sadiya and Matak were wrested from the Khamti chieftains and added to the Lakhimpur district in 1842. Around 1853 the structure of civil administration in the Brahmaputra valley was somewhat as follows:

Table 2.1

| Commissioner of Assam (Guwahati as Headquarter) | 1 |
| Deputy Commissioner | 1 |
| Principal Assistant | 6 in six districts |
| Junior Assistant | 3 |
| Sub-Assistant | 8 |

Source: B. Datta Ray’s “Assam Secretariat”

In 1861, the designations of these officers serving under the Commissioner of Assam were changed. Deputy Commissioner whose powers were those of District and Session Judge was hereafter known as Judicial Commissioner: Principal Assistant became Deputy Commissioner and the Sub-Assistants as Extra-Assistant Commissioners. These designations except the Judicial Commissioner were retained for more than 150 years.
Many important administrative development took place under the Commissioner of Assam between 1826 and 1874. Though most of the posts continued to be manned by military officers, there were remarkable development in the field of tea industry, transport and communication, thereon and improvement in the procedure of survey and settlement, and assessment and collection of land revenue.

After this period of consolidation, i.e., between 1826 and 1874, commenced the new era of Assam as a separate Province from Feb, 1874.

2.5 Development of Assam Secretariat since 1874:

The constitution of Assam into a Chief Commissioner’s Province by the proclamation of February 6, 1874, was a landmark development in the history of Assam administration, though the then Province of Assam was not the same as what the state of Assam is today. When Col. R.H. Keatinge assumed the office of Chief Commissionership at Guwahati on Feb 7, 1874, the office of the erstwhile Commissioner was designated as the Secretariat. The Personal Assistant to the Commissioner was replaced by a Secretary to the Chief Commissioner.

The logical sequel to the raising of the administrative status of Assam was a corresponding upgrading of the Head Quarters administrative establishment. But it was not realized that the administrative machinery devised for the Commissionership of Assam was not sufficient for a Chief Commissioner’s Province. There was need for a new administrative machinery to deal with multifarious problems. Unfortunately the conditions laid down by the Secretary of State did not take into consideration the need of the time. The adequacy and efficiency of the existing administrative machinery for a new situation did not receive attention.

Thus, the Chief Commissioner set out to work with a Secretariat consisting of a lone Secretary and slender finance. The Secretariat in 1874 had three main departments-General, Judicial and Revenue and two subsidiary departments-Native and Records. The sanctioned strength of the Assam Secretariat of all categories from the Head Assistant to the sweeper was 33. The monthly expenditure was Rs 2161-0-0. The entire establishment was under one Head Assistant above whom were the Secretary and the Chief Commissioner. The Secretariat was organized as follows:
Chart 2.1
In February 1874

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>General Department</td>
<td>Revenue Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head clerk</td>
<td>Two Clerk</td>
<td>Head clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Assistants</td>
<td>General Dept(Medical)</td>
<td>Revenue Dept(native)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Assistants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Hospital</td>
<td>One Sheristadar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>Three Duftires</td>
<td>Four Mohurirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One jamadar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight peon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Bhistee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Sweeper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: B.D.Ray’s *Assam Secretariat* p 3.

The Chief Commissioner had to take upon himself considerable burden of routine administration besides decision making and formulation of policies. He was also the Inspector –General of Police, Inspector-General of Jails and the Sanitary Commissioner. Besides this he had to undertake a considerable amount of political activities.Col. Keatinge was ably assisted by the Secretary H.Luttman Jonshon who was one of the best officers with vast experience.

The Assam Secretariat was at Guwahati for about 40 days. The Assam Secretariat was transferred to Shillong on March 20, 1874 and the Capital remained in Shillong for
almost 100 years till 1972-73, barring a brief period between 1905-1912 when the capital of the Province of Eastern-Bengal and Assam was partly at Decca and Shillong.

Within a month, after the transfer of the capital, it became clear that the Secretariat, despite the efforts of all concerned, needed additional staff including another Head Assistant exclusively for the General Department.

Thus in the first ten months of its life, the Assam Secretariat establishment increased from the initial staff of 33 to 39. From the above it is clear that there was no intelligent estimate of the work to be done and consequent planning. Therefore, there was the rule of thumb. The way the enlargement was effected shows that it was on a try and find out method. Economy was placed above efficiency. The same principle underlines subsequent growth of the Secretariat though various stages.  

2.6 Evolution of the office of the Chief Secretary in Assam:

The Assam Secretariat during the period of the British evolved as a three tier structure – the upper, the intermediary and the lower.

The highest Secretariat post was that of the Chief Secretary. The office of Chief Secretary was first created on the formation of the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam on October 16, 1905 on Rs.3000 a month plus a local allowance of Rs.250 a month.

P.C. 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 organising the new Provincial administration.

Percy Comyn Lyon joined services in September 1883 and his services were 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 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.

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 functions and take decision which no one else had power to do in the administrative hierarchy. For instance, he had power to dispatch Foreign office telegrams to all places and persons except the Secretary to State and India Office. In these 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 of all civilian.

Sir William James Reid joined services in September 1891. He held the routine appointments of Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner. He was also appointed as the Inspector General of Police, Jails, Registration, etc. 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 William J. Reid for the post of first Chief Secretary of Assam. He had to organize the shifting of the Secretariat from Dacca to Shillong and to put on firm foundation during his tenure of only fifteen months.

He became the Commissioner of the 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 officiating Governor of Assam twice in 1925.

The Chief Secretary 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 services. 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 services was an essential incident, not only of the Chief Secretary, but also of all Secretaryships held under local Government 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 provincial autonomy by the Chief Secretary.

He was the ex–officio Secretary to the Council of Ministers and attended all Cabinet meetings. He was responsible for maintaining the “Book of Transaction” of the Government. He was the principal spokesmen 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 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 admirabley adjusted themselves to the changing social and political climate. They looked to the Chief Secretary for the 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.G.Dennehy.

J.A.Dawson, M.A. joined the Civil Service in October 1904. After the routine appointment as Assistant Magistrate and Collector, and later on Joint magistrate- he became the officiating District Judge of Tippera and Sylhet. He was appointed Secretary to the committee to enquire into 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 on economics. He
held temporarily the Office of Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Districts Division in 1931. Earlier he was also the Commissioner of the Assam valley Division.

The responsibility of organizing the Assam Secretariat for the introduction of the Provincial autonomy fell on J.A. Dawson. He was appointed as the Chief Secretary in November 19 and held the office till May 1937 when he was appointed the Member of Board of Revenue for Assam.

Sir Harold George Dennehy 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 to 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 (Provincial Constitution) order 1947--many British elements of the Civil Service left India, but devotion to service and his love for Assam kept Sir Harold to his post till his retirement.
Table 2.2

Chief Secretaries for the period of 1905-1947 were the followings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.C.Lyon</td>
<td>16th October 1905-1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.LeMesurior</td>
<td>1910-1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.Nathan and N.D.Beatson Bell (officiating)</td>
<td>1911-1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.J.Reid</td>
<td>April 1912 -1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.C.Allen</td>
<td>1915-1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.E.Webster</td>
<td>1912 -1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.W.Botham</td>
<td>1920-1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.E.Soames</td>
<td>1926-1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.A.Cosgrave</td>
<td>1931-1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.A.Dawson</td>
<td>--1934-1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.H.Hutton, H.G.Dennehy,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.K.Rhodes, officiating from time to time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.G.Dennehy</td>
<td>1940-1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.P.Desai</td>
<td>1947.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: B.Datta Ray’s “Assam Secretariat”
Notes and References


4. Ibid., pp.65-66.

5. Ibid., pp.79-80.

6. Ibid., p.81.


8. Philip Woodruff., The Men who Ruled India, Vol.II-The Guardians, London:Jonathan Cape,1959,p.274. It is believed, however, that the Chief Secretary’s importance was relatively less in States having Governors who were members of ICS.

9. Ibid., pp.274-75.


Notes: Under the rules, which remained in force till 1870, the order of merit in the competitive examination determined the province in India of the civil servant. The highest candidate on the list frequently chose the North-Western Provinces, Punjab and Oudh; the next favoured destinations were the Lower Province of Bengal: and the rest went either for Madras or for Bombay. Young Civilians allotted to the North-Western Provinces or Lower Bengal was as a rule selected to serve in British Burma, the Central Provinces and Assam. But this was not without problems, for these undeveloped provinces were unpopular and the officer argued that, since they were permitted by the Government to select a particular province, it was unreasonable to send them against their will to another province after they had made themselves familiar with the language of the area originally selected.

A case arose in July 1877 when the Government of India asked the Bengal for the service for the junior Civilian for employment as Assistant Commissioner in Assam, which had been constituted as a Chief Commissionership in July 1874. In its reply the Bengal Government said that none of the five junior Civilians sounded had agreed to accept the post and that they preferred remaining in Bengal. The Separation of the administration of Assam from Bengal reduced the scope of promotion. Junior Civilians therefore preferred not to go to Assam. (B.B. Misra, *The Bureaucracy in India: An Historical Analysis of Development up to 1947*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 94-95)