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LIQUOR SHOPS

AND



THE EXCISE ADMINISTRATION IN ASSAM.

Memorandum by J. Buckingham Esq., C. I. E.

Chairman Assam Branch

WITH

Medical Reports and Correspondence

Showing abuses of present Outstill System.

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Liquor Shops, and the Outstill System in Assam.

Memo by J. Buckingham, Esq., C. I. E.

Chairman of the Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

BEFORE proceeding with the difficult task of criticising the Excise system of Assam, I may say, we are all fully aware that mere denunciations of the iniquity of Grog Shops will not alone solve the practical difficulties that surround the question; we have therefore, while collecting evidence, which cannot fail to show the weaknesses of the Outstill System in Assam; at the same time brought forward proposals which we consider will place the shops under more efficient control, thereby ameliorating the condition of the immigrant population.

In 1889 a commission was appointed by the Government of India, at the instance of the Secretary of State, to enquire into the various systems of Excise Administration in India, and I think, I cannot do better than quote a few Paras from the Excise Commission's Report bearing on the excise of Assam.

In Assam we are concerned with the Outstill System only, which is described as follows.—

Page 78 of the Excise Report—

"22. Next comes the outstill system properly so called. The difference between this and the Farming system, described in the preceding paragraph, is that each still, usually with one shop only attached, but sometimes a slightly larger number, is disposed of separately. The right to manufacture at the outstill, and to sell the spirit there manufactured is sold by auction to the highest bidder. And in the original form of this system the control over the monopolist is confined to ensuring that he manufactures and sells only at the places mentioned in his contract. This system is in force in Assam, Burma, and part of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and till recently it was the system which prevailed most extensively in Lower Bengal."

As to carrying out the policy of Government which I quote later on from Mr. Driberg's report, the Government of India decided that, having regard to the varying conditions of different Provinces, it was thought desirable for the present, to leave to Local Governments, full discretion to decide what measures were expedient in each case.

The following orders were circulated to all Deputy Commissioners in the Assam Valley in 1880:—*See page 209, Report of Commission.*—

"The primary object to be kept in view is not the increase of Abkari revenue, but to avoid encouraging the illicit manufacture, and consumption of liquor, by regulating the number of licensed shops in accordance with the demand, and by keeping these shops under vigilant control: to effect this is surely not beyond the power of an energetic District Officer. There still remains the objection naturally made by the Planters to having shops placed so close to their gardens as to be a source of daily and hourly temptation to their coolies, and from this point of view the Chief Commissioner thinks that the increase in the number of shops last year from eleven to twenty-six was unduly sudden, and that you were insufficiently instructed in regard to the selection of localities for the shops. It was no doubt necessary, in accordance with the Chief Commissioner's desire to give planters an opportunity of obtaining entire control over these shops, to place them at such convenient distances from the Tea Gardens as would permit the Planters to exercise this control; but you should have been warned at the same time against putting them in such immediate proximity to the gardens as to be an ever present temptation to the coolie."

"When, therefore, you have revised your list of shops and fixed on the localities where licenses are to be granted, you should, in the case of such shops as are mainly for the convenience of garden coolies, and are not situated in large bazars, place yourself in communication with the Managers whose coolies are likely to supply themselves from those shops. You should explain what the objects of the Administration are, and that in order to give the Planters full control over the shops, you will give to any one of them who may be willing to undertake the control of the shop, a license at the price received for it last year (this, however, can be altered by you in case of necessity), and that during the year no fresh shops will be licensed. It will then be fully within the power of the Planter, through the shopkeeper he may nominate, to prevent his coolies getting more liquor than is good for them, or getting it at inconvenient hours or of deleterious quality.

"SIR JAMES WESTLAND then proceeds to say at page 210—

(40) "The opinion I gather from reading the past history of the matter is, that, from the fact of the planters not coming forward with complaints, we have too easily assumed that the policy laid down in 1880 had been sufficiently carried out, and that no occasion for further restriction had arisen. On the other hand, the Planters have too often accepted as inevitable a state of things which, if they had only brought it to notice, and would give some assistance in putting it right, they would have found the officers of Government quite willing to remedy. It is only by co-operation between the Managers and the Officers of Government that the evils they allege can be remedied, and it was upon this principle that the Chief Commissioner's orders of 1880 were based. The establishment of the shops was justified upon the ground that the coolies must have liquor and will get it illicitly if they do not obtain it by lawful means. Our hope was that the planters would undertake the control of the shops; but that hope was entirely disappointed, and they apparently would have nothing to do with the shops and, if their present complaints are correct, they will not even do anything to prevent their coolies indulging in excess in the licensed shops."

(41.) "Even supposing the state of things is what the planters represent, I do not think we can accept for the Government the entire responsibility for it. It arises at least in part from the fact that the Planters remain with their hands folded, and will do nothing either towards the prevention of illicit liquor or the regulation of the traffic in licit liquor. I am afraid that some of them knowingly permit illicit manufacture to go on in their gardens, from a belief that the liquor so prepared, is not so harmful as that obtained from the shops. I think the solution of the difficulty must be in the establishment, in co-operation with the Planter, of some *modus vivendi*, based on the fact that the coolies require, and will by some means or other obtain a certain amount of liquor, and that the arrangements of the Government and of the Planters should be combined to ensure that the liquor they get will pay its proper tax, and will not be excessive."

(42) "A circular was issued by the Chief Commissioner 25th June 1889, based on this policy, calling on District Officers for full information relating to the matters of which the Planters have complained, and directing them to consider, in communication with the Planters, what the best remedies are to be applied to any evils they bring to notice. The circular indicates the necessity of co-operation on the Planters' part, if any success is to be obtained in the regulation of the sale of spirits.

(43) "The Government of India, in letter No. 1248, dated the 9th March 1889, forwarding copy of a despatch to the Secretary of State on the subject of the outstill system generally, directed the Chief Commissioner to arrange for a careful and exhaustive enquiry into the facts connected with the Excise Administration of Assam. Mr. Fitzpatrick has left on record his recommendation that Mr. Driberg should be placed on special duty during next cold weather for the purpose of taking up the enquiry. The enquiry will necessarily cover the whole ground which

"has been touched upon in this Note, both the ascertainment of the facts,"
 "and the solution of the difficulties. My object in this Note has been to
 "explain in what state matters stand in this Province, and thus to indicate
 "generally the matters to which the special enquiry which it is intended
 "to initiate should mainly be directed. The principles of Excise Adminis-
 "tration have been fully laid down in several recent letters and despatches,
 "and may be described as generally accepted and recognized; and we also
 "possess, both in the enclosures to these letters and despatches and in
 "several recent reports, the experience of the several Local Governments,
 "some of which at least bear upon the questions that have to be solved in
 "Assam."

Para 28, page 208, of Report—

"The objection which the planters have to their coolies leaving the
 "garden and drinking at a neighbouring shop is most natural, and has the
 "Chief Commissioner's sympathy. He would far prefer that the planters
 "should take out selling licenses, and let the coolies fully supply their
 "wants from their own rum-stores, but they do not care to do this, nor
 "would the price probably suit the coolies. But the Chief Commissioner
 "does not think that, while over the whole of India an Excise system is in
 "force, which professes merely to arrange that purchasers should be free to
 "buy the liquor they want, provided only it pays the Excise duty, the
 "Assam tea coolie should be an exception to the rule. The supply has
 "certainly not been forced in advance of the demand; on the contrary
 "it has lagged greatly behind it, and except by giving planters special
 "facilities for controlling the vend of taxed country spirits, the Chief
 "Commissioner does not see how, consistently with the ordinary principles
 "of Excise Administration, the demand for the protection of the coolie
 "from drunkenness can be met.

"It is, however, possible to give the planter a better opportunity of
 "control than he has hitherto had, and it is certainly possible to place the
 "shops where, without being entirely out of reach of the consuming class
 "they will not, as when placed at the entrance to a tea garden, be a daily
 "and hourly temptation to the coolie."

"The directions given were that a strict control should be kept over
 "the shops that if drunkenness or violence occurred the shops should be
 "closed, and the planter allowed an opportunity of taking over the lease
 "without any enhancement of license-fee.

Para 47, page 212 of Report—

"The setting of the location of shops upon the principles laid down
 "in the orders quoted in paragraph 28 above, and the fixing of their
 "prices upon the principles here indicated, seem to me to be the chief
 "means at our disposal of exercising a control over the outstill system in
 "this province. Even though planters refuse to take any active part in
 "the control of the supply of liquor, they have special facilities for get-
 "ting information which would be of use to the district authorities in
 "exercising their control, and they might perhaps be induced, more than at
 "present seems to be the case, to give the district authorities the benefit
 "of their information, especially if we had, as I think we should have,
 "more systematic and constant means of gathering such information."

(Sd.) J. WESTLAND.

I may quote a few paras from Sir James Westland's Note to the
 Government of India on the Excise Problem in Assam in 1889—he re-
 marked: "The Planters have for many years imported from 10,000 to
 "15,000 gallons of rum for issue to their coolies, but as they issue it rather
 "by way of reward than upon actual payment in cash, their issue of it is
 "held not to be within the restrictions of the Excise Act."

As to the statement regarding rum given to coolies as a reward, I
 may say that the custom now is almost obsolete, rum is now imported

almost entirely for sick coolies, and usually an allowance is made for Hospitals. At many gardens new coolies who show signs of being anæmic are given a tot of rum and milk once or twice a day. Sir James gave the amount of rum imported at from 10 to 15,000 gallons in 1889, I see the importation for last year is only 4,428 gallons by Planters and 430 gallons by licensed vendors.

Sir James gave an extract from the Chief Commissioner's letter of the 3rd November 1880 showing what the policy then adopted was. "The directions given were that a strict control should be kept over the shops, that if drunkenness or violence occurred, the shops should be closed, and the Planters allowed an opportunity of taking over the lease without any enhancement of license fee, also to prevent the Planter being ousted by being overbid at the yearly auctions the Chief Commissioner was willing as an experiment to forego the expected increment of revenue, and settle the shops with the Planters at the same rent as last year." Sir James remarked that "Planters did not come forward as the Chief Commissioner hoped they would" one Deputy Commissioner reported. "The Planters have had the opportunity of purchasing shops, and thereby obtaining entire control over them if they wished; they have not availed themselves of this, neither from the replies received are they now willing to take advantage of the Concession offered in the Secretary's letter under reply."

I would ask if any one could honestly call the former proposal a "Concession?" What would any Principal in a manufacturing Town say, if, after complaining of the harm a licensed liquor shop was doing to his mill hands, he was told that, as a Concession, he would be granted a spirit License himself? Is it reasonable to expect that a Planter should turn into a Licensed vendor of spirits manufacturing his own liquor? A few Planters may have come forward, and taken a License as a last resource, and I understand this was the case, however the matter was dropped on receipt of the following report from the Commissioner dated 3rd June 1882.

"From enquiries made during my recent tour, it is quite certain Planters do not wish to have control of liquor shops."

Sir James finished his memo with the following: "The matter (alluding to Planters taking out Licenses) therefore dropped, and it was assumed, apparently with reason, that the Planters acquiesced in the decision of the Government to tax the liquor consumed by the coolies, and that as they were unwilling to undertake any active part themselves they had no objection to raise, to the system of licensed shops for distilled liquors." I am not aware that, Planters at any time acquiesced in the present system of licensed shops for distilled liquor, but what I do know, is, that if the policy of Government before quoted by me, regarding the cancellation of licenses for drunkenness etc. had been persistently followed up, there would never have been any occasion for us to have taken up the matter in the way we now do.

It is curious to see how the Government of Assam falls back on the so called "Concession" to Planters, for notwithstanding its signal failure in former Administrations, it was again attempted in 1899-1900 by Mr. Cotton, but of course with the same results as before.

Apart from the financial objection to Tea Estates and Companies becoming Abkars, practically every Company would have to be reconstructed to allow of its Capital being used in a direction not contemplated by its articles! and although one administration after another has admitted the necessity of giving Planters a control of the Liquor shops at their doors, and advocated the co-operation of the Planter as a necessity, if abuses are to be checked, and the Excise Administration made effective; the only possible *effective* control *viz* "Inspection control" coupled with certain powers on proof of existence of abuses, has never been offered or suggested.

I will next touch on certain points that came out on the Special Inquiry into the Excise of Country Spirits in 1890.

In this year Mr. Driberg, Officiating Commissioner of Excise, Assam, was deputed by the Chief Commissioner, Assam, to make a careful and exhaustive enquiry into all matters connected with Excise of country spirits in Assam.

The principles on which the Government of India based the Excise Administration were stated to be as follows:—

(1) That any extension of the habit of drinking among the population of the Province is to be discouraged.

(2) That the tax on spirits is to be as high as may be possible without giving rise to illicit methods of making and selling liquor.

(3) That, subject to these considerations a maximum revenue should be raised from a minimum consumption of intoxicating liquors.

Mr. DRIBERG said "I have endeavoured to find out if the drinking classes have increased under our present system, or if people now drink more than they did formerly, and my opinion is that there has been no increase in drinking or drunkenness beyond the normal increase due to the larger number of gardens, and garden population and to the increase in the wealth of coolies, and other classes who have always been in the habit of drinking."

Now as nearly every Excise Report emphasises the fact that the revenue from country spirits is almost, if not entirely, derived from the spirit consumed by the coolie population, the following I think is a significant proof that there is greater tendency to drink than formerly.

The adult garden population for 1889-1890 is given as 2,39,694, and the revenue from country spirits during that year amounted to Rs. 2,73,037.

For 1900-1901 the garden adult population is given as 4,15,560, and the revenue from country spirits amounted to Rs. 6,97,584 or nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ as much again in proportion to the adult population of gardens.

The HONORABLE Mr. CORTON himself states in his Excise Resolution dated July 1899 that although the number of liquor shops for that year remains about the same, still the amount bid for them shows an increase of upwards of a lakh of rupees, "the rapid development of the revenue under this head is due to the increase of the immigrant population by whom country spirit is almost exclusively consumed."

It has been alleged that the larger revenue from spirit shops is not an evidence of larger consumption, but that it is owing to stricter supervision by Excise Officers and consequently less illicit manufacture of spirits.

This theory may have held good years ago, but I most certainly deny that it has any force at present. Mr. Driberg in 1890 said that he did not consider that illicit distillation was carried on in either of the Valleys to any considerable extent, and when we consider the enormous price paid at present by the Lessees of the Licensed shops we may safely say they are the best Excise Officers we have, to see that their interests do not suffer, by any illicit stills in the District, or as the commission on Excise state, the grant of a monopoly enlists, from strong motives of personal profits, the distillers and shop-keepers with all their local knowledge, on the side of prevention.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOUT, and SIR ROBERT LETHBRIDGE both considered that too much stress had been laid on illicit distillation, the latter did not think that any great weight need be assigned to the great bugbear of

"illicit distillation," and the former that "where the sentiment of the great mass of the people was adverse to that traffic, they would have the greatest security against illicit distillation."

MR. DRIBERG summarized his suggestions as follows:—

(1) "That the size of the stills be limited in accordance with the position and value of the shop, and that each shop be obliged to have its own still.

"(2) That the upset price of each outstill shop be fixed after careful enquiry in the manner indicated, a higher price being fixed for the larger shops, and that the fee should bear a direct relation to the profits of the shop. No shop (except on the frontier) should pay a license-fee of less than Rs. 300 per annum in the Surma Valley, or Rs. 240 per annum in the Assam Valley.

"(3) That certain shops be closed; no new shops to be opened without full enquiry as to its necessity, and after obtaining the views of the residents of the neighbourhood, and only with the sanction of the Commissioner of Excise.

"(4) That wherever possible, no shop be located inside a large market place or hât frequented chiefly by garden coolies, but that it be situated half a mile to one mile outside the hât, and on the side where there are fewest gardens. This I propose in order to prevent coolies, who go to the market for the purpose of buying food, being tempted to drink, and I also suggest that wherever a shop is located in or near a large hât, the Police be always in attendance on hât days to prevent any drunkenness or misconduct.

"(5) That a minimum price for the sale of country spirits be fixed and that this price be 6 annas per ordinary quart bottle.

"(6) That a Deputy-Collector, and an Excise Inspector (with a sufficient number of Excise peons) be attached to each of the Districts of Sylhet, Cachar, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur, their duties to be more clearly specified separately."

I do not think it is sufficiently realized that the revenue derived from drink comes out of the pockets of the coolies who are acknowledged to be almost the only consumers of liquor; they have to pay (first) the value of the liquor, (secondly) the revenue from the liquor shops, and (thirdly) the profits earned by the Abkars; it follows therefore that the less coolies spend in liquor the more prosperous they must be, and they would certainly be in far better position of contributing to the expenses of the nation; and it also follows that so long as every facility is given them of drinking to excess, as under the present system their wages will be, and remain in reality, and not merely on paper, "a miserable average pittance." It is urged by many that Government cannot sacrifice such a revenue, as it now receives from Excise, for the sake of temperance. Those who bring this forward, to support their views, could never have seen the orders issued to revenue officers in India in 1838.

It ran as follows "It cannot be too strongly urged upon collectors that the object which Government has in view, is to restrain, and if possible to correct and diminish the total actual consumption of spirituous liquors whether clandestine or licensed, being fully persuaded that any amount of revenue that may be lost by the efficiency of the system for this end will be repaid one hundredfold in the preservation and advancement of moral feelings and industrious habits among the people."

In 1890 the Government of India admitted to the Secretary of State that an error was committed in so greatly extending the outstill system after 1877.

Mr. COCKERELL, member of the Board of Revenue, said in 1884: "In the general opinion of the District Officers as well as of non-official Europeans, and respectable native residents, the introduction of the outstill system has been accompanied with a decided increase of drinking and drunkenness."

It is the greatest mistake to say that drinking and drunkenness have for many years been rife in India. We know from experience that new coolies are not usually given to intemperate habits but they acquire them after being in the country a few years. The Government of India themselves say in a despatch dated June 25th 1887 that "Judged by a European standard, the people of India are a remarkably abstemious people, drunkenness, in the English sense of the term hardly exists in India." *If this truly describes the state of India generally, surely Assam, from the facts now laid before us, has degenerated in a very marked degree.*

In the Government of India's letter dated 4th February 1890 to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, it was said "that it was a matter for regret that the statements made in the debate on the Indian Excise System should have been inaccurate and misleading."

This was in answer to the following resolution passed by the House of Commons, *viz.*, "That in the opinion of this House, the fiscal system of the Government of India leads to the establishment of spirit distilleries, liquor, and opium shops in large numbers of places, where till recently they never existed, in defiance of native opinion and the protests of the inhabitants; and that such increased facilities for drinking, produce a steadily increasing consumption, and spread misery and ruin among the industrial classes of India, calling for immediate action on the part of the Government of India with a view to their abatement."

I believe that if the Government of India had been cognizant of the actual working of the outstill system in Assam, an answer such as that above quoted would never have been given to the Secretary of State.

Sir James Westland accuses us as having too often accepted as inevitable a state of things, which, if we had only exposed them, the Government of Assam would have been only too glad to have come to our assistance, we are also told that we have remained with our arms folded, and would do nothing either towards the prevention of illicit liquor or the regulation of the traffic in licit liquor. That there has been in past years a certain amount of apathy on our part I will not deny, but at the same time I most emphatically state that District Officers have had too much regard to the revenue derived from Excise to take the precautions they might have, to see that the principles laid down by the Government of India were complied with, and I am supported in this statement by para 5 in the Secretary of State's Despatches dated 16th May 1889, and also in the Despatch dated 19th April 1888. See pages 74 to 77 of this file. Alluding to increase in Revenue the Excise Commissioner in his report for 1898-1899 says: "During the past year all Districts, except Goalpara, Darrang, and the Khasia Hills, in which there was a decrease, contributed towards the increase. Taking the districts in the order of their increase, it will be found that Luckhimpore heads the list, with a very large increase of Rs. 53,099 or 53.57 per cent. This increase was not due to any increase in the number of shops, but to keen competition amongst the Mahaldars, in anticipation of larger business, owing to the increase in the foreign population of the district, and also to the interest taken by the late Mr. Duncan in the settlement of shops. This increase, though large for one year, is not disproportionate to the increase in the foreign element of the district." Mr. Davis then gives the immigrant population on the tea gardens for the past 5 years.

1893-1894	...	91,218
1894-1895	...	93,707
1895-1896	...	1,01,243
1896-1897	...	1,08,251
1897-1898	...	1,24,943

On checking these figures, I find they do not agree at all with the

Immigration Report for 1898; at page 15 of the Immigration Report for 1897. The following totals are given for Luckhimpore:—

Act coolies	...	46,428
Non-Act coolies.	...	35,529
		<hr/>
		81,957
Children.	...	39,501
		<hr/>
Total	...	1,21,458

for 1898, the following figures are given:—

Act coolies	...	45,781
Non-Act coolies.	...	39,193
		<hr/>
		84,974
Children.	...	43,059
		<hr/>
		1,28,033

Now we have an increase in the adult population for 1898 of only 3,017 adults. I should say therefore that an increase of 53·57 per cent in Excise revenue *was most disproportionate to the increase in the foreign element of the district* and from this increase in Revenue Mr. Duncan got kudos; Captain Herbert also comes in for praise for an increment in Revenue. (See page 11 Excise Export from 1898-1899.)

The Honorable Mr. Cotton in his letter to Mr. Anderson says that few complaints were made to him in his tours. Until very lately Records have not been kept of complaints; *the complaints and cases recorded at the end of this memorandum are for the most part those that have occurred during the last 6 months*, and I have no hesitation in saying that they do not represent one half of the cases that have actually occurred. I trust however we shall not again be accused of accepting the inevitable or keeping our arms folded, if we are, we must re-double our exertions to prove our case.

I do not think it is generally known that the liquor question in Assam was the subject of discussion in the House of Lords in May last. (See pages 79 and 80,) and I also give an extract from the "Abkari" on the same pages.

GENERAL MCGREGOR, C. B. D. S. O., Commanding the Assam District, wrote me on the 17th June last regarding the rum supplied to the Assam Regiments, he said, "The only two Regiments which are supplied with rum in the Assam District are the 43rd and 44th Gurkhas, the rum is obtained on payment from the Commissariat, Calcutta. I don't know where it is got from originally.

"The Gurkha Regiments have been supplied with rum on payment for many years (quite 20) and rum was got up so that men should have a decent sort of liquor, and not be obliged to drink the vile hill liquor. I can quite imagine that the liquor in the Plains of Assam is equally injurious." I understand these Gurkha Regiments have their canteen which are closely supervised by a Committee of Native Officers, with a British Officer as President, a wholesome liquor is supplied made up to a certain strength, and no man is allowed to get more than a certain quantity at one time.

Can there be more overwhelming proof than this, that the liquor made at the Outstills is generally unfit for human consumption?

His Excellency the Viceroy in his address to the Army Temperance Association at Simla in June last sounded a very certain note on Temperance in the Army, which cannot but equally apply to labour all

ever India, "none will deny," His Excellency said, "that a sober soldier is better than an intoxicated one, and a moderate drinker than a hard drinker, and a total abstainer better than all." "If," His Excellency continued, "every Commanding Officer in India were told that he himself would be judged by the sobriety of his Regiment, and that a flourishing canteen fund would be looked upon as a mark of a bad Colonel, it would be a most excellent thing." I will take the risk of censure, when I say, that this remark of His Excellency's should apply in the same way to the Administration of Excise in the Province of Assam.

I will now make a summary of the various proposals that have been made, many of which are most practical, and if adopted would I think place the Excise system on a much sounder basis than it is at present.

(1.) *Perhaps the most serious charge made by Medical Officers of the Valley is, that in many instances the water used for the manufacture of spirit is of the filthiest description, being the drainage from the surrounding houses. It should be a sine qua non that unless the license holder can show to the satisfaction of the Civil Medical Officer or to any other Officers appointed for that purpose, that he can secure throughout the year a good supply of pure water, his license should be withheld.*

(2.) *That grog on no account should be sold in or near a hât where a large number of coolies are collected. This was a suggestion of Mr. Driberg.*

(3.) *That unless accurate accounts are kept by the Abkars showing the quantity of liquor manufactured, and sold the Lessee should have his license cancelled. (These accounts if ever furnished by Abkars, are intentionally misleading and incorrect.)*

(4.) *That drunkenness should not be allowed either within or near the Abkar's shop (The present form of License does not permit any drunken person "to remain in his shop.") and that on being twice convicted of permitting drunkenness, and disorderly conduct in or near his shop, his license should be cancelled.*

(5.) *That not more than one bottle of a certain proof, should be sold to any one coolie at a time. At present any person can purchase no less than 6 bottles at a time.*

(6.) *That the liquor sold should be of a certain fixed proof, without this, it seems worse than useless fixing any price on a bottle. (The present price is 0-6-0.)*

(7.) *That on any deleterious matter being found with the grog on analysis, the vendor should at once forfeit his license.*

(8.) *That a certain fixed distance from gardens should be laid down for the site of grog shops.*

(9.) *That coolies should get permit tickets from Managers before they could get grog. (I do not myself see how this could be worked.)*

(10.) *That Police should always be in attendance on hât days to prevent drunkenness or misconduct. This was also suggested by Mr. Driberg.*

(11.) *That the supervision over grog shops should be far stricter than it is at present. Mr. Driberg suggested that there should be a Deputy Collector, and an Excise Inspector with peons for each District.*

(12.) *That Medical Officers of Tea Estates should be invested with special powers to inspect grog shops, and to suspend the licenses of Abkar's for one month, with the approval of the Deputy Commissioner.*

(13.) *That more use be made of District Committees of the Tea Association to enquire locally into breaches of the Excise Act or non-fulfilment of stipulations laid down in licenses.*

(14) *That grog shops be closed earlier on Sundays say 4 p. m., and that grog shop-keepers be prohibited from giving nautches and tamashas at or near their shops.*

(15) *Last, but not least, I see a few propose the total abolition of grog shops.*

I think I have now summarised all the proposals made, and submit they are in the main both sound and practicable.

I cannot close this memorandum without regretting exceedingly on behalf of the Assam Branch Indian Tea Association that we have to place such a formidable looking file before His Honour the Chief Commissioner, so soon after his arrival in the Province. We can however assure His Honour that we are fully aware of the intricacy of the question, but if by mutual assistance we can relieve the Government of Assam of any of the difficulties of the situation, we shall be only too ready to do so.

J. BUCKINGHAM,

AMGOORIE,
April 2nd 1902.

I beg to acknowledge reports re grog shops and the effects of drink on coolies, from the undermentioned Medical Officers in the Tea District, the information they give is of most material assistance to us, and can hardly be overestimated.

G. C. WINCHESTER, M. B. A. M., of Edinburgh.

Medical Officer of the Assam Tea Company.

J. DODDS PRICE,

Salonah, Nowgong.

W. RUSSELL,

North Lakhimpore.

ALFRED McCABE DALLAS D. M. L. M. ETC.,

Councillor, Indian Medical Association, Panitola, Lakhimpore.

HUGH J. SMITH,

Medical Officer, Bishnath Tea Company.

GIRIZA SUNKER SEN,

Dr. Baboo Seconee.

SITAL CHANDRA GHOSH, DIPLO. M. C., Calcutta,

Medical Officer, Moabund Tea Company.

CHARLES A. BENTLEY, M. B. C. M., Edinburgh,

Medical Officer, Empire of India and Ceylon Tea Company, Tezapore.

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J. HEWAN, M. B. O. S., England, L. K. C. P. London,

Medical Officer, Jorehat Tea Company Limited.

ROBT JOHNSTON, M. B. C. M.

Medical Officer, Moriani.

A. J. ELLIOT, M. D. F. E. C. S., Edinburgh,

Medical Officer, Noakacharie.

J. K. MACNAMARA, F. R. C. S. I.

Medical Officer, Golaghat.

M. B. WRIGHT, M. B.,

Medical Officer Moran Lakhimpur District.

I am very sorry that I was denied the opinion of the Officers of the U. M. S. in Assam, I wrote to Col Carr. Calthrope our P. M. O., asking him if he would obtain the opinion of his Medical Officers on the outstill system as at present conducted in the Valley, but my request was not granted.

Remarks on some of the letters I have received.

Surgeon General DeRenzie who was the P. M. O. in Assam some 10 years ago, remarked at a meeting of the Tea Association in London "that Government are most anxious to provide every facility for coolies to use country spirits." This is hardly in harmony with the Government of India avowed principle, and looking at the matter in a broad light, the correspondence now presented will undoubtedly prove that the Surgeon General is correct, he is also of the opinion, like many others, that "an increase in wages will go far to raise the Revenue for country spirits."

De. Bentley, Tezporé, says, Native grog shops cannot be compared to the English Public House, they are more akin to the opium dens of Asiatic cities, or the Absinthe bars in Paris, *the coolie does not take grog as a beverage but solely as an intoxicant.*

He compares Native grog drinking to Ether drinking which became so prevalent amongst the lowest classes in Dublin some years ago, and which Government eventually stopped by declaring the drug a "poison" under the Pharmacy Act.

Mr. Skinner's letter page 25 regarding the petition of the Bindukuri Station Master on the state of the Grog shops, and surroundings on a hat day is well worth reading.

"Owing to the amount of drinking it is simply impossible to keep the permanent way clear of coolies, it being crowded with coolies hopelessly drunk, thereby endangering the lives of passengers." Mr. Skinner mentions 2 lives being lost owing to drunkenness, and finishes his letter by saying *"it is a scandal to the administration permitting a Government liquor shop under no efficient control, alongside a public railway station for the sake of revenue under the head of Excise."*

The Rev. S. Endle, page 27, fully supports Mr. Chamney, Chairman of the Tezporé Sub-Committee, in his crusade against liquor shops, and his suggestions are well worthy of notice.

Mr. Koch of Tezporé, page 30, gives an interesting letter showing how coolies pay gets absorbed under the influence of drink.

Mr. Wilde and others, pages 31 and 32, show how coolies of a naturally temperate habit, succumb to the vice of drink when they have loose money in their pockets.

Mr. B. Stewart, page 35, Mr. R. Evans of Suntoek, page 55, and many others, bear testimony to the fact of coolies being unable to do full work on Mondays owing to the drinking bout they had on the previous day, the latter gentleman gives a case of 40 coolies out of 111 being *hors de combat* on Monday.

Mr. Swinley's letter of the 25th September 1901, see page 36, gives particulars of a drunken brawl near the Charallee Grog shop in which 2 men were killed. The two men implicated were sentenced to 12 months imprisonment each, thus (as Mr. Swinley observes) *"I lost the services of 2 men entirely, and 2 for a whole year."* Mr. Swinley cites many other cases, and finishes his letter with a well merited obloquy on the action of the Government of Assam.

Mr. A. H. Templer, Superintendent of the Moabund Tea Company, page 39, and Mr. Geddes, page 40, graphically describe the effects of drink on coolies, when opportunity is placed at their very doors.

The latter gentleman complains of having to send in witnesses to the Sudder Station in a single grog case, he had instituted, no less than 4 times, and on one of these occasions they were detained 7 days. Is it to be wondered at therefore that Planters fight shy of instituting cases against Abkars when the witnesses are detained so many days in Court?

Mr. Edwards, page 44, gives a case when liquor was not even distilled, but was simply made up of a concoction of chillies, Bhang, and other drugs.

Mr. Macrae, pages 44 and 45, gives instances of 4 deaths, one of which, when in a state of collapse, and lying in a drain, had his eyes picked out by vultures.

Mr. Hulbert, Chief Superintendent of the Assam Company, gives at page 47 perhaps the most powerful argument yet advanced as to what is actually spent in grog by coolies; he placed reliable men on the road to count the quantity of liquor purchased by his coolies at Mazengah and Ligiri Pookri for 14 days, the number of coolies was 1835, quantity of grog purchased 3549 quarts equivalent to an average per head per mensem of $4\frac{1}{2}$ quarts. Estimated average cost per coolie per mensem Rs. 1-8-9.

The correspondence between the Chief Commissioner and the Chairman of the Assam Branch Indian Tea Association is given at pages 47 to 52. The Honorable Mr. Cotton questioned the veracity of a statement made by Mr. Lawes, Superintendent of the Bishnauth Tea Company to the Directors of the Bishnauth Company. Mr. Lawes statement however was fully corroborated by the Medical Officer in charge.

Mr. Lawes gives some ghastly accounts of coolies who have died through drink, here again we have an instance of a coolie lying in a helpless state, and being partly eaten by jackals.

Mes-rs. Olney, Lumsden, Davis, and Murbocks, pages 53 and 54, cite some very serious affrays with coolies when in a state of intoxication.

I note that Mr. Lumsden makes the same proposal as Mr. Knox Wight did some years ago when Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, *viz.*, that coolies should get a permit ticket from the Manager before he purchased grog from the shop.

Mr. Henderson, page 52, quotes a case where a coolie had to stay in the Hospital 19 days on account of wounds received in a drunken brawl.

Mr. Davis, page 53, gives an account of 2 men having died from the effect of drink, and one girl who had her arm fractured.

Mr. Showers of Tiphook, page 56, gives a case of a boy only 12 years old dying from the effects of drink, and another boy of 10 who nearly succumbed.

Mr. J. Begg of Hoolungoorie, page 56, bitterly complains of the enticement given to coolies by the Abkars to take more leave than they are entitled to during the Doorgah Poojah, and other holidays, coolies always get two extra days which with Sunday gives them 3 whole days to debauch in, they are not content with this, and constantly refuse to turn out to work the 4th day. For a case of this kind see Mr. Simkin's memorandum, page 59 to 61.

Mr. Gair of Mackeypore at page 57 gives a case of a man who when in a drunken fit was bitten by a cobra and died.

The correspondence forwarded by Mr. S. H. Shaw at page 61 to 64 is important as it shows how little assistance we get from some of the Government Officials to lessen drunkenness among the coolies, and that the liquor sold is unfit for human consumption. Mr. Shaw points out that the grog shops in his neighbourhood have been erected and conducted at variance to the Excise Act in no less than 5 important points, *this I beg to state is no exception to the general rule.*

Mr. Grimston, see page 58, had to stop giving his coolies leave for the "Tagooa" owing to their not turning out to work when their leave had expired. The same gentleman also alludes to some very serious cases of drunkenness not only in the case of men, but also boys.

Mr. Ferguson of the Hunwall Tea Estate, page 59, describes a drunken row in which one man was murdered and thrown into the river.

Dr. Hewan compares the grog shops here with British Public Houses only he says, there is one very remarkable difference, the latter are strictly inspected, but the former are allowed to have their own way entirely.

J. BUCKINGHAM.

AMIGOORI, April 2nd 1902.

LIQUOR SHOPS IN ASSAM.

MEDICAL REPORTS.

To obtain a full and true consensus of medical opinion on the Liquor Shop traffic in Assam, as it affected Tea Estates, the following questions were circulated to the Principal Medical Officers in the Upper Assam Valley —

1. What is your opinion regarding native Grog shops in the vicinity of Tea Gardens? Do you consider they are prejudicial to the health of coolies? And have you any suggestions to make regarding them? Do you think they should be wholly abolished or only partially?

2. Have you in your experience come across coolies suffering from the effect of over-drinking? If so, do these cases, as a rule, present symptoms, which you would expect from ordinary alcoholic excess, or are they accompanied with any other symptoms of a more serious nature, such as might be attributed to Bhang, Datura, or some other adulterant being mixed with the Grog?

3. Have you met with any cases of Bronchitis, Pneumonia, Pleurisy or any other chest disease, directly or indirectly due to exposure after excessive drinking?

4. Have you met with any gastro-intestinal or other diseases in coolies that you might fairly attribute to drinking inferior or drugged liquor?

Can you quote any cases, if not, would you mind placing on record any cases you may come across under questions 3 & 4, for say 6 months.

5. Have you ever seen any Grog shops in your neighbourhood where the water used for diluting liquor is drawn from suspected or doubtful sources? If so, please give details?

6. Have you come across many cases of assaults and serious injuries following on an excess of drinking the liquor from Government Grog shops?

7. Have you ever sent any suspected liquor to Calcutta to be analysed? If so, with what results? If not, would you mind undertaking to send any suspected liquor to Calcutta to be analysed?

It would be advisable to send the liquor direct to Messrs. Waldis & Co., Analytical Chemists, Calcutta, who will receive instructions to bill the Association.

8. Do you find there is more sickness after a hot day than there is on any other day during the week? If so, what proportion of this sickness do you attribute to the consumption of native liquor?

The following replies were received in answer to the above question, and have been numbered categorically :—

Doctor Geo. C. Winchester's Report

(*Medical Officer to the Assam Company in the District of Sibsagar.*)

1. I do not think they ought to be allowed near Tea gardens, as they undoubtedly are prejudicial to the health of the coolies. I do not think they should be abolished entirely, but they should be subject to stricter and more efficient supervision.

At present any supervision there is, is practically *nil*!

2. Yes, very often. The cases, as a rule, show the ordinary symptoms of alcoholic excess, but occasionally cases occur which the native doctors attribute to adulterated liquor.

3. Yes. I have been able to trace many cases of Bronchitis, Pneumonia &c. to excessive drinking. The cooly gets drunk, lies out in the open all night until he is more or less sober, and soon develops some illness due to the exposure he has undergone. Much of the serious sickness on gardens is due to this fact.

4. Yes. I have met with gastro-intestinal affections in coolies which could easily be traced to excessive drinking (*vide* case XII Toukok case.)

5. Yes: Nazira Grog Shop has no source of water supply that would be passed by any Civil Surgeon. Dolebagan Grog Shop is in the same condition; as is Chokey Mukh near Makeypore; and the Gelakey Liquor Shop and Sonari are in the same state. They all have either Kutcha wells, or little tanks, but they are all dangerous as water supplies.

6. Yes I append a list of cases.

7. No. Yes (I will send suspected liquor for analysis.)

8. On some factories that is the case, but not on all.

GEORGE C. WINCHESTER, M. B.

(*Cases referred to in answer to question 6.*)

Toukok Cases.—In these cases all the grog was supplied from the shop at Sonari.

- Cases 1.—Boglai, male, age 32, got drunk at Sonari, and fell into a drain on August 19th 1901. From this accident he was unable to work until September 3rd 1901.
- " 2.—1 Etwari, male, age 40, got drunk at Sonari on August 19th 1901, and in consequence was off work till 21st August 1901.
- " 3.—Tara, female, age 44, got drunk at Sonari on 18th August 1901 and was unfit for work for six days.
- " 4. Chaiton, male, age 28, got drunk at Sonari on 1st September 1901, quarrelled with some other coolies, and in the affray had his metacarpal bones broken. He was off work nearly 3 weeks.
- " 5.—Rosona, female, was admitted into hospital on 8th September 1901 for injuries inflicted by her husband while he was drunk. She was ill ten days. The liquor was procured from Sonari.
- " 6.—Haroo, male, age 28, got drunk at Sonari, and got into a quarrel. He received a large incised scalp wound for which he was detained in hospital ten days.

- 7.—Bhoondia, female, age 27, was admitted to Hospital on 29th September 1901, for an injury to knee joint inflicted by her husband while drunk. She was off work 14 days. The liquor came from Sonari.
- 8.—Dhanea, female, age 30, was admitted into Hospital on 6th December 1901, having been severely assaulted by her drunken husband. She was discharged on 19th October 1901. The drink was procured from the Sonari Shop.
- 9.—Horua, male, age 30, was admitted to Hospital on 21st October 1901, having been assaulted when drunk at Sonari. He had several bad contusions on his body, and a bad black eye. He was unfit for work until 28th October 1901.
- 10.—Lohi, male, age 36, was admitted to Hospital 15th December 1901, suffering from a lacerated wound of the foot, received while drunk. He was discharged on 25th December 1901.
- 11.—Gonga, female, age 18, off work 2 days from drunkenness.
- 12.—Giridhary, male, age 35, was admitted into Hospital on 15th December 1901, suffering from choleraic diarrhoea which followed a bout of drinking. He was discharged on 23rd December 1901.
- 13.—1 Bhondoo, male, age 48, was admitted into Hospital on 15th December 1901, with Pneumonia following upon exposure while drunk. He is still in hospital 24th January 1902.
- 14.—Mongtin, female, age 28, was admitted to Hospital on 15th December 1901, having been assaulted badly by her drunken husband. She was discharged cured on 22nd December 1901.

Mackeypore Cases.

- Cases* 1.—Sooklal, male, age 30, was admitted into Hospital on 29th November 1900, suffering from a fractured skull; from which he died. His case was carefully gone into in Sibsagar. He obtained the liquor from Chokie Mukh, got drunk and was assaulted by some other coolies.

(*N. B.*—This case resulted in the loss to the garden of three other coolies who were sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment for causing the death of Sooklal.)

- 2.—Giridhari, male, age 28, was admitted into Mackeypore Hospital suffering from a severe burn on September 13th 1901. He fell into the fire while drunk: and was off work for a month.
- 3.—Lorra, male, age 30, was admitted into Hospital with severe convulsions following a bout of drinking on December 13th. The convulsions continued for 24 hours, but he eventually recovered. He was ill a week.

Suntok Cases.

- 1.—Meghai, female, age 30, was admitted into Hospital with 2 severe scalp wounds on July 22nd 1901, which were inflicted by her husband who was drunk with grog. She was discharged on August 19th 1901.
- 2.—On Tuesday, January 14th, Taura (Moonda) bought five bottles of grog from the Cacharipookri Grog Shop, for Rs. 0/15/0 and returned to Suntok. He drank some of this with a man named Omrit. He was admitted into Hospital unconscious and bleeding freely from a severe cut on the head at 11-30 p. m. On examining the wound a fractured skull was found. The man is recovering and the case is to be tried in Sibsagar.

Mr. EVANS, the Manager of Suntok, tells me that on Monday, January 13th 1902, half his factory was off work from the effects of liquor. And he says liquor is always sold to the Suntok coolies at Ra. 0-3-0 per bottle which is below the authorised rate.

Doctor Dodd Price's Report

(*Medical Officer, Salonah, Nowgong.*)

1. I consider native Grog shops in the vicinity of Tea Gardens a source of danger, and most decidedly prejudicial to the health of the coolies. I have no suggestions to make regarding them, beyond that they should be wholly abolished.

2. Repeatedly. The cases usually presenting symptoms one would expect from ordinary alcoholic excess. I have not come across cases such as might be attributed to an adulterant being mixed with the grog.

3. Very frequently. 50 per cent of the Pneumonia and Chest cases met with during the cold weather months. I have always attributed to direct exposure after excessive drinking.

4. I have not noticed such cases. I will place on record any cases I may come across in future.

5. Yes. There is a grog shop situated midway between two of my gardens, three quarters of a mile from one set of coolie lines, barely half a mile from another set. The water used for diluting liquor is taken from a stream which runs alongside the shop. This stream is liable to contamination from many sources, and may at times contain cholera and dysentery bacilli, doubtless very often does so.

6. I have seen several such cases.

7. No.

8. There are usually many more applications for sick leave after hāt day than on any other day during the week. The bulk of these cases are due to the consumption of alcohol.

J. DODDS PRICE,

Salonah,

Nowgong.

27th November 1901.

Doctor Russell's Report,

North Lakhimpur.

1. Grog shops serve no useful purpose, the aboriginal races for whom they cater, are specially prone to abuse the opportunities provided. The fermented liquor which coolies manufacture in their own houses is free from adulteration, and preferable to the distilled liquor sold. Grog Shops should exist only where there is a large settled population, providing no accommodation beyond drink; their presence on sparsely populated roads is to be condemned. Where existant more supervision is necessary.

2. The local Grog Shop is the scene of regular weekly debauchery! such as might be expected when the easily led cooly is tempted into spending his earnings on liquor instead of food.

3. Direct evidence to this effect is extremely hard to obtain.
4.
5. The local grog shop is for most part of the year surrounded by stagnant water mingled with which is drainage from a cattle shed, and decomposing rubbish of all sorts. No pure water is available. A Jan draining a forest Bheel was about 100 yards away.
6. A hundred such cases might occur and not one be traceable.
7.
8. The local grog shop is within a mile of the garden so a supply can always be obtained without difficulty.

W. RUSSELL,

North Lakhimpur.

*Note by F. E. Winsland, Manager of the Joyhing Tea Estate,
on above Report.*

Doctor Russell's remarks with reference to question No. 5 are altogether too mild, this particular shop for most part of the year simply wallows in filthy, stagnant, stinking water, which surrounds the shop almost up to its floor level, showing an utter disregard and want of supervision by Government in the matter, as Dr. Russell says coolies drink to excess at this shop, and have then nothing but the above filthy water to quench their thirst, with the result that after a few days return to the garden cases and deaths from cholera &c occur without its being traceable to the actual cause. If Grog Shops are indispensable, keep them as far as possible from Tea Gardens, and in cases like the above Government should be asked to exercise at least as much supervision as is done with a black list garden.

Doctor Alfred McCabe Dallas' Report.

(Medical Officer, Jokai Tea Company, Panitola, Dibrugarh.)

1. My opinion is expressed by accompanying letter which I addressed to the Directors of the Jokai Tea Company two months ago. Both directly and indirectly I consider them prejudicial to the health of the labour force. I think they ought not to exist in the vicinity of a garden: and ought to be located at a sufficient distance to make the supply inconvenient to obtain. Preferably I would wish complete abolishment as alcohol is not a necessary in any sense and is not sought after, previous to a coolie's importation into Assam. This suggestion however would meet I fear with Government opposition.
2. Yes. From my observation the symptoms in many instances were characteristic of undue exhaustion and subsequent stupor which are suspicious of noxious adulteration.
3. Pneumonia and Pleurisy have often been attributed to exposure. By this I mean intoxicated coolies being unable to fetch their homes have slept outside their lines, on road sides, or elsewhere, without any protective covering. It is an indisputable fact that excess of alcohol has a reactionary effect towards depressing the nervous functions lowering vital forces, and causing greater susceptibility in contracting acute disease. This is intensified during holidays when they undergo a certain amount of physical exhaustion from promenading about, debauching at night, in many instances while it is raining.
4. I am not prepared to specifically answer this question.

5. Yes. Panitola for instance, which is on the side of the public road, adjoining the Panitola Estate. This locality is in a particularly insanitary condition; in special regard to its water supply, and although repeated appeals have been made to the authorities to attend to the subject, no notice has ever been taken or attempt at improvement considered.

6. I have. It might be assumed by this answer that the Police records do not bear me out but as the assaults and injuries occur among coolies who are usually friends, but commit these acts under alcoholic influence, matters are invariably settled afterwards between themselves or perhaps through the Manager, unless of course fatal consequences are likely to ensue.

7. No. This will be done in accordance with the methods adopted by Government to prevent any dispute towards tampering.

8. As a rule yes. Often the foundation of future incapacity. From the direct effects, and indirect influence I consider the increase approximates 10 per cent.

ALFRED McCABE DALLAS, D.M. & CH., L.M.Q.R.C.P. & C

Doctor Dalla's letter to Secretary Jokai (Assam) Tea Company, London.

PANITOLA, July 1901.

* *Liquor Shops.*—A large liquor shop for the manufacture and sale of country produce, exists right up against the Panitola Estate. I fear local influence is not sufficiently strong to cause the removal of this institution. It would be well if gardens (or Agents) similarly circumstanced were to bring some sort of pressure on Government, or their officials. It is notorious from the large revenue enjoyed by the Excise department that such practically comes out of the earnings of the coolies. Irrespective of the deteriorating effects of this pungent form of alcohol, on the health of the labour force, the danger is enhanced by all dilutions being drawn—most probably—from adjacent nullahs or impure wells—as the proprietor of such an establishment does not pin his faith in a Pasteur, or any other form of filter.

Indeed it is a matter of surmise whether, when the Government of India had before them the subject of increasing the coolies wages by another Rupee per mensem they were free from all suspicion as to where the extra money would eventually gravitate. I do not believe—bar a few exceptions—that the increase would benefit the cooly physically or be utilized in providing more food or clothing, but in the direction of this so-called public house. Extra pay in my opinion would act in increasing the excise revenue and seducing the cooly to demoralise his health by consuming more of this country spirit.

Instead of Government encouraging a reduction of sickness and mortality they actually place inducements in the way, by planting a nucleus of disease at the very door of a valuable force.

ALFRED McCABE DALLAS,

Medical Officer,

TO THE DIRECTORS,

Jokai Tea Company,

LONDON.

Doctor H. S. Smith's Report

(Medical Officer, Bishnath, Darrang.)

1. I most certainly consider grog shops prejudicial to the health of the coolies more especially when they are in the vicinity of the Hât or on

the road to the Hât. I think no grog shop should be within 2 miles of a Hât, or on the road between a Hât and any group of gardens; and that it would be advisable to close all grog shops until after Hât is over and thus enable the cooly to spend more on his food and less on liquor. I think grog shops should be partially abolished, and inspected by the Medical Officers of the District.

2. Yes: in some of the cases the delirium has been very violent, and the liquor seemed to act as an acute irritant, producing symptoms of cholera.

3. Yes.

1 Damsad, Pabhoi Tea Estate, Pneumonia, 25th March 1901.

2 Gatoor, Diplunga Tea Estate, Pleurisy, after lying incapable all night 12th May 1901.

4. Yes.

1 Foolapi, Pabhoi cooly, died 17th June 1901.

Adhin, Dekorai cooly, died 15th February 1901.

2 Ghiridhari, male, Borphukari cooly, died 24th April 1901 suddenly after drinking—symptoms of cholera.

3 Hoolia, Borphukari cooly, died suddenly after drinking—cholera symptoms.

At Pabhoi garden after Chokedars had been warned to stop excessive drinking after July, although there were 9 deaths up to date, no cases of choleraic diarrhoea have occurred.

5. Rungamatti grog shop, Pabhoi Road, Bishnath. Yes. The well is simply a hole in the ground—no pump, and on a level with the surrounding low lying country. The water is filthy and there were about 2 dozen frogs floating about on the water when I examined the well on the 20th instant. This is at the Rungamatti grog shop on the Pabhoi Road.

6. On 18th August one Borphukari man was killed on the Government Road and 2 Kalapani men badly cut.

On October 22nd my Bungalow sweeper, named Kua, after drinking to excess and being accused of robbery, attempted suicide in my absence.

Budon, male, garden Chokidar at Pabhoi, drank to excess at Fagua and was found dead and partially eaten by jackals within a short distance of the Rungamatti grog shop (two years ago).

Mohesh, male, Sirdar, Borphukari, found dead on road-side after excessive drinking, 14th April 1894.

7. I have sent three samples purchased at the Rungamati grog shop Bishnath to Messrs. Waldie and Co.

8. Always, particularly after pay day—and Choleraic Diarrhoea is more frequent on Mondays following pay day.

HUGH H. SMITH,

Medical Officer, Bishnath District.

Doctor Giriza Sunker Sen's Report

(Seconee Tea Estate, Nowgong.)

1. They are prejudicial. Should be wholly abolished or placed further away from lines—say 6 mile limit.

2. Very often. They drink once a week. The effects are not so bad as Bhang or Datura. I do not find the grog adulterated—but it is very intoxicating and does much more harm than the "rice beer" the coolies make themselves.

3. Very many cases of severe illness have been caused by men drinking at this shop at Joklabanda. About 2 years ago, a cooly named Sita was brought into the lines intoxicated and died a few days after (5th August 1899) from Pneumonia. He had been lying drunk on the road, exposed for some hours to the rain. This is one case out of many that have probably died from this cause.

4. We have had cases of Gastritis caused by drinking at this shop.

5. The water for this shop is drawn from the Kullung, and we have no complaint to make of its purity, as all the villages on its banks obtain the same water.

6. We had this year a man nearly killed in a drunken riot at or near this shop. We reported the case to the Police. The riot was among our own coolies—not sufficient evidence being forthcoming from the drunken rioters concerned. The Daroga took no action.

GIRIZA SUNKER SEN,

Doctor Baboo at Seconee.

Dr. Sital Chundra Ghosh's Report

(Diplomaed M. C. Calcutta, Medical Officer, Moabund Tea Co., Ltd., Sub-Division Jorhat of Sibsagor District.)

1. Native grog shops, if not in too close proximity to Tea gardens, are not objectionable, so long as they manufacture unadulterated liquors. It is the adulterated liquor that they are accustomed to manufacture and sell to the coolies at cheaper rates, which is most objectionable as it affects the health of the coolies considerably.

The grog shops should be prevented from manufacturing adulterated liquors and also from selling more than one bottle of liquor to a coolie in the same day.

I do not think it is advisable to suggest that the grog shops should be wholly abolished as a little stimulating drink after a week's hard toil is beneficial to the health of coolies in damp, moist and malarial climate like Assam. The grog shops should be under close supervision.

2. Yes, it is a common occurrence to see coolies returning from the grog shops in an absolutely drunken state staggering about on their feet and using obscene language often they go to the nearest nullah to quench their thirst, which they feel terribly after over drinking and doing so, many fall down on the road side and there they sometime remain in an insensible state for hours.

On Saturday nights and Sundays rows amongst the coolies such as wife beating, drum breaking and various other offences which are committed, are attributable to over drinking adulterated liquors.

3. I have on several occasions had to admit cases of Bronchitis, Pneumonia, Pleurisy and various other chest complaints caused by exposure after excessive drinking.

4. Cases of Diarrhoea are often admitted in Tea Garden Hospitals on Monday mornings caused by over drinking inferior drugged liquor.

5. I have no opportunity to see the source of water supply for diluting liquor. But I have heard from the coolies that during holidays when the demand for liquor becomes very high, the grog shop servants draw water from the nearest pools to dilute the liquor.

6. I have had on innumerable occasions to attend and treat cases of assaults and various injuries inflicted by drunken coolies during my long service in Assam Tea Plantations.

7. No. I have never sent any suspected liquor to Calcutta to be analysed.

8. The sick list generally goes high after the hât days but it specially

goes high after the pay days. I believe one in twenty come to hospital on Monday mornings, pretending illness, after over drinking.

SITAL CHANDRA GHOSH,

Medical Officer, Moaband Tea Co. Ltd.

Report of Doctor Chas. A. Bentley, M. B., C. M., Edinburgh

(Medical Officer Empire of India and Ceylon Tea Company, Borjuli, Tezapore.)

I am strongly of opinion that the grog shops are a constant source of danger to the health of coolies living on any garden in their vicinity. It is noticeable that cases of assault, accidents &c. show increase upon gardens, in inverse ratio to the distance separating them from a grog shop.

I consider that grog shops should be entirely abolished in parts, where the principal population consists of Tea Garden coolies.

The native grog shop cannot be compared to the English Public House, or the Hotel bars of the large Indian Towns. It serves a totally distinct purpose, and is more akin to the Opium Dens of Asiatic cities or the Absinthe bars in Paris. No cooly uses the grog obtained from the Government licensed Shrab-ducan as a beverage. He takes it solely as an intoxicant!

I cannot compare native grog drinking to anything so well as to the Ether drinking which became so prevalent among the lowest classes in Dublin some few years back, and which the Government eventually stopped by declaring the drug "a poison" under the Pharmacy Act.

The liquor which I believe the cooly is allowed by law to prepare for his own personal use, by simple fermentation and which he uses as a beverage, although not altogether harmless, is far preferable to the impure and fiery spirit supplied in Government licensed grog shops.

I have never even heard it suggested that the grog shop spirit was ever taken medicinally, that is, as a useful and necessary stimulant. No one who ever knew anything of its character could ever imagine such a possibility.

Every Tea garden supplies Rum to its Hospital, for such coolies who require any sort of stimulant. Evidently the grog shop can only be looked upon as an *unnecessary evil*.

I have frequently, both in Cachar and in this district, seen coolies showing signs of intoxication. My bungalow in Hailakandi, was within a mile of a grog shop. The symptoms of many of the cases I have seen appeared to me to bear a greater resemblance to some drug intoxications than that produced by simple alcoholic liquors.

I cannot account for the paroxysms of excitement often noticeable in some cases, or the profound insensibility in others, except on the hypothesis of drugging.

I have often seen acute Pneumonia following upon a heavy drinking bout; in the cold weather months it may occur after exposure while in a state of intoxication, with such suddenness as to cause death almost immediately.

I have known of a series of sudden deaths occurring on a garden within a short time. A *post mortem* examination revealed the presence of intense double Pneumonia in the case of one of these.

In this case the victim had spent the Saturday night and Sunday (Hât day) in drinking Shrab. He was taken ill on Monday morning, and was carried insensible to the Hospital, dying almost immediately.

I think it highly probable that the other cases, which died before a diagnosis could be framed, were due to the same cause.

It is a matter of common knowledge, that gastro-intestinal disorders are frequently induced by the consumption of country liquor.

Fortunately the majority of the gardens in my charge are some distance from the grog shop, but I have frequently remarked that cases of dysentery and choleraic diarrhoea are most common on a garden nearest to the Shrab-ducan. This garden too has always borne the reputation for having a class of coolie given to great indulgence in alcoholic intoxication.

I think that coolies are probably rendered more susceptible to attacks of certain bowel complaints, when their gastro-intestinal system is deranged, as the result of excess in the consumption of country liquor.

There is one most fatal result which may fairly be attributed to the use of grog. This is seen in the occurrence of an attack of "semitertian" malarial fever in the person of a cooly who has been indulging freely in liquor. Such cases are almost always fatal—dying from collapse.

In almost all fatal cases of acute fever of this nature, that have come under my notice, I have been able to obtain a history of previous alcoholic excess.

In the last 9 or 10 months, one case of murder, another case of fractured rib from assault, and a case of death from injuries received by an intoxicated cooly while walking along the railway line have been brought to my notice. Drunkenness was in each case the cause of the quarrel or accident which occasioned such unfortunate results.

In each of these cases, I believe the drunkenness was produced by the consumption of grog from a Government licensed grog shop.

(Sd.) CHAS A. BENTLEY, M. B., C. M.,

Edinburgh.

Report of Doctor James A. Bishop

*Medical Officer, British Assam Tea Co., Borelli, Anglo American, and
Bamgaon Tea Estates, Tezpur.*

I am of opinion that native grog shops in the vicinity of gardens are an unnecessary nuisance, and much of the monthly wage of the cooly is spent in liquor which should be expended on food stuffs.

Their total abolition would, I feel confident, be for the best interests of the cooly, and save much sickness directly the result of drinking, and indirectly by turning their money thus spent to better account.

I have come across a few cases of intoxication in which the delirium was of such a furious nature that I should be inclined to suspect the victim had taken more than alcohol.

Amongst cases which might fairly be attributed to excessive drinking, I might enumerate such cases as severe scalp wounds, Erysipelatous inflammation, Hæmatoma; concussion of Brain, Sprains and extensive burns the result of falling into a fire while drunk.

I can quote cases of each of the above if necessary—I have come across many cases of assaults, and serious injuries following on excess of drinking the liquor from Government grog shops. I think there is most sickness in Tea gardens for the ten days or fortnight succeeding pay day.

(Sd.) JAMES A. BISHOP.

Report of Doctor John Hewan, M. R. C. S., England, Q. R. C. P., London.

Medical Officer, Jorehat Tea Co, Ltd., Jorhat District, Sibsagar.

1. It appears to me that native grog shops in the vicinity of Tea Estates are an evil which cannot be abolished any more, than the British Public House, but whereas the British Public is strictly inspected and all abuses severely punished, the Assam grog shop man has things very much his own way.

During my experience in Assam I have met with a large number of very severe, and also many fatal cases of sickness caused by drunkenness and subsequent exposure.

My suggestion is that there should be very much stricter discipline in the inspection of grog shops to prevent adulteration by harmful drugs, and to limit the amount sold to each individual. Also that in any case where it can be proved to the Inspector of Labourers that the neighbouring grog shop or shops are loosely managed and are the cause of habitual drunkenness and excessive sickness amongst the coolies, the man's license should be taken away or the grog shop abolished.

2. Yes, over and over again, and although as a rule they present symptoms which I should expect from ordinary alcoholic excess, still the patient's behaviour in some cases have caused me to strongly suspect adulteration of the liquor consumed.

3. Yes, I have met with a very large number of such cases.

4. I have met with several diseases caused undoubtedly by alcoholic excess, but whether due to this alone, or to adulteration of the liquor consumed or to the exposure to cold and wet when in a state of helpless intoxication, has generally been doubtful, during the last six months I have not treated any such typical cases.

5. No.

6. Yes. I have frequently met with such cases.

7. No, *vide* answer to question 4.

8. Yes. As a rule there is a considerable increase of sickness after the hât day, but in my present practice, it is mostly due to unwholesome food, whereas in my former practice among the Tea Estates in North Lakhimpur, largely laboured by robust jungli coolies, the increase was principally due to indulgence at the grog shops.

(Sd) JOHN HEWAN.

Report of Doctor Robert Johnston, M. B., C. M.

Medical Officer, Moriani Circle, Jorhat District, Sibsagar.

1. I consider that grog shops in the vicinity of Tea gardens and more especially in the close proximity to the Hâts (which I believe is very often the case) distinctly prejudicial to the health of the coolies. I would suggest that all existing grog shops, in the vicinity of Hâts and within a few (say three) miles from Tea Gardens should be removed. I would also suggest that the liquor made should be periodically analysed. Also that increased supervision be placed over grog shops, either by a Medical Officer, or Manager of a Tea garden, or an official near who would make periodical visits not less than once a month. Also that a better class of liquor be made and a higher price paid for it, or sold in smaller quantities.

2. It must be the experience of most people to see many dead drunk coolies lining the road near the grog shops; such is my own experience, and I am of opinion that in some cases the liquor supplied does contain some narcotic adulterations.

The grog costs six annas a bottle, and if pure I do not think a small quantity would produce the state of drunkenness in which I have seen some coolies, and I have been told by coolies, on whom I can place more or less reliance that the amount drunk in some of these cases was very small. As the person drunk had not the wherewithal to buy more than a small quantity.

3. I have met with several cases of these diseases, but cannot definitely attribute excessive drinking as the cause, although I have no doubt

in my own mind that excessive drinking and exposure after such predisposes to these ailments.

4. Same as above.

I cannot quote any cases which I could absolutely attribute to excessive drinking.

5. In the grog shop in my neighbourhood, the water used is from the Desoi River. This I consider ought to be stopped as the water is not filtered, simply used as it comes from the River.

I to-day had a look round a grog shop and found the distillery room very dirty, and saw a sample in fact taken from the river, and used in the manufacture of the liquor. I would suggest a proper well and a good filter, and this could be seen by the Inspector on his visits.

6. Several minor assaults, and one serious assault which occurred lately. The Manager of Hanwall Tea Co. has a record of the case, and I will ask him to let you have details.

7. No. I have it on good authority that the coolies from one or two of the distant gardens have paid only 2 annas a bottle for their liquor.

8. As a rule the coolies are slower to turn out after a Hât day and the sickness is more or less heavier than other days but not constantly so, and I have no doubt that a proportion of the increase is due to Hât day, but I cannot definitely say what percentage is due to consumption of native liquor.

(Sd.) ROBERT JOHNSTON, M. B., C. M.
Edinburgh.

9th March 1902.

Report of Doctor A. J. Elliot, M. D. F. R. C. S., EDIN.,
Noakacharie, Jorhat Sub-Division of Sibsagar.

I am of opinion that a grog shop in the vicinity of a Tea garden is very decidedly detrimental to the general health of the coolie population of that garden.

I am of opinion that these shops should not be opened within a certain distance of coolie lines (2 or 3 miles say). The inspections should be stringent and frequent, more particularly perhaps with regard to the purity of the liquor for sale.

In my opinion the coolie would not be the sufferer if grog shops were entirely abolished.

2. Yes, frequently. These cases, as a rule, are due to ordinary alcoholic excess plus exposure. But I have met with a considerable number of cases where an adulterant has been used I firmly believe.

3. Yes. Many.

4. Yes, very frequently. I believe it to be common knowledge the frequency of gastro-intestinal attacks—mild and severe—following hât day and attributable to the drinking to excess of inferior (and sometimes doubtless drugged) liquor.

5. I am unable to give a decided reply to this question, when making recent enquiry at a Hât not very far away, I was informed that the pucca well water was invariably used in the grog shop. All the same I found a small, Kutcha filthy insanitary well close to the grog shop—and have little doubt that the nearest water is generally used!

6. Yes. Many during my residence of considerably over 20 years.

7. No. But should be glad to do so as opportunity may occur.

8. Yes, decidedly.

(Sd.) A. J. ELLIOT, M. D. F. R. C. S.,
Edin.

8th March 1902.

John K. Macnamara, F. R. C. S. I.

(*Medical Officer, Rongajan Division, Jorehaut Tea Co. Ltd., Jorhat.*)

1. I do most certainly consider that grog shops in the vicinity of tea gardens are most prejudicial to the health of coolies in more ways than one or I might say directly or indirectly so. The direct influences will be answered in some of the answers to the other questions on this paper. Indirectly the coolies are affected by spending a considerable amount of their pay on grog and not keeping enough to live upon. There has been a considerable amount of controversy going on with regard to the coolies pay, well it would astonish some of the people who were advocating the rise of wages to know to what extent drunkenness is carried to in most tea gardens.

In answer to the question whether do I think grog shops ought to be abolished or not. In my opinion though far from being inclined to interfere with the liberty of a people by prohibition or any such stringent laws, I really think in this case it would be doing a *great good* by having the grog shops wholly abolished as by keeping them open there is no doubt we (the British nation) are teaching the coolie who are when all things are considered, is not far removed from the savage, to be drunkards.

Of course if the Government could devise some scheme to have European strict and expert supervision of all grog shops and see that the coolie is not allowed to drink to excess while on the premises and is not allowed to carry away liquor from the shops things might work all right, but it would be a big undertaking and would not tend to increase the revenue from that source.

I was frequently round the gardens that I am medical officer of during "Fagua" and a more deplorable sight it would be hard to witness than to see to what extent drunkenness is carried on, and to imagine the amount of money the coolie has expended to satisfy his vices.

2. I have come across cases due to the effect of over drinking. They presented symptoms of excessive drinking only and not any symptoms to my knowledge or as far as I can remember of Bhang or Datura.

3. I have met with many diseases of respiratory organs due to exposure after excessive drinking.

4. I have met with many cases of diseases of the gastro-intestinal kind after excessive drinking. Whether the liquor was bad or not I cannot say. I have not the notes of any cases to hand, but will make a collection in the next few months.

5. No. Having no authority to inspect Government grog shops I have not had the opportunity.

6. I have frequently come across cases of assault and wounding through drunken coolies fighting. Some of the cases occurred at the grog shop and some afterwards.

7. No. But I will do so in the near future.

8. I have not noticed a great amount more sickness after a hat day than any other. The coolies drink most on a Saturday night and Sunday being a leave day, they are not so keen on attending hospital.

JOHN MACNAMARA, F. R. C. S. I.,

Medical Officer,

JORHAT.

M. B. WRIGHT, M. B.

(*Medical Officer, Moran, Lakhimpur District.*)

1. I consider that the near vicinity of a native grog shop is distinctly prejudicial both directly and indirectly to the health of any labour force. Directly in causing drunkenness and the long list of diseases consequent

upon acute or chronic alcoholic poisoning. Indirectly in diverting the wages of the coolie into illegitimate channels and thereby causing want or even starvation among the families of habitual drunkards. I consider however that the presence of the grog shops in more or less a necessary evil, as the demand for liquor is certain to continue to exist. It is certainly better to have a legally controlled sale of decent spirits than to have it manufactured *sub-rosa* in the lines and villages. The fault in the present system lies in the inefficient control of the existing grog shops. To strengthen the hands of the excise department I should suggest that definite power should be granted to garden medical officers, to whom the matter is of prime importance affecting as it does so nearly the health of the labour forces under his supervision. The medical officer should have the power to stop at once the sale of liquor in any shop when the sanitary arrangements are deficient or the quality of the liquor doubtful. He should also be supplied with the means and the power to examine himself at any time samples of liquor sold. In the granting of licenses also, the medical officer and Managers of gardens should be consulted freely as to the management and character of the various grog shops.

2. Cases of drunkenness among coolies are extremely frequent. In the majority of instances the symptoms are those of ordinary alcoholic poisoning. In many instances however the symptom of Datura poisoning are well marked, and other adulterants are doubtless used occasionally. I have tried several times to get samples of liquor adulterated with Datura but have always failed. I believe however more strongly, and have it on the evidence of many natives, that liquor adulterated with Datura is obtainable at many grog shops by approved customers.

3. Yes. Cases of this kind are of frequent occurrence, and the connection between the drinking bout and the resulting illness is generally absolutely clear.

4. Gastro-intestinal disease in many forms is the invariable result of chronic alcoholism however pure the spirit. The occurrence however of severe and often fatal choleraic diarrhoea after a drinking bout may I think be fairly attributed in many cases to the quality of the liquor sold, such cases are by no means infrequent. I believe also from my own experiences and from the experience of many native doctors that the diseases due to chronic alcoholism are on the increase among garden coolies. It is very easy to confound the effects of chronic alcoholism with those of chronic malarial poisoning. I believe however that many cases of liver, periportal and chronic gastro-intestinal catarrh are the direct result of alcoholic poisoning.

5. The grog shop at the Nahorhabi hat is I believe a case in point, I have it on the authority of the assistant Manager of Nahorhabi garden that the water used for manufacturing the liquor is generally drawn from the hoolas near the still. On this garden it may be noted cases of choleraic diarrhoea were extremely frequent during the summer months of last year.

6. I have seen many cases of more or less serious assault due to drinking bouts at grog shops, and in many cases have had to report the matter to Police.

In 1899 Etwa, a Sirdar of Hilika Tea Estate of the Assam Frontier Tea Company, murdered his wife while under the influence of drink on returning from the grog shop at Bara Hapjan. The man had hardly any recollection of having committed the murder and had no quarrel with his wife; he was not an habitual drunkard and bore an excellent character.

7. I have never sent any liquor to Calcutta.

8. There is undoubtedly more sickness after a hat day or coolie festival. The proportion due to the consumption of native liquor is hard to state definitely. Many cases however can be directly attributed to alcohol, often with the frank admission of the patient.

M. B. WRIGHT, M. B.

Medical Officer,

MORAN DISTRICT.

Excerpts from Minutes of a Meeting of the Indian Tea Association.

*Remarks made by Surgeon General deRenzy at a
General Meeting of the Joka Tea Company Ltd.
held in London in 1901.*

Country Spirit Shops in Assam.—In the letter dated 21st June Mr. Tye drew attention to the remarks upon this question which were made by the Chairman (Surgeon General A. C. C., deRenzy, C. B.) of the Joka Tea Company Ltd., at a recent General meeting of that Company. These remarks were as follows:—

“It appears from the last Assam Administration Report that for 1899-1900 the revenue from Country Spirits in that year increased to Rs. 6,46,189, nearly the whole of which, the report states, was paid by the immigrant population. Besides the Government Tax the cooly paid the contractors profit, and the cost of the liquor which must have come to a large sum. Besides his liquor Bill he paid a large part of the provincial Revenue derived from Opium which amounted to Rs. 17,95,457. It is impossible to give exactly the share of this sura paid by the indigenous Assam population but it is highly probable that the cooly paid the larger portion of it.”

“The Government are most anxious to provide every facility for the cooly to use country liquors. Wherever there is any considerable gathering of coolies, there a liquor shop is set up for their accommodation. To these shops the coolies resort on Sundays and holidays, and drink freely, too often to maniacal excess. The Medical Officers complain that the liquor has a maddening effect on the coolies. Excess in the use of even good liquor is known to have a destructive effect in a hot climate, and excess in the use of such liquors as are supplied to the coolies must have more mischievous effects still.”

“If the rate of wages had been increased as proposed by the Chief Commissioner, much of it would have gone to raise the revenue from country spirits.”

The General Committee noticed that the question was to be discussed at the Annual General Meeting of the Assam Branch, to be held on the 20th July. They accordingly decided to defer its consideration until after that meeting.

To

THE CHAIRMAN,
Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

The Liquor Traffic in Assam AS AFFECTING TEA GARDEN LABOUR.

The Assam Administration Report for 1900-1901 states the total Imported labour force on Tea Estates was ... 6,64,897
or roughly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total population of the Province.

Of the labour force 37-57 per cent were children *viz.* 2,49,337, thus leaving 4,15,560 adults.

The report admits that 50 per cent of the adults were men thus giving 2,07,780 men.

It is a well known fact and admitted by the Assam Administration that the whole of the country spirit consumed in Assam is consumed by the immigrant population; as Assamese rarely touch it.

The Report states the revenue demand for country spirits for the year 1900-1901, was Rs. 6,97,584, this is the sum the lessees had to pay to Government by way of license to sell country spirits, so that grog shops had to realize Rs. 6,97,584 exclusive of all costs of manufacture, rent, management and supervision.

This sum is equivalent to Rs. 3.357 of the adult labourer's maximum pay of Rs. 6 per mensem.

From enquiries made from grog shops it is admitted that each bottle sold costs some As. 2 while the minimum price per bottle they are allowed to charge the public is annas 6; and it may be fairly presumed that $\frac{1}{10}$ ths of the country spirit sold by them is sold at As. 6 equivalent to a profit of 200 per cent.

On this data 27,90,336 bottles would have to be sold at As. 6 to realize the Government due of Rs. 6,97,584; leaving the Lessee no profit on the business, as it would merely pay the revenue alone; while the consumer's bill would amount to Rs. 10,46,576 which is equivalent to Rs. 5.003 per head of the adult male labour forces a maximum pay, and this without taking into any consideration the profit made by the grog shop keeper on his business, which has also to be paid by the consumer.

For obvious reasons it is impossible to arrive at the exact profit made by Liquor Shop keepers but having regard to the keen competition that takes place each year, at the auction sales of these shops, and the enormous increase in the revenue on country spirits which in the year 1901 amounted to 7.37 per cent more than in the previous years, such profit must be considerable; and whatever it is, it goes to swell the consumers bill for country spirits.

The excise demand for the same year on account of the following spirits and drugs was as follows:—

Rum	...	3537
Tari	...	343
Pachmi	...	1459
Bhang	...	60
Charus	...	2417
Ganja	...	398948
Opium	...	1804382
TOTAL	...	2211146

It is admitted that the immigrant population are not great opium eaters, though the coolies of certain estates noticeably in North Lakhimpur and in one or more gardens of the Sudder of Dibrugarh are habitual opium eaters, while a great many consume ganja.

If the immigrant population consumed their proportion of the above Rs. 22,11,146; as they constitute $\frac{1}{4}$ of the population, their share would amount to Rs. 2,76,393 which when added to the country liquor bill of Rs. 10,46,376 gives a total of Rs. 13,22,769 or Rs. 6.366 per adult male and as in the computation of the bill for opium and exciseable liquor other than country liquor, cost of production, sale, and profit is excluded; and in the case of country liquor the grog shop profit on the revenue demand and the cost of manufacture and sale of all liquor sold beyond what is necessary to satisfy the revenue demand is excluded from the calculation; this sum of Rs. 13,22,394 falls very far short of the actual sum contributed by the imported population towards the excise revenue of this Province, but as there is no wish to exaggerate the evil, let us be content to set off the cost of production, management and profit against any excess that we may have been betrayed into from want of more reliable statistics, and the result is most significant and damaging.

The Administration Report for 1900 gives the average monthly pay of the adult male labour force on tea gardens for the year under review at Rs. 4-14-4 pies (or Rs. 58-12-0 per annum). If his Excise Bill is Rs. 13,22,394 or anything like it, it would appear that the imported adult male labour spend nearly $\frac{1}{10}$ th of the miserable average pittance to which the Chief Commissioner so feelingly refers in para 28 of his Immigration Report for 1900, in swelling the excise revenue of the Province the latter has the honor of administering.

The public will now better understand where the increase of *Ré B* per mensem in the Act labourers pay would have gone had it been imposed, and the ludicrous farce that was being enacted in the name of humanity by its advocates.

So long as grog shops are placed at *hâts* and are kept open on *hât* days to tempt the coolie, so long will he spend his "miserable average pittance" on Liquor instead of on the necessities of life.

This and the fact that the majority of grog shops are placed in direct contravention to the Excise Act as near Tea Estates as possible, and that the Lessees are permitted to keep their shops open on Sundays (coolies leave day) and to give entertainments and *nautches* so as to attract custom, are amongst the worst features of the Liquor traffic in Assam, and are the undoubted cause of the swelling the garden death rate; on this point the non-official medical opinion in Assam will be found unanimous! Government however do not provide a column in the garden death returns for death by "alcoholic poisoning" and such deaths have heretofore not been brought prominently before the public, as they have been entered under the heads of "Cholera," "Pneumonia" and "other causes."

The Excise Act under which these grog shops are licensed, distinctly provides (*inter alia*.)

1. No Liquor shop shall ordinarily be in a Bazaar or at the entrance to a Bazaar.
2. Or at any place of Public Resort (*i. e.* at *Hât* or Fair)—or at or near a Factory—or interior of a village.

And the spirit of the Act clearly shows the intention that if there is a demand for a liquor shop at all, it should be placed in such a position, as not to obtrude itself on the attention of the public, or be placed where it may subject the public to annoyance from persons drinking.

Yet in spite of these clear provisions, the majority of Liquor shops are placed in or near *Hâts*, or in close proximity to Tea Estates with the obvious intention and result, that the coolie who certainly does not take his liquor as a beverage, but purely and simply as a means to an end, "intoxication" shall achieve his object with the utmost facility, to his own detriment, but to the enormous profit of the Government Revenue.

While apart from the moral deterioration that ensue, from the planter's point of view, there is an equally serious result, namely, that this demoralization nullifies the effect of "moral persuasion," and "personal respect" on which a Manager of a Tea Estate has in a great measure to rely to secure obedience, and the due observance of garden discipline and control, on which the existence of the Estate as such depends.

The official answer to any objection to the license system is naturally, unless we license grog shops, the coolie will provide himself with liquor of his own brewing, with the result, that the Government Revenue will suffer without materially improving the situation, but this is a specious argument for the analysis of the two liquors clearly goes to show that the home brewed fermented liquor is far less harmful in its affects than the distilled variety now poured down the unfortunate coolies throats under the license system—while as regards supervision Managers may be trusted to control the amount of rice Beer brewed in their lines—while the Government control of their system has been a complete breakdown and one of the gravest scandals of recent years.

In conclusion, the more one considers this question, the more one feels convinced "that the insufficiency of wages is (not) the most serious of the troubles from which the Industry in Assam is suffering" but that the most serious trouble is the ever increasing Excise bill paid by the coolie, and the manner in which the liquor traffic in Assam is conducted; and one can come to no other conclusion, but, that until radical and permanent changes are effected so as to protect the ignorant coolie as much as possible from his inordinate love of drink; so long will his pay amount (in reality and not on paper) in the words of the Chief Commissioner to a "miserable average pittance."

**Extracts from Letter of the Deputation of the
Assam Railways and Trading Co., Ltd.
in reply to Government Sanitary
Report on Coal Mines.**

Assam Railways and Trading Co. Ltd.
MARGHERITA, 29th February 1896:

FROM

J. BERRY WHITE, Esq.,
AND
SURGEON GENERAL D^RRENZY, C. B.,
*Members of the Deputation
of the Board of the Assam Railways and Trading Company, "Ltd."*

TO

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
*Home Department,
Calcutta.*

SIR,

With reference to the correspondence as per margin we beg to report that the Assam Railways and Trading Company Limited have again deputed us to inquire into the cause of the continued unhealthiness of the coolies employed in their Collieries and other work at Ledo, Tikak and Margherita. We arrived here on the 13th instant and since then we have been busily occupied in carrying out the duty entrusted to us.

Letter of the Deputation
No. 2149 dated 10th February
1896 and the reply thereto
from the Officiating Secretary
to the Chief Commissioner of
Assam dated 16th August 1896
217
No 3540 Bmgn B

2. On our arrival at Calcutta we heard that Surgeon Major General Cleghorn, Sanitary Commissioner with the Government of India, was on tour in Assam, and as we were anxious to have his advice we at once telegraphed to request him to visit our works, to examine the measures necessary to remove the causes of sickness. We assured him that the Company would spare no expense that might be necessary to maintain our work people in good health. We at the same time telegraphed to our Agent and General Manager to afford every possible assistance and to place all available information at the disposal of the Surgeon Major General in the prosecution of his inquiry. We regret that we were ourselves unable to be present at the inspection as otherwise we believe we should have been able to satisfy the Surgeon Major General that some at least of his criticisms were hardly just. We enclose a copy of his Report with our comments in explanation on half margin.

3. The letter of the Officiating Secretary to the Officiating Chief Commissioner of Assam is the reply of the Assam Administration to the serious allegations contained in our letter of the 10th February, both quoted in the margin. The Board deferred answering the Officiating Secretary's letter until the Deputation, which had already been determined on, had had an opportunity of making further inquiries on the spot.

4. Considering that para 34 of the Deputation's letter described a potent cause of sickness and mortality among our coolies due to the gross neglect of their duty on the part of the officers of the Administration and one which called for instant removal we cannot but express our surprise that it took the Assam Government more than six months to pass orders on our representation, and then the orders were issued by the temporary holder of the office of Chief Commissioner who appears to be very imperfectly informed as to the facts. The Chief Commissioner himself was at his post for some months subsequent to the date of our letter, but he does not seem to have instituted any inquiry into the accuracy of our description of the liquor shop at Ledo. We infer this from the fact that the Officiating Chief Commissioner expresses

doubts as to the liquor shop being as great a nuisance as we described it, for if any inquiry had been made and the facts had been truly reported he could have had no such doubts. Who could doubt that a water supply taken from a stagnant back water in the Ledo river immediately below a large heap of rotting human excreta must have been a cause of infinite damage to the health of those using it? The strict accuracy of our description of the state of the water supply is not denied, and it is a significant fact that on our arrival we found that the liquor shop had been removed altogether. We have learned, however that it was allowed to remain for several months subsequent to the date of our letter. It is impossible to estimate the amount of sickness and mortality and permanent injury to the health of the coolies which this abominable nuisance must have caused *in the long period of several years it was permitted to exist.*

Our officers had several times applied to have it removed, but their request was treated with silent neglect. And yet the Officiating Chief Commissioner refers to the facts as if they were still in doubt and passes lightly over them to defend the Administration against a charge which has never been made. *We never questioned the propriety of having a Government liquor shop to compete with and restrict the use of the illicit spirit brought in by the Nagas.* What we did object to was that notwithstanding the repeated remonstrances of our officers the liquor shop was conducted in such a way that it necessarily became a source of pestilence among our coolies.

5. The remarks of the Officiating Chief Commissioner as to the powers of the Chief Commissioner in relation to the Labour Law and as to the obligation which rests on employers to maintain their labourers in health were quite unnecessary. We quite understood the position of the Chief Commissioner and we fully admit that it is the bounden duty as it is the interest of employers to maintain a fair standard of health among their coolies. What we complained of was that the Government itself, partly through the misconduct of its officers but mainly by the policy it pursued for some years under the present Chief Commissioner, has rendered the fulfilment of the Company's duty to its labourers impossible. The Officiating Chief Commissioner, while very discursive on other matters, abstains from any reference to this complaint.

6. The Policy of the Chief Commissioner has injuriously affected the health of the coolies in three different ways, two of which were set forth in our letter above quoted, the third we did not fully recognise in our present visit, *via.* (1) In not allowing clearance of jungle and forest the Chief Commissioner has prevented the removal of malaria, the most fruitful cause of sickness. (2) In the exorbitant rents he exacts for the use of land he has rendered the local production of food supplies impossible. (3) In reserving strips of land for Government purposes at Margherita and at the same time making no provision for sanitary control he has made that village a hot-bed of pestilence for our coolies. We proceed to explain in detail how each of these heads of policy has hindered the Company in the performance of its duty as an employer.

The large revenue derived by Government from liquor and opium licenses is an infallible, though an unpleasing evidence of prosperity. We think it a matter of regret that effective measures have not been taken to open out a tract of country which abounds in all the elements of wealth. The Company would gladly have co-operated in this work.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servants,

J. BERRY WHITE,

A. C. C. DERENZY,

Members of the Deputation

of the Board of the A. B. & T. Co., "Ld."

**Information asked for by Mr. M. Chamney
regarding Grog Shops in Darrang.**

15TH DECEMBER 1901.

To

THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER,
Darrang, TEZPUR.

SIR,

I have the honour to inform you that several grievances in connection with the Government Country Liquor Shops have been brought to my notice as Chairman of this District's Branch of the Tea Association, and before addressing you formally on the subject I beg the favour of some information in connection with grog shops in the Tezpur division of this District.

2. Referring to Assam Excise Form No. 11, (sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner's No. 538-47 R. dated 9th February 1891) will you kindly inform me whether the European residents in the vicinity of the proposed site of a country grog shop are consulted as to their wishes regarding its establishment, and whether it is not the duty of the Police, or Excise Officer, to consult them in the matter.

3. Will you kindly inform me what Spirit Shops or Mahals were sold by auction in that year—1891-1892—and what were the prices realised in Darrang District.

4. May I ask what officer is responsible for seeing that the conditions of clauses II, IV, VI, VII, XI, XII, XV, XVI and XVII are carried out, and in particular I beg to ask whether Rules XV and XVI are adhered to, and if so,—

5. Whether you can inform me what was the amount of spirits sold in Tezpur Division at the Government shops in 1891-1892, and during last year—1900-1901.

6. Can you also please inform me what test is applied, and how frequently, to ascertain that the holder of the license adheres to Rule No. IV of Excise Form No. 11, and does not adulterate the produce of his still.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) M. CHAMNEY,

Chairman, Tezpur Sub-Committee,

ASSAM BRANCH I. T. ASSOCIATION.

28th November 1901.

To

SAYMA CHURN MOITRA,
Vakil, Tezpur.

DEAR SIR,

Referring to Excise Form No. 11, copy of which I enclose for inspection, I beg you will ascertain and advise me as soon as you can, of some points in connection with it.

1. What is the "Procedure" about opening a grog shop, who first suggests one at any locality. Is it Government? or does a would-be Licensee for it, or do the residents of the locality ask for it.

2. What happens next? Are the leading residents, such as the Garden Managers, native gentlemen and house-holders informed of the proposal to establish a grog shop in their midst? Is the Mahal gazetted as are the Rubber, Baint, Ajar, Elephant and other Mahals? If not, why? What form of notice is given to the public for the sale?

3. Referring to Rule No. IV of the form, are any special officers told off to see this provision carried out? If not whose duty is it to test the Liqueur? How often are analyses of the spirit made, and with what results? What were the number of trials and convictions in Tezpur Court last year (1900-1901) for offences by grog shop owners? And what were the punishments?

Referring to Rule No. XVI, what was the amount of liquor sold in the year of this Excise Enactment (No. 11) 1891-1892, and what was the amount sold last year 1900-1901, in the 6 Tezpur shops, viz. (1) Tezpur, (2) Goraimari, (3) Bindukuri, (4) Balipara, 5 Harkahat (Gatoo), (6) Godhajuli (Deekajuli), and any other shop that existed in 1891-1892.

If this information is not available, please let me know the auction price of these shops in 1891-1892.

An early reply will oblige.

Yours faithfully,

M. CHAMNEY,

Chairman, Tezpur Sub-Committee

A. B. I. T. ASSOCIATION.

Deputy Commissioner's Answers to Mr. Chamney's questions.

No. 2561 R.

FROM

CAPTAIN H. W. G. COLE, I. S. C.,
Deputy Commissioner of Darrang,

TO

M. CHAMNEY ESQUIRE,
Chairman, Tezpur Sub-Committee,
Assam Branch I. T. Association.

Dated Tezpur, the 8th February 1902.

SIR,

I have the honor to reply to your letter dated the 15th December 1901 asking for certain information regarding the country liquor shops in the Tezpur Sub-Division of this district.

2. No outstill is sanctioned unless there is a *bonafide* local demand for it ascertained by enquiry. Local opinion as to the sites of liquor shops is always consulted, as far as possible. In this connection I may observe that four shops were abolished in 1890 in consultation with some of the members of the planting community in this district; another shop was closed in 1897-98 in deference to their opinion. The Gadhuji shop was opened in 1900-01 with their consent and only recently the Balipara Hat* has been removed to Amarabari in consultation with them.

*Yes, the Hat has been removed away from liquor shops. Not liquor shops away from hat.

3. The following 16 shops were sold by auction in the year 1891-92 in the Darrang district and the total price realised was Rs. 28,560 :—

(a) Sadar Sub-Division.

1. Tezpur Ganesbari,
2. Garaimari hat,
3. Bindukuri.
4. Balipara.
5. Harkahat.
6. Bakala Chaibari,
7. Sutia Thana.
8. Charali.
9. Sakamata,
10. Behalihat.
11. Rangapara.

(b) Mangaldai Sub-Division.

1. Singrimari (Kalaigaon.)
2. Mangaldai Chakbazar,
3. Panci.
4. Singribari.
5. Tanganijhar.

4. The country spirit shops are frequently inspected by the police officers who are generally responsible for seeing that the conditions of lease are observed by the Mahaldars. Any violations of these conditions on the part of the Mahaldars are reported to the Collector of the district who takes necessary action on them.

5. It is a notorious fact that the registers shewing the quantity of liquor manufactured and sold maintained by the Abkars are quite inaccurate. Of late years efforts had been made to induce better accounts but they never shew in their accounts the real quantity of liquor manufactured and sold and there are no means of compelling this to be done. No reliable statistics are therefore available for purposes of instituting a comparison between the figures shewing the consumption of country liquors during the years 1891-1892 and 1900-1901.

6. In order to ascertain the strength of the liquor turned out by the Abkars the hydrometer is used when occasion arises. When complaints are received against any of them as to the quality of the liquor prepared by them or it is suspected that it has been adulterated, a sample is sent to the chemical examiner, Calcutta, for examination.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) H. W. G. COLE,

Deputy Commissioner, Darrang.

**Reply from Baboo Syama Charan Moitra Pleader
Tezpur.**

M. CHAMNEY Esq.

Dated Tezpur, the December 1901.

DEAR SIR,

With reference to the queries made in your letter of the 28th November last, I beg to reply *seriatim* as follows:—

(1) It is difficult to ascertain how first the grog shops that now exist were started. But the present custom is when an intending purchaser of a grog shop wants to have a new shop at any particular place, he applies to the Deputy Commissioner requesting him to put the place in the list of the grog shops of the District. The Deputy Commissioner on receipt of the application generally sends it on to the police for investigation and report and on receipt of the Police report which is generally submitted by the Police on ascertaining the wishes of the neighbouring residents and Managers of tea gardens, if the Deputy Commissioner

considers that a new grog shop is to be started at a new place he recommends for sanction of the new shop at the new place to the Excise Commissioner. When the Excise Commissioner's sanction is obtained the shop is enlisted and annually put up to auction by the Deputy Commissioner (pending sanction of the Excise Commissioner) and generally given to the highest bidder. This process goes on annually till the shop is abolished on the complaints of the principal residents of the neighbourhood. Such complaint is made to the Deputy Commissioner of the District, who sends on to the Excise Commissioner for abolition of the shop if he considers the complaint just and proper. The starting and ultimate abolition of a shop rests with the Excise Commissioner of Assam. In fact this course was followed when Rangapara grog shop was abolished in 1896-97.

(2) When application of a new shop and abolition of a particular shop is sent to the Police, it is supposed that the Police ask the wishes of the neighbourhood in respect of the shop. The fact of the establishment of a new shop, or the abolition of an existing shop is not gazetted, the sale of the shop is not gazetted.

(3) The Police of each District are entrusted with the supervision of each shop and to see that the rules in each shop are carried out. *There are one Inspector and two Sub-Inspectors and five Chaprashes* recently appointed especially for Excise purposes, but their jurisdiction extends over the whole province. The liquor is tested once in a year in the Deputy Commissioner's office, generally by the Revenue Sheristadar, in the month of February for the ensuing year and up to date no fault was found in this District in the preparation of country liquor.

(4) There was only one trial of an offence committed by a grog shop owner for selling liquor after the usual hour of business in night and it resulted in his conviction and a fine of Rs. 20.

(This is a private information I give you from my knowledge, but the officers refuse to give the information).

(5) I get no information as to the quantity of country liquor sold in 1900-1901 or 1899-1900. I am told (this is of course private information and cannot be officially used) that no such accounts were previously submitted nor any account kept in the office. Something of this sort is being kept in the current year. But the year 1901-1902 is not yet complete it will end in March 1902. If you wish to have the information as to the quantity of liquor sold in Tezpur, Goraimari, Bindukuri, Balipara, Horkahat and Godajuli in the months April to November 1901, I may try to collect, but I fear you shall not be able to use the figures officially the information would be more of a private nature from the shop-keepers and there would be nothing to verify the figures, I shall give you, and moreover it will take time and involve cost to collect the information.

I am given to understand that the registers of 1891-92 have not been kept showing the prices at which the shops which then existed were sold. If it be for 1901-1902, the information was given in my letter No. 798 dated the 30th July 1901. I repeat them here.

	MONTHLY 1899-1900	MONTHLY 1900-1901	MONTHLY 1901-1902
1. Tezpur	... 421	600	620
2. Garaimari	... 284	405	430
3. Bindukuri	... 501	715	755
4. Balipara	... 555	850	750
5. Harkahat	... 357	425	460
6. Godajuli	... ..	170	155
7. Chaibari	... 210	400	307
8. Soota	... 250	425	400
9. Charali	... 205	305	232
10. Pabhoi	... 160	280	274
11. Behali	... 150	205	164
12. Mangaldai	... ..	...	...
5 shops	} ... 7120 (annual)	8800 (annual)	not known,

I return the lease form as requested.

Yours faithfully,
S. M. MOITRA,

Tezpur Sub-Committee of the Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

*Minutes of General Meeting held at the Chummary, Tezpur,
on 28th October 1901.*

PRESENT: Messrs. A. B. Moore, H. O. Allen, M. Clarke, M. Chamney, C. Whyte, E. H. Hannay, A. B. Hannay, A. Butcher, A. B. Thom, C. C. Clark, C. Chasten, W. M. Skinner, G. B. Boreham, E. G. Wilde, A. Levick, A. Y. Thomson, F. Cowburn, and by their proxies F. L. H. Koch (C. Whyte), D. H. Felce (A. Y. Thomson).

Government Grog Shops in Assam.—The serious aspect this question is assuming was the cause of considerable discussion. In a speech in London on 19th June last, Surgeon Colonel DeRenzy, late Principal Medical Officer and Sanitary Commissioner of Assam, stated—"It appears from the last Assam Administrative Report, that for 1899-1900, the revenue from country spirits in that year increased to Rs. 6,46,189 nearly the whole of which, the Report states, was paid by the immigrant population. Besides the Government tax the coolie paid the contractors profit and the cost of the liquor, which must have come to a large sum. The Government are most anxious to provide every facility for the coolie to use country liquors. Wherever there is a considerable gathering of coolies there a liquor shop is set up for their accommodation. To these shops the coolies resort on Sundays and holidays, and drink freely; too often to maniacal excess. The demoralisation of the coolies and the deterioration of their health caused by the liquor shops has long been a grievous burden on the tea industry."

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Government records show there were ten grog shops sold in that year (1899-1900) in the Sudder Divisions of Darrang, exclusive of those in Mongaldai, and that they fetched at auction Rs. 36,516. In the following year (1900-1901) these 10 shops sold for Rs. 55,320, being a gross increase of Rs. 18,804 or no less than 50 per cent in value in one year. As if this was not enough a new shop was opened, which fetched Rs. 2,040 at sale, making in all Rs. 57,360 for the Sudder divisions alone of Darrang; and the meeting considered this to be a state of affairs that ought not to be permitted to exist.

(Sd.) M. CHAMNEY,

Chairman.

Petition of Bindukuri Station Master forwarded to Tea Association by General Manager Tezpur-Balipara Railway.

To

THE GENERAL MANAGER,

Tezpur-Balipara Railway Company, Ltd.

(THROUGH THE TRAFFIC INSPECTOR.)

SIR,

I beg to report the following inconvenience for kind redress. There is a grog shop, which is very near to the station, so we have to inhale bad smelling air from it—almost all the day. And our night lodging is in the station limits, so at night also we are not excepted from inhaling the same unhealthy air. After drinking liquor, coolies come here, some for the purpose of going by train to their destination and some for the purpose of comfortable rest and thereby causes our disturbance while we are engaged with our duties. It is needless to describe that while a signaller attends the instrument to receive something necessary, then even a whispering

talk disturbs him. So I hope, you will be good enough to hear my prayer and do needful to remove the alehouse (belongs to Prasad) to some other distant place.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

BINDUKURI STATION,
29th May 1901. }

(Sd.) M. C. SAIK,
Station Master.

Forwarded to the General Manager for orders. The grog shop is certainly a nuisance being too close to our station.

(Sd.) S. C. SEN,

30-5-1901.

I fully endorse the above, the stench and the sanitary conditions of this shop are disgraceful and demand the attention of the authorities. In any other country, and even in India did the place belong to private individuals not under the patronage of Government they would be indictable for committing a nuisance against the public.

(Sd.) W. SKINNER,

General Manager.

TEZPUR-BALIPARA RAILWAY,

Tezpur, the 7th November 1901.

THE CHAIRMAN, TEZPUR SUB-COMMITTEE,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

DEAR SIR,

While acting as General Manager of the above Company from April to October, I deem it desirable to place on record the difficulties to working and nuisance caused by the Government liquor shop at Bindukuri, which is in close proximity to the station. The staff there petitioned me about the intolerable stench from it, and its insanitary surroundings, which is fully corroborated by passengers using the Railway and my own experience.

The working of the Sunday (hât day) traffic is made very irksome to the staff, and dangerous, by reason of the uncontrolled drunkenness.

It is no uncommon sight to see the platform and permanent way littered with coolies helplessly drunk, and dependant on their friends less inebriated, and the staff, to get them clear of, and into the train, while the quarrelling and rows consequent on the drink are so frequent, as sometimes to make working efficiently impossible, and the trains are greatly delayed.

The track is used as a high way by coolies and on hât days it is only by the extreme care taken by the staff, and constant stoppages that some measure of safety is assured the public.

In spite of the care and precautions used, a coolie woman in July was run over and died from the shock and injuries, being left, at the last moment by her less drunken companions, on the permanent way. A similar accident occurred last year and was equally unavoidable. It is a scandal on the Administration, permitting a Government liquor shop, under no efficient control, alongside a public Railway station, where coolies are turned out by the hundreds helplessly drunk to the danger of life and property, for the sake of revenue under the Head of Excise.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

(Sd.) W. SKINNER.

GHAT TEZPUR.

BENGAL UNITED TEA CO. (ASSAM DIVISION)
BINDUKURI P. O. ASSAM.

10th November 1901.

THE CHAIRMAN.

SUB-COMMITTEE, ASSAM BRANCH,

Indian Tea Association.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to report a case where one of my coolies, by name Sombhoo, was beaten and ill used at the instance of the Licensed Liquor shop-keeper at Gariamari. I am in the unenviable position of having a Government Grog shop on each side of my garden—that at Bindukuri being within a quarter of a mile of my lines, and on the other side that at Gariamari under a mile from my Gariamari lines. It was alleged by the shop-keeper that my coolie had struck another, so he ordered him to be tied up and beaten—the allegation was false, and that he was tied up and beaten the enclosed letter from Mr. Abbott to whose garden he was taken and my Doctor Babu's report testify. I have not proceeded against the liquor shop people, as the Courts were closed for the Puja holidays and with a week's interval and the strong influence the Liquor shop-keeper can bring, makes a conviction doubtful, so is best left alone.

I remain, yours faithfully,

(Sd) W. SKINNER.

SONABHEEL TEA ESTATE, BINDUKURI P. O.
TEZPUR,*Assam, 22nd October 1901.*

MY DEAR SKINNER,

I send back your Kassamarie man. It appears from his own account that the Bhutiwallahs tied him up and thrashed him. They made him over to my tea-house sirdar to bring here, as the boy appeared badly knocked about and they thought an enquiry might ensue: they say they saw the assault committed.

I am sorry one of your men should have been detained here, in this manner. I was away last night at Addabari and have only just returned.

With Salaams,

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) O. A. ABBOTT.

TO BABU KALI KUMAR SEN,

DR. BABU,

Please examine Sambhoo and give me a written description of any injuries.

(Sd.) W. SKINNER.

W. SKINNER ESQUIRE,

Manager, Bindukuri,

FROM KALI KUMAR SEN.

SIR,

I most respectfully beg to report about *Shambhoo* a boy of our Kassamarie garden who has been beaten severely by cane and stick and is wounded on the side of the right shoulder blade near the acromion

process of scapula and bruised on two parts on back between Scapula and Dorsal vertebra. The marks about the wounded parts are noted below.

	Long	Broad
1st cane mark on back left side	3½ inches	½ inch
2nd cane mark on the right side of the first mark is	4½ "	½ "
3rd cane mark on its right side	2½ "	½ "
4th mark on the right side of the 3rd	4 "	½ "
5th mark obliquely	6 "	½ "
6th mark on the left shoulder	4 "	½ "
7th mark	3 "	½ "
1 Cut wound	2 "	½ " deep
1 Stick mark on the left thigh	4 inches long	

BINDUKURI,

22-10-01.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

(Sd) KALI KUMAR SEN.

To

THE CHAIRMAN, Tezpur Sub-Committee,
ASSAM BRANCH, INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION.

Tezpur, 12th November 1901.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 9th instant giving cover to a copy of the Minutes of a General Meeting of the Tezpur Branch of the Indian Tea Association held at the Station on October 28th with other correspondence bearing on the subject therein dealt with.

2. I must fully agree with all that has been said on this matter in the accompanying letters and have more than once called the attention of the Government, to the serious public nuisance and many obvious evils resulting from the system of allowing liquor shops to be set up in the immediate vicinity of Markets, or any other places of assemblage for large numbers of the Tea Factory labourers. In all likelihood much of the mortality and invaliding on certain Factories is due to these liquor shops, and the highly deleterious drinks sold therein. My duties compel me to travel about the District a good deal, and I have often seen cases of men obviously under the influence of liquor, and that in the immediate neighbourhood of Government licensed liquor shops, showing clearly the source of the evil complained of. Direct loss of life is sometimes brought about in this way, as shown in Mr. Skinner's letter. I was eye witness a few months ago to a very similar case, which, however, had not a fatal termination though that result was avoided by what seemed not a fatal termination, though that result was avoided by what seemed to me little short of a miracle. On Sunday 16th June my duty took me to Madhoopi for morning service, and I had to return to Tezpur for Evensong by what is known as the "Market Train" from the Bindukuri Railway Station, where I had a wait for the train for some 20 minutes. A number of factory coolies in various stages of intoxication were loitering about the Station, and some were on the permanent way itself. Among these latter I noticed two men both under the influence of liquor—one of them so much so as not to be able to stand upright for any length of time. The train was due at any moment and attempts were made to get these men off the line, but with only very partial success; for they persisted in returning to it time after time. At the very moment of the Train's arrival, the drunken man gave a lurch over the off rail and seemed to me (I was too far off to help him) to fall right under the "Cow-catcher." Indeed I quite thought the man had been killed though it seems that his less drunken companion was able to pull him out of danger at the very nick of time. In all likelihood my experience in this matter is not a solitary one.

Probably many other like cases occur, though they may not always come to the knowledge of those who are responsible for such crying evils.

5. In dealing with this and other like nuisances of great magnitude it is much more easy to see, and to dwell upon, the evil itself, than to suggest any practicable remedy. In a climate like that of the plains of Assam, it is obvious that *liquid* refreshments must be forthcoming from some source; the difficulty is to supply these without inflicting very serious evils on large numbers of the King Emperor's subjects, as the system now in vogue undoubtedly does. It has sometimes occurred to me that a modification of what is known as the "Gottenburg (Sweden) system" might perhaps be applied to Assam. So far as I understand this system, the keepers of all refreshment-rooms &c. established at places where large gatherings of people take place, are Government servants receiving a guaranteed minimum pay. *Solid*, as well as *liquid*, refreshments are sold, the latter including both intoxicants and non-intoxicants. On all wholesome food sold, as well as on the sale of non-intoxicant liquors, the vendor obtains a very liberal commission; while no commission whatever is given on the sale of intoxicants. In this way it obviously becomes the *interest* of the refreshment-house-keeper, to push the sale of non-intoxicating drinks (tea, soda-water, &c), whilst he has no interest whatever in urging the purchase of intoxicants; the cause of Temperance, has I understand gained largely thereby.

4. If this remedy is impracticable, some slight *palliative* of the grave evils and scandals of the present system might be found by adopting and acting upon some, or all, of the following suggestions:—

(a) Under no circumstances should the holder of a Government liquor license be allowed to open a Grog-shop within a certain distance (say 4 or 5 miles) of any market, or other like gathering of the Tea-factory coolie population. Large numbers of those who now drink to excess would probably from sheer *Oriental indolence*—not care to go long distances even to indulge their favourite vice. If "opportunity makes the thief" still more certainly does it make the *drunkard*.

(b) Much more rigid surveillance should be exercised as to the character of the *liquor* sold at these licensed Grog-shops, which is very likely often drugged and deleterious in the extreme.

(c) Every licensed Grog-shop-holder should be severely punished for selling liquor to a would-be purchaser who has obviously had more than enough already. With all good wishes for the success of your most meritorious crusade against what is undoubtedly a very great and rapidly growing evil.

I am,

Very sincerely yours,

(Sd.) S. ENDLE,

S. P. G. Assam Church Mission.

Durrung Tea Company, Limited.

MODOPUR TEZPUR ASSAM.

1st December 1901.

To

M. CHAMNEY, ESQ.,

CHAIRMAN TEZPUR SUB-COMMITTEE,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

DEAR SIR,

As you have requested information regarding any friction or row between garden coolies and the liquor shops, I wish to give you particulars of a case which occurred last month. On Sunday afternoon the 10th November long after business had ceased at the Bindukuri hat, several coolies of different gardens were drinking at the Bindukuri liquor shop. Prolonged drinking ended in their getting quarrelsome, and a row ensued which ended in a coolie of this garden by name Dinoo caste Gond, being

vary severely, cut on the head and knocked senseless with a bamboo *lathi* by one Ram Majhy, a servant of the Bindukuri liquor shop-keeper. I sent Dinoo and a witness to the Tezpur Thana on Monday morning to make a complaint and also wrote a letter giving details of the occurrence to the Inspector of Police as I knew that neither the District Superintendent of Police nor the Deputy Commissioner were in Tezpur. As no European officials were in Tezpur, the police did next to nothing except to detain Dinoo for a day and night at the dispensary, where he says he got no food.

The following Thursday I went into Tezpur myself and fortunately found the Deputy Commissioner in the station, with the result that the case was enquired into, the man Ram Majhy was summoned before the Extra Assistant Commissioner convicted and fined Rs. 25 the fine being paid by the liquor shop-keeper.

I reported the matter separately to the Deputy Commissioner complaining that this case was typical of the way in which indiscriminate drinking is encouraged at the grog shop. Coolies returning from the hâts instead of buying what liquor they want and going on home to their gardens, are encouraged to remain drinking at the shop, where they are supplied with liquor till they get quarrelsome, then a row occurs and some one gets hurt. I also complained to the Deputy Commissioner of the proximity of the liquor shop to my garden, the shop being actually placed on my boundary line and within 300 yards of my lines, and I am glad to say that he has consented to the shop being removed to a greater distance when the present license expires.

I am, yours faithfully,

F. LLOYD,

Manager.

Deckajulle Tea Co., Ltd.,

SINGRIGHAT.

DHEKHAJULIE P. O. & T. O.,

TEZPUR, ASSAM.

1st December 1901.

THE CHAIRMAN SUB-COMMITTEE,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association,

TEZPUR.

DEAR SIR,

I am very glad to hear you are taking up the matter of Government country liquor shops in this District. When the grog shop was opened near this garden, I protested to the Deputy Commissioner that the coolies were had enough owing to excessive rice beer drinking and what was I to expect if they were allowed to have free access to that abominable strong liquor. The Deputy Commissioner was good enough to keep the shop about 2 miles distant from the garden. About 1½ months after the shop was opened at Godhajuli one of my agreement coolies was killed in a drunken brawl, name of coolie (Subedie Caste Uria) caused by excessive drinking. This happened in May 1900. I in common with other gardens similarly placed have a greater number of absentees or at any rate men who go out to work I have to return being incapable of work than in the old rice beer drinking days. I hope it will be possible to have the nuisance removed.

Yours faithfully,

WALTER PERMAN.

CHARDWAR TEA COMPANY, LD.
 BELSIRI DIVISION,
 BINDUKURI, P. O.
 Assam 14th December 1901.

M. CHAMNEY, ESQR.,
 Chairman Tezpur Branch Indian Tea Association.

DEAR SIR,

With reference to your letter of 30th November regarding liquor shops in this District, I beg to bring to your notice the experience of some of my coolies at the "Gabroo" shop on Sunday last, December 8th. The following 8 coolies of various castes found their way to the Government liquor shop at the "Gabroo", when they admit having got hopelessly drunk and either their money was stolen from them at the shop or they lost it while in their drunken condition. They all say that one Phoolchand (Bhuiya caste) who I understand is a sort of Chowkidar belonging to the shop, also was drunk and quarrelsome.

Name	Caste	Spent on Liquor	Stolen or lost	Wages received on 12th
Chamo (m)	Kurmi	0-14-0	3- 0-0	5- 0-0
Monsa (m)	Moorari	0- 6-0	1- 8-0	3-12-0
Manka (m)	Kamar	1- 2-0	one coat 1-4-0	3-14-0
Kalichoron(m)	Sonthal	0-14-0	4- 2-0	5- 0-0
Soma (m)	Moonda	1- 0-0	1- 0-0	3-10-0
Sonichor (m)	Bhoia	0-12-0	2-12-0	3- 8-3
Soinath (m)	Ghatwar	0-10-0		5- 0-0
Choonoo (m)	Majhi	0- 9-0	3- 0-0	3- 8-9

Of the above, Kalichoron was the only one who was able to do any work the next day, Monday. Choonoo Majhi was cut across his chin and reached the garden with difficulty about 4 P. M. on Monday, and Sonichor had to be assisted home on Monday evening. This man had fallen into the river and hurt his thigh badly.

Chamoo, Manka, Kalichoron, Soinath and Choonoo Majhi were senseless all Sunday, and with the exception of Kalichoron (who returned about 8-30 A. M. on Monday) did not return until late on December 9th.

It will be seen that most of them have dissipated their month's pay which was given to them the previous evening—in one day.

I shall be glad to supply any further details if required.

Yours faithfully,
 F. L. H. KOCH.

THE BRITISH ASSAM TEA COMPANY, LIMITED.
 BALIPARA, 20th December 1901.

To

THE CHAIRMAN,
 Tezpur Branch Indian Tea Association.

SIR,

I wish to draw your attention to the nature of the rum sold at Balipara Hat, which causes general illness amongst the coolies. I have been informed on good authority that the water used is taken from a hole in the ground near the eaves of the house on the north side.

It does not seem much use citing cases of drunkenness—they are too numerous by far and there is no doubt that drinking at the Government grog shop at Balipara is greatly on the increase, and in my opinion had a great deal to do with the riot last spring, at any rate so far as my coolies were concerned, when the licensee was assaulted and thrown into his vat of liquor.

I am, yours faithfully,
 A. BUTCHER,

The 20th December 1901.

FROM

S. C. MOITRA,

TO

M. CHAMNEY ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to inform you that the grog shop-keeper at Rangamati (near Mijika) named Neloomal was fined yesterday Rs. 5 for underselling liquor i. e. selling liquor @ 4 annas a bottle, while by the license he is bound to sell @ six annas a bottle.

Yours faithfully,

S. C. MOITRA.

BAMGAON TEA ESTATE,
BALIPARA, P. O. TEZPUR,
Assam, 28th December 1901.

M. CHAMNEY ESQ.,

CHAIRMAN TEZPUR SUB-COMMITTEE,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

DEAR SIR,

In connection with the question of grog shops their harmfulness etc. I would wish to say that from my experience of newly arrived immigrants into Assam they are by no manner of means drunkards, and that it is not until that they are in possession of spare cash (a thing that for the most part they have never possessed until their arrival in Assam) and exposed to the temptations of the grog shop-keeper and the example of older residents who have succumbed to the vice of drink, that they indulge in spirituous liquor to any extent. Unfortunately having acquired the taste for strong waters and with the ever present temptation of a neighbouring liquor shop they, in my experience, are not content with spending their spare money there, but soon encroach on that portion of their pay necessary for their subsistence. This burning the candle at both ends, curtailing food to buy drink, must weaken the constitution and thereby court disease especially in a non-acclimatized immigrant and to this cause may be traced many a death that is credited to the climate of Assam.

I say nothing of the bodily injuries received in drunken rows which must be the outcome of the wholesale furnishment of a fiery and maddening liquor to people generally unaccustomed to strong drink.

Yours faithfully,

E. G. WILDE.

ADDABARI, 14th December 1901.

MY DEAR SKINNER,

Sometime ago you wrote me a few lines suggesting that Government might be asked to permit planters to sell rum to their coolies, under a license, instead of having liquor supplied to them as at present from country grog shops. In making out our case for petitioning the Chief Commissioner in the matter of grog shops, it has become clear to me that unless we have some alternative course to propose to Government, we might as well let the thing alone, so far as the chances of having the shops abolished is concerned. I understand Government have a mass of correspondence—or information—and figures on the subject ready at hand, with which to meet any request for abolishment. They claim the coolie will drink, and that the present system of supplying him with spirit was only arranged after careful enquiry, and from the results of different systems of supplying, tried in other parts of India, as well as in Assam: and

while they may admit that there are faults about the system as it stands, they do not see their way to abolish it until some better scheme is evolved, or brought to their notice.

If you have views about rum-selling I would be much obliged for any particulars you can give me, from which a draft scheme might be drawn out. I am making enquiries about the Bengal Central Still system, whereby pure spirit is supplied to the vendors from a still under proper supervision. I am quite sure we must propose something else, when we ask for abolishment.

Were you at Bindukuri, or elsewhere, at the time any grog shop was started in your neighbourhood? And if so were you ever consulted by the Police or other officers as to your wishes in the matter? I want evidence of this.

Excuse the trouble, and with best salaams,

Believe me, sincerely yours,

M. CHAMNEY.

NAMGAON ESTATE.

THAKURBARI, P. O.

TEZPUR, ASSAM.

20th December 1901.

MY DEAR CHAMNEY,

I have to acknowledge yours of the 14th instant, the Rangapara grog shop was closed by Colonel Gray 5 years ago as there were continually rows going on, the Rangapara Station Master died from the effects of a drunken row. One of my Rangapara coolies was also drowned, he went to the river whilst drunk to wash and fell in. In my opinion drunkenness would nearly diminish amongst garden coolies if grog shops were abolished, as since the closing of the Rangapara liquor shop there have been very few cases brought to my notice, as coolies have to travel a long distance to procure it.

I may mention returning from Tezpur on the 8th instant, a Thakurbari Sirdar named "Dewan" was lying in a pool of water close to the Bindukuri station dead drunk, I had him carried on to the road, and Mr. Briscoe sent people at 8 P. M. to bring him back to the garden. I also saw another man lying incapable in a drain alongside the Railway line.

I have found fresh arrivals from Bengal to be most temperate and they only indulge in it if placed in their way by Government.

Best Salaams,

Yours sincerely,

A. B. MOORE.

No. 2499 R.

FROM THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER,

Darrang.

TO MR. M. CHAMNEY,

Manager of the British Assam Tea Co. Ltd.

DATED TEZPUR, the 31st January 1902.

SIR,

With reference to your letter, dated the 18th November, 1901 to the address of the District Superintendent of Police, Darrang, I have the honour to forward herewith the statement therein asked for.

2. The mahals are generally put up for sale in February every year. This year they will be put up to sale on the 12th February 1902. The notices of sale are not gazetted, but the notices are posted for public

information about a fortnight before the sale in the different hafs, thanas, in the Railway stations and in the Catchery.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

K. CHOWDHARY,

for Deputy Commissioner Darrang.

Return of Prosecutions and the number of convictions in connection with the irregularities in the Government Country Liquor Shops in the Tezpur Sub-Division for the year 1900-1901.

1	2	3	4	5		
Serial number	Date of institution	Name and rank of prosecuting officer	Name of persons accused	Description of offence charged, and the quantity of article seized; village and thana where offence was committed		
1	1-11-1900	Rama Kanta Saikia H. C.	Prosod Nunia	Violating the conditions of license by distilling country spirit at night, P. S. Tezpur, village Bindukuri.		
6	7	8	Persons			
Date of judgment	Definition of offence proved, with section of law under which punishable	Abstract of order and sentence	Number brought to trial	Number convicted	Number acquitted or discharged	
12-11-1900	Violating the conditions of license by distilling country spirit at night punishable under section 59 Act VII (B. C.) of 1878	The accused is fined Rs. 10 (Sd.) N. G. C. E. A. C.	1	1	...	
Fines			11	12	13	14
Amount realized	Date of realization	Date and number of treasury chales	Persons to receive rewards	Amount of reward payable to each person	Date of payment of reward	Result of appeal, if any, and Deputy Commissioner's remarks as to adequacy of punishment, and in case of discharge or acquittal, as to conduct of prosecuting officer
10	12-11-1900	No. 9 dated 12-11-00	...	...	...	Adequate (Sd.) H.W.G. Cole, Deputy Commissioner 4-1-01

Notes.—Every case which is shown as pending at the end of any month, should be shown in every succeeding return in red ink until it is finally disposed of, and the reward, if any, is paid.

DATED TEZPUR;
The 31st January 1902.

K. CHOWDHARY,
for Deputy Commissioner of Darrang.

Drunken Brawl at Mackeypore Garden Assam Company in which a Coolie was killed.

JUDGMENT BY J. C. ARBUTHNOTT Esq., I. C. S. C. I. E.,

DISTRICT SIBSAGOR IN THE COURT OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF SIBSAGOR
M. G. R. No. 436 OF 1900.

*Empress versus 1 Bonduna Turi, 2 Ram Bawri, 3 Gobind Ghatwar, 4 Dayal
Bowri, 5 Sampa Rajbungsi, Section 304 I. P. C.*

In this case the accused persons Bundhana Turi, Ram Bawri, and Govind Ghatwar have been charged under section 325 and 304 I. P. C. The facts of the case are as follows. About 9 P. M. on the night of Sunday November 18th a quarrel occurred in the coolie lines of Mackeypur garden between a woman Fulia and Kisto coolie a relative of the deceased Suklall. The deceased who was eating his rice with the witness Paita and Nitai went to interfere, as they say, to stop the quarrel between Kisto and Fulia who were abusing one another. He was then assaulted by the accused Bondhana, Ram Bowri, and Govind who struck him on the head with their bamboo *lathies*. The accused Champa and Doyal according to the witness Paita and Kisto were standing by with small sticks in their hands but they do not appear to have done or said anything. There were also some other coolies present and they all including the 5 accused sent up by the police ran away when the man Suklall fell down. The witnesses Paita, Kisto, Nitai and one Sricharan removed Suklall to the garden hospital where he died on a Thursday 29th November about 12 days after the assault. The deceased was examined by Dr. Winchester, the garden European medical officer, on the 19th November. He was then in a semiconscious condition suffering from concussion of the brain and fracture of the skull. There were two wounds on the left side of his head. The *post mortem* was made by the Civil Surgeon of Sibsagor on the 1st December and the skull was produced in Court and is an exhibit in the case. The Civil Surgeon in his evidence has made a detailed statement as regards the two contused wounds which were one inch apart and immediately over a depressed fracture of the skull and in his opinion death was due to depressed fracture of the skull lacerating the brain substance. The wounds could have been caused by a blunt weapon such as the bamboo *lathies* produced any one of which might have caused them. An important statement made by the Civil Surgeon towards the close of his evidence is that the skull of the deceased is not as thick as the normal native skull. I have discharged the accused Champa and Doyal under section 253 O. P. C. There is no evidence to show that they took any active part in the assault. The 3rd witness Nitai says that he could not see whether they had anything in their hands though he is positive that Bundhana, Ram and Govind had *lathies* in their hands. There were other coolies then and all including these 5 ran away when the catastrophe took place. The witnesses Paita and Kisto say that Champa and Doyal had sticks but neither say that either of them struck deceased. As regards the 3 accused persons Bundhana Turi, Ram Bawri and Govind Ghatwar the witness Paita states "I saw Bundhana strike Suklall on the head with a bamboo *lathi*, Ram struck Suklall with the second *lathi* and Govind struck Suklall with the third *lathi*. Suklall then fell down." The witness Kisto said "Bundhana struck Suklall on the head with a *lathi* first and he fell down. Then Govind struck Suklall on the head and Ram also struck him on the head. Bundhana struck him first, then the other two struck him" Witness then corrected himself. "Suklall did not fall at once when Bundhana struck him. He fell down when Ram had struck him. There can I think be no doubt that the three accused persons Bundhana, Ram and Govind assaulted the deceased Suklall with their *lathies* with the result that his skull was fractured and death ensued 12 days afterwards. The accused Bundhana at first admitted that he had struck Suklall with a bamboo *lathi* on the head and pointed out his *lathi*, his excuse being that he was drunk. He then changed his mind and withdrew his statement. The defence of the accused Ram Bawri and

Govind Ghatwar is a mere denial coupled with the assertion that the case has been brought against them out of enmity owing to their having objected as persons of quiet behaviour to noise and drunkenness in the lines at previous occasions. It is clear on the evidence on the contrary that the deceased, witness Kisto, and the accused persons were all more or less drunk and that this was the state of most of the Bhumij coolies on the Sunday evening of the occurrence. The deceased received his injuries in a drunken affray with the accused. He may have gone to play the part of peace-maker but the witness Paita asserts that he was not sober. Kisto witness whose quarrel with Musst Fulia apparently originated the disturbance admits he had been drinking. I have taken this into consideration, also the medical testimony of the Civil Surgeon who made the *post mortem* and I do not think that the accused can be held to have intended to cause the death of the deceased Suktall. In convicting the accused Bundhana Turi, Ram Bawri and Govind Ghatwar under Secs. 325, 304 and 109 I. P. C., I consider that a sentence of four years rigorous imprisonment will meet the justice of the case. I accordingly sentence the accused Bundhana, Turi, Ram Bawri and Govind Ghatwar under secs. 325, 304 and 109 I. P. C. read with sec. 30 C. P. C. to four years rigorous imprisonment.

SIBSAGAR,

(Sd.) J. C. ARBUTHNOTT,

December 19th 1900.

Deputy Commissioner.

Letters from Mr. Stewart of Atkhel and Mr. Walling of Gelakey to General Manager of the Assam Coy. complaining of the liquor shop at Gelakey and how it interfered with the work on his garden.

ASSAM COMPANY,

Atkhel, 3rd August 1901.

To

F. E. HULBERT Esq.,

General Manager,

ASSAM COY. NAZIRA.

DEAR SIR,

I wish to bring before your notice the inconvenience that this Factory is being subjected to through the Liquor shop at Gelakey.

Take for instance last Tuesday morning, I had brought up to me no less than 25 good strong healthy coolies, who were unable to finish their *nirick* at hoeing on the previous day, owing to the after effects from drinking on Sunday.

All these coolies are good workers and as a rule finish their *nirick* early in the day and the majority of them owned up to the fact of not being able to finish their *nirick* on account of having been drunk on Sunday.

I think I have every right to make a complaint as it seems to be getting worse every month and becoming a regular nuisance.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

R. STEWART.

Forwarded to the Secretary, Assam Branch Indian Tea Association for his informations.

F. E. H.

DEAR HULBERT,

The undermentioned coolies were absent from work owing to drunkenness on Monday 19th instant.

Panchoo M. Caste Bhuia.
Bisoo M. Caste Oorao.

GELAKY,
24-8-1901.

Yours sincerely,
H. WALLING,
Manager Gelakey Tea Estate,
ASSAM COMPANY.

This report should have been sent to you earlier in this week, but I forgot about it.

H. W.

ASSAM COMPANY,
Nazira, 15th June 1901.

M. M. HADOW, Esq.,
Secretary,
ASSAM BRANCH INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION,
Dibrugarh.

DEAR SIR,

The Manager of Mazengah informs me to-day that 3 of his coolies returned to the lines last evening from the Nazira grog shop in a drunk and disorderly state. The men were not prosecuted.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,
F. E. HULBERT,
General Manager, Assam Company.

Letter from Mr. Swinley re Grog Shops.

Majuli Tea Company, Limited.
CHARALI P. O., BISHNATH,
Assam, 25th September 1901.

To:

THE HON. J. BUCKINGHAM, C. I. W.
AMGOORIE.

Grog shops.

SIR,

I have to bring the following to your notice. On Sunday, 18th August, owing to excessive drinking at the grog shop at Charali (a distance of 6 miles from the gardens in this Division) a brawl took place which resulted in two men being killed—one belonged to Kalapani, and the other to Bor Pukhuri. Two Kalapani coolies were found guilty and sentenced under Sec. 304 to 12 months' imprisonment.

All were old hands and most well behaved and never gave any trouble. With the aid of a Government grog shop, however I lose one cooly entirely, and the services of two for a whole year.

On 15th September.—Again through excessive drinking at another grog shop, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Mijika, I had to send out at midnight and bring in 5 coolies who were lying on a bridge dead drunk.

On Saturday, 11th May.—The keeper of this last named shop (and who is also I believe part or sole proprietor of the Charali one), was caught selling grog in the Kalapani *coolie lines*, and from a gharie as well, just outside the Kalapani property on Sunday 12th May. The fine inflicted by Capt. Cole was a paltry, Rs. 100.

In the face of these repulsive incidents Capt. Cole, the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, addressed me as follows on the 14th instant:—

“SIR,

“I have the honour to ask you to be good enough to inform me whether you have any objection to a Rum Shop being opened at Jingia Hat. It would probably reduce the patronage of the neighbouring country liquor shops and better liquors being consumed. One application has already been received from one Nainoomal Khandchand, a Bombay Merchant of Jorehaut, at present of Tezpur, but I should be prepared to make settlement with one of the European Managers should any one wish to take up the matter.”

I have the honour etc.

Why a *Rum* shop should be less forbidding than a *grog* shop I fail to see. Does the Deputy Commissioner suppose that a cooly won't get drunk on Rum, or if he does he certainly won't be the dangerous evil minded brute that he becomes after partaking too freely of grog. What a monstrous position for a Government to occupy, who should be aiding the Planter by force of a fine example how the labourers can be best cared for.

Yours faithfully,

G. H. SWINLEY.

Head Constable's letter regarding Bundho coolie who was drowned when in a state of intoxication.

(Translation.)

BORTOLA,

29th August 1901.

SRIJUT HEAD MOHURER BABU,

It is suspected that the cause of the death of “Bondhoo Jogi” of your garden is only drunkenness and in accordance with the state of the dead body in which it was found it is reported that the man was drunk and having been senseless he jumped down and was drowned in the water. This is in reply to your Manager's letter.

(Sd). RANGAI RAM KAKOTI,

Head Constable.

ASSAM COMPANY,

Nazira, 18th September 1901.

THE SECRETARY,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association,

DIBRUGARH.

DEAR SIR,

The Manager of Ligri Pookrie garden informs me that on Monday the 16th instant 10 men out of some 200 were unable to perform their duties owing to the effects of drink they had taken the night before.

Yours faithfully,

F. E. HULBERT.

30th August 1901.

FROM

R. N. FARQUHARSON,
MAZENGARH,
Assam Company,

To

F. E. HULBERT Esqr.
General Manager,
NAZIRA.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to report that one of the Ligrie coolies named Bundhoo when returning drunk from Nazira last Monday night fell into a burrow pit^a by the railway station and was drowned. I also beg to report that out of 95 men who were sent out to hoe last Monday seven were unable to do; more than a few nulls owing to their having been drunk the previous day.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

R. N. FARQUHARSON,

The 16th September 1901.

NONOI DIVISION.

JOHN HENDERSON, Esqr.,

Chairman, Nowgong Sub-Committee,

A. B. I. T. A.

DEAR SIR,

With reference to Mr. Buckingham's Circular *re* Liquor shops and their abuses I have to say, that I find the liquor shop at Borjuli and situate in the centre of my gardens retails liquor at 4 annas a bottle. This you may imagine is stuff of the vilest kind. Drunkenness is prevalent on Sundays and Saturdays and yesterday (15th) I found a good many of my Tea House men were more or less drunk and manufacture was interfered with to some extent. My Head Mistree assaulted another of the Mistrees in the Tea House yesterday 15th and although he is a good and reliable man as a rule I was compelled to have him forcibly turned out of my Tea House. He has now absconded. Little or no supervision of any kind whatever is exercised by the authorities over this liquor shop, and I had seen drink supplied to coolies who were already in a terribly bad state of intoxication.

Yours faithfully,

H. LYALL.

The 1st August 1901.

FROM

THE MANAGER,
Dole Bagaun,
ASSAM COMPANY,

To

THE GENERAL MANAGER,
Nazira.

Re Liquor Shop Circular No. 1423.

This factory suffers very much by the liquor shop being only about 80 yards away from the coolie lines. Every Monday about 15 to 20 coolies

are entirely off work being drunk, and about another 20 who go to work and cannot complete their full tasks, besides about 5 or 6 daily drunk and incapable, as for rows in the lines through drink there are several cases; some requiring medical treatment for a fortnight.

V. A. GODFREY.

Letter from Mr. Templer, Superintendent, Moabund Tea Co. Ld. complaining against a liquor shop known as the Dholi Liquor Shop.

MOABUND TEA COMPANY, LIMITED,

Moabund P. O. and T. O.

UPPER ASSAM.

7th August 1901.

TO THE SECRETARY,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

DEAR SIR,

Liquor Shop.

The Government licensed liquor shop known as the "*Dholi Liquor Shop*" situate some $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Moabund Tea Company's gardens on the Government Trunk road, (Gorali), in Jorhat district, and held this year by one Porsuram, Bombay Merchant, is becoming such a menace to the health of my labour force that I venture to bring the matter before the Association in the hope that its influence may induce the authorities to institute a stricter supervision (if such shops must exist) on the quantity and quality of the liquor sold to coolies and the conduct of the holder of the license to sell liquor.

Moreover the coolies resort to this liquor shop on Sundays, holidays and after receiving their monthly wages. Where liquor of the most poisonous kind is sold to them at a cheaper rate than sanctioned by the Government.

As a result of imbibing this poisonous filth many serious cases of brawling, wife beating and unfitness for work for days together are of frequent occurrence amongst the coolies. Only a few days ago, one of my own bungalow servants was under treatment in the hospital for 3 days recovering from the effects of a visit to the liquor shop.

On Sundays and pay days a drunken crowd may be found outside the shop a serious menace to the public peace, and danger to themselves and others passing along the road, and a disgrace to any civilisation. Another case came under my notice only last Sunday, when a coolie passed my bungalow in a frenzied state and stark naked returning from the grog shop where he had been allowed to drink to this maniacal excess.

Yours faithfully,

A. H. TEMPLER,

Superintendent,

MOABUND TEA COMPANY LIMITED,

**Report of case against Nahor Habi Hat Liquor
shop Lessee,**

Nahor Habi Tea Estate,
NAZIRA, P. O.

Assam, 6th September 1901.

MY DEAR BUCKINGHAM,

I have now got particulars about the Nahor Habi grog shop case last year.

On the night of the 8th September we got notice they were selling grog in our lines. Mr. Brander went down and found two of the grog shop men with 2 coolies and 4 kerosine tins in which they carried the liquor 2 were empty and 2 full. We locked up the 2 full tins, and I reported the case to the Deputy Commissioner on Monday the 10th September. The Police came in about 10 days, one of the men had gone to Bombay and they have not seen him since. The other man they got after some trouble. The case came up 4 times. Mr. Brander went once but we had 12 coolies in 4 times on two occasions for seven days at a time, in the end they fined the grog shop servant Rs. 50. The Lessee "Motiram" Bombay merchant they never put a case against. I also reported about their selling liquor at 4 annas per bottle of which they took no notice. The grog shop at the entrance to this garden is a scandal. On a Sunday night when driving out Mrs. Geddes. I have often had to get out of the trap and help the syce to lift off the drunken people from the road some of them boys 10 to 12 years of age. The stuff they sell is filth made from water in the nearest Holla.

I omitted to mention that the above grog case was only decided on the 26th October.

Yours sincerely,

J. GEDDES.

Name of lessee,	... <i>Motiram Bombay Merchant.</i>
Locality of shops	... <i>Nahor Habi Hat.</i>
Charge	... <i>Selling liquor in Nahor Habi Tea Estates coolie lines.</i>
By whom made	... <i>J. Geddes Esqr., Manager.</i>
	Convicted at Sibsagar by Munshee Mashiat Ullah Ahmed Extra Assistant Commissioner.
Amount of fine	... <i>Rs. 50</i>
Date	... <i>26th October 1900.</i>

Remarks by Mr. Geddes.—This case was spoilt by the Police. The liquor was sold on the night of the 9th September 1900, and the case was not tried till 26th October 1900. We sent witnesses in on 4 occasions and they were kept one time 7 days.

**Case in which Mr. Marillier, Supdt of the Assam
United Tea Company, complains against
the Lessee of a grog shop.**

ASSAM UNITED TEA CO., LD.

DOKHINHENGRA,

MOHEEMA P. O. ASSAM.

4th February 1901.

MY DEAR BUCKINGHAM,

Enclosed copy of some proceedings in court in which the Munsiff who tried the case convicts the defendant and fines him Rs. 25.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) W. MARILLIER.

(In the Court of the Extra Assistant Commissioner of Golaghat)

PRESENT:

Baboo U. C. Dass, Extra Assistant Commissioner and 2nd class Magistrate.

Complainant,

EMPRESS *versus* GOPALRAM LOHAR DOKHINHENGRA.

Case No. 801 Crl. of 1900 Sec. 67 of Act VII of 1878.

JUDGMENT.

Mr. Marillier, Manager of the Dokhinhengra Tea Estate, informed that the accused, the Manager of a liquor shop, at Attabarie permitted drunkenness in his shop premises during the last Puja season. The accused denies having allowed any one to drink in his shop or its precincts. The Police who were asked to hold an enquiry into the complaint, reported that the accused allow people to drink wine in his shop and that while holding the enquiry they saw drunken people in the shop premises. Mr. Macnab, Assistant Manager of the Dokhinhengra Tea Estate, deposed to having seen some coolies of the Dokhinhengra estate about the shop premises in so drunk conditions that they were unable to move about. The statements of Mr. Macnab are corroborated by the evidence of the witnesses produced by the prosecution.

From the defence evidence also it appears that some drunken coolies were seen loitering about the premises of the shop on the day of the occurrence. Under the circumstances I convict the accused under Sec. 67 of the Excise Act of 1878 and sentence the accused to pay a fine of Rs. 25 which when realized will be, I recommend, paid to the informants Rs. 15 to Mr. Marillier and Rs. 10 to Mr. Macnab if approved by the collector.

(Sd.) U. C. DASS,

Extra Assistant Commissioner.

14-12-1900.

The deposition of witness No. 1, 2, 3, & 4, for prosecution complainant taken on oath or solemn affirmation under the provisions of Act X of 1878 before me Uttam Chandra Dass, Extra Assistant Commissioner of Golaghat, this 16th day of November 1900.

My name is Mr. Marillier where I am Manager of Dokhinhengra. My assistant reported to me that the accused allowed drunkenness in his premises. This matter was reported by me to the Assistant Commissioner. I myself have no knowledge of the occurrence. Ex. I. is my report.

U. C. DASS,

Extra Assistant Commissioner.

16-11-1900.

My name is F. A. Macnab where I am an Assistant Manager of Dokhinhengra.

I know the accused Gopal Moholdar on the 5th of October in the afternoon. I went down to the shop (liquor) of the accused and saw six coolies or 7 drunken in his compound in front of his shop near the road. So drunk were they that they were unable to return to the garden or to walk. I could not bring them with me Minaram Mohori Tonu, Dwarika, Setaram, and Sawera were brought from the garden and they identified that the drunken coolies were coolies of my factory.

Cross-examined.—The road is about 30 yards from the shop. The coolies were midway between the shop and the road. There is no fencing

except the walls of the house. The coolies had no holidays that day. They were absent from the garden.

Admitted correct,

(Sd) F. A. MACNAB,

(Sd) U. C. DASS,

Extra Assistant Commissioner.

16-11-1900.

My name is Nenoiram, My father's name is Moniram. I am by caste Kuch. My home is at Jamuguri where I am a head Mohorrer. I know Gopal. On the 5th October I went to Gopal's shop with 5 Chowkidars, to see if there were our coolies. I saw that six coolies were there. They were drunk. I took down their names and reported this to the Manager. The Assistant Manager also went there. The coolies were then unable to walk and were lying on the courtyard of Gopal's house.

Examined—I did not see them drink. Gopal was not then present. A servant was then selling liquor to another man from the door way.

Read over and admitted correct.

(Sd) U. C. DASS,

Extra Assistant Commissioner.

17-11-1900.

My name is Soora Kachari. My father's name is Hanfola. I am by caste Kachari. My home is at Mouza Dokhinhengra, Police station Golaghat, where I am a garden sirdar. Some time ago during the pujah time, after the holidays we got (the following the two days leave) Nenoir Mohori, 3 chowkidars and I went to Gokul's shop to see if our coolies were there. I saw that three men were drunk there. Sahib then went there and saw three drunken coolies then. The coolies were so drunk that they could not walk.

Cross-examined.—The pujah lasted more than two days. The customers purchase wine from outside. Drinking is not permitted by the shop keeper inside the house (shop house)

Read over and admitted correct.

(Sd) U. C. DASS,

Extra Assistant Commissioner.

16-11-1900.

The deposition of witness No. 1, 2 and 3 for defence taken on solemn affirmation under the provision of Act X of 1873 before me Uttam Chandra Dass, Extra Assistant Commissioner of Golaghat. My name is Narayan Kumar. My father's name is Boyarsing. I am by caste Comar. My home is at Mowza Chora, Police station Chander, Zilla Purulia, present in Mauza Dokhinhengra, Police station Golaghat, where I am a cultivator. On the Bijoya day I saw some men seated beneath a bamboo grove near the shop of a confectioner. Gopal's shop (liquor shop) will be about 15 yards from the confectioner's shop. The accused was not then at the shop. The accused does not sell wine inside the shop. I have been to the liquor shop on several occasions but on no occasion I saw any one drink wine in the shop. I came there after the Sahib left the place that afternoon.

Cross-examined.—There is fencing round the shop house. The people sit outside the fencing. I do not know when the people came and sat

near the shop. I do not know them. I had no talk with them. The Sahib, I was told, took down the names of the persons. I do not know why the names were taken down by the Sahib

Read over and admitted correct.

(Sd.) U. C. DASS,

Extra Assistant Commissioner.

10-11-00.

My name is Ramlal Mohonto. My father's name is Budhonram. I am by caste Halowai. I reside at present in Mouza Dokhinhengra where I am a Mehonto. I know Gopal. I saw his shop on Friday, the immersion of idol took place. I was that afternoon in my lodging opposite to Gopal's shop and on the other side of the road. I saw some 8 or 10 coolies seated near the road, beneath a bamboo grove, and one side the compound of the accused. The Sahib saw the coolies seated. He enquired of the coolies what brought them there. The coolies said that they were come after their day's works. There was no coolie within the compound of Gopal. Gopal does not allow any one drink wine within his compound.

Cross-examined.—5 or 10 coolies were there. The Chowkidars who accompanied the Sahib did not want to take the coolies to the garden. The Sahib did not enquire if Gopal was at home. I do not go inside the compound of Gopal. I do not know if the coolies seated near the bamboo-grove, were drunk or not. I do not know if the coolies came from Gopal's shop. I brought a case of defamation against Ram Lokhon. The first witness came to Gopal's house before the Sahib had come. I do not know if he was there when the Sahib came. I had no talk with the witness at that time.

Read over and admitted correct.

(S1.) U. C. DASS,

Extra Assistant Commissioner,

10-12-1900.

My name is Fulchand Noonia. My father's name is Nerghin. I am by caste Noonia. I reside at present in Mouza Dokhinhengra where I am a shop-keeper. Gopal's wine shop is situate on Churamonf's land. Ramfall, I and several others have got shops there. There is fencing round the wine shop compound. The fencing would be 4 or five *nuls* from the road. The shop is visible from my shop, which is close to the wine shop. The immersion of idols took place on Friday. The Sahib came there that afternoon. There was no coolie inside the compound of the wine shop. There were some people outside the compound and near a bamboo grove, Gopal was not then at home.

Cross Examined.—The bamboo-grove is a parcel of the wine shop land. There is fencing on three sides of the compound, the front side road side is open. I was then ill and kept inside the house. I did not see the coolies drink wine. One of the coolies made a joke with the Sahib. I do not know where they drunk wine.

Read over and admitted correct.

(Sd) U. C. DASS,

Extra Assistant Commissioner.

10-12-1900.

Various Letters from Bisnauth.

Majuli Tea Company, Limited.

MAJULIGHUR DIVISION,

Sootea P. O.,

ASSAM.

To

THE SECRETARY,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association,

DIBRUGARH.

DEAR SIR,

I have now the pleasure to send you in the reports that I have received on the Liquor Traffic in this district, and from them you will see that there have been many glaring instances of the great harm that this pernicious liquid called "grog" has caused.

I notice that the license form is "for the manufacture of spirits according to the native process." Now this in itself is too elastic a condition, and probably accounts for Government officers never testing the quality of the liquor sold, which is at the bottom of the whole evil. Mr. Chisholm wrote me that he had known "grog" made and sold, in the making of which there was no distilling process, and it was simply a decoction of chillies, Bhang and other materials. If Government will lay down a standard of the liquor to be sold and see that it is always kept to, the grog shop nuisance would right itself.

Yours faithfully,

WALTER EDWARDS,

Chairman, Bishnath Sub-Committee

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

Borpukhuri Tea Company, Limited,

CHARALI POST OFFICE,

BISHNATH,

Assam, 22nd January 1902.

W. N. EDWARDS, Esq.,

Chairman, Bishnath Sub-Committee,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

DEAR SIR,

With regard to the information asked for by Mr. Buckingham, c. r. 2, some time ago *re* liquor shops I have to notify the following cases *viz.*

- (1) Ram Kora killed in a drunken brawl near Rungamati grog shop.
- (2) Mohesh Kurmi got incapable from excessive drinking at Charali grog shop and falling into the drain at the roadside the vultures picked his eyes out and he died shortly after he was found.
- (3) Chaiton Sonthal got drunk at Charali grog shop and was found dead on the road.
- (4) Kunjobehari Koiree contracted pneumonia from exposure while lying on the ground under the influence of liquor supplied by the Charali grog shop and died.

Other cases similar to the latter are not uncommon.

Grog shops have a most demoralising effect on the coolies and the quality of the liquor supplied cannot fail to be injurious as the water supply of both Rungamati and Charali grog shops is far from pure or clean.

During the last Durga Puja festival the Rungamati grog shop Lessee sold liquor to my coolies at two annas per bottle instead of six annas as stipulated in his License. I reported this matter to the Sub-Inspector of Police Sootea who promised to enquire into the case but I have heard no more about it.

Yours faithfully,

D. J. MACRAE,

Manager.

BISHNATH TEA COMPANY LIMITED.

DEKORAI DIVISION,

SOOTEA, P. O.

Assam, January 20th 1902.

To

W. N. EDWARDS, Esqr.

Chairman Bishnath Sub-Committee,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

DEAR SIR,

Re Liquor Shops.

There have been many cases of excessive drinking the past 6 months at the grog shop at Sen-barri.

Only last month a man by the name of Lalla was brought in early morning in a state of collapse. He had sent his children and got a large quantity of liquor from the grog shop which he consumed during the night. The Dr. Babu reported to me that this unconscious state was brought about by alcoholic poisoning and was undoubtedly due to the excessive amount of the country liquor he had drunk during the night. I may mention that the man was only brought round with the greatest difficulty and afterwards had no fewer than 6 epileptic fits.

Another man Aladin died in my Balijuri lines. He was known to have been an habitual drunkard and his death was due to cholera brought on as supposed to be by drinking to excess country liquor, as he was known to have consumed a large quantity during the night. A man named Manick also died suddenly from cholera. He had drunk a large amount of country liquor during the night. There was no other case of cholera in the lines at the time. Any night after pay day as on Sunday nights men may be seen lying dead drunk on the road from Soi-barri to Dekorai exposed to night air and damp which no doubt lays the foundations for all kinds of diseases. There is always a large absent list on Mondays here owing to the excessive drinking at the Government grog shops.

Name of lessee (Sevoglam).

Locality of shops (Soi-barri).

Yours faithfully,

E. H. BULL,

Manager.

The following report meant for medical officers was filled in in error by Mr. Clifford of the Bishnath Tea Company.

(1) In my opinion grog shops near the gardens do an enormous amount of harm. Both mentally and physically and are the absolute direct cause of many disturbances. I think abolished *in toto* unless some very carefully supervision is introduced.

(2) Hundreds of cases have come under my notice, men and women not decently drunk but raving lunatics. I am of the opinion that some noxious drug must have been used to the manufacture of the liquor to produce such effects.

(3) I have met with very many cases of chest diseases directly or indirectly due to exposure after excessive drinking.

6. I have come across many cases of assaults and serious injuries following on an excess of drinking the liquor from Government grog shops. I quote one only which occurred this year. Two of my men who were returning drunk from the hāt and grog shop. They assaulted a cartman and stole a few articles at midday on the Imperial Road. These two men held good position *i. e.* of a syce and a garden sirdar. These men are good steady people and have a good record. They were sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 25 each.

7. No.

8. I do not find the sick list heavier after hāt day, but that a lot of the people are unable to complete their haziris

Judgment in Liquor case by Magistrate of North Lakhimpure.

(In the Court of Magistrate of North Lakhimpur)

CASE No. 485 of 1901.

(Manager of Silonibari Tea Estate)

KING EMPEROR *vs* PROKASH CHUNDRĀ (*Defendant.*)

Offence sec. 59 Act VII of 1878.

The accused person is a Gomasta of the liquor shop at Laluk. He is charged with having sold liquor at a prohibited hour namely about midnight on the 30th August 1901.

The accused pleads not guilty to the charge. He admits having sold the liquor but he alleges that he sold it at about 9 p. m. which is not a prohibited hour for its sale.

It appears from the evidence adduced by the prosecution that the persons purchasing the liquor left Bodoti for Laluk at about 7 p. m. at about sunset, that Laluk is about 14 miles from Bodoti, and that they walked that distance and then they purchase liquor at the liquor shop. It is therefore impossible that the men should reach Laluk earlier than 11 p. m. The sale of the liquor must then have taken place after 11 p. m.

The defence could not adduce reliable evidence that the sale took place at about 9 p. m.

I accordingly convict the accused Sec. 59 Act VII of 1878 and sentence the accused to pay a fine of Rs. 25 or in default to two months' rigorous imprisonment,

(Sd.) U. C. DASS.

31-10-01.

Letter from General Manager Assam Co., making some proposals re grog shops.

ASSAM COMPANY,

Nazira, 20th January 1902.

M. M. HADOW, Esq.,

Secretary,

ASSAM BRANCH INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION

Dibrugarh.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your circular letter No. 509 on the subject of grog shops

the only suggestions I have to offer for the more satisfactory working of the above are the following:—

I. That no grog shops be allowed within a radius of 4 miles of the nearest tea garden.

II. That the custom of having nautches and other entertainments by the keepers of grog shops be stopped, these being held simply as an inducement to coolies to purchase liquor.

III. That all grog shops be closed on Sundays at an earlier hour than usual, say at 4 P. M.

IV. Better supervision all round with a view to some of the license regulations being carried out.

Yours faithfully,
F. E. HULBERT,
General Manager Assam Company.

Memorandum from Mr. Hulbert General Manager of the Assam Company regarding the quantity of Rum consumed by Mazengah and Ligri coolies during a period of 14 days only.

Quantity of Country Rum consumed by Mazengah and Ligri coolies during the period of 14th days from the 11th to 24th September inclusive.

Garden	No. of adult coolies on garden	Quantity of Rum purchased Quarts	Estimated average per head for a month Quarts	Estimated average cost per head for whole month @ 0-4-0 bottle.
Mazengah Ligri ...	1835	3549	4½	Rs. 1-8-9

F. G. H.

Correspondence between the Govt. of Assam and Chairman Assam Branch Indian Tea Association re mortality from drinking to an excess in the Bishnath Coy.

GROG SHOPS.

Report of the Directors of the Bishnath T. Co. Ltd re deaths from Drink.

No. 673-Emgn:
4402-3 R.

FROM

THE SECRETARY TO THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF ASSAM,

TO

THE CHAIRMAN, ASSAM BRANCH OF THE INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION,
AMGOORI

Shillong, the 11th December 1901.

SIR,

I am directed to forward, for the information of your Association, a copy of the correspondence noted on the margin in connection with the 76th half yearly report of the Directors of the Bishnath Tea Company Limited for the half year ending the 30th June 1901, an extract from which appeared in the *Englishman* of the 24th September last.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

F. J. MONAHAN.

Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

(1) This office letter No. 684 Emigration 3650 B., dated the 4th October 1901 to the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, with enclosure.

(2) Memorandum No. 2983 G, dated the 2nd November 1901, from the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, and enclosure.

From the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to the Officiating Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, No. 584-Emigration 3550 R., dated the 4th October 1901.

Sir,

I am directed to enclose an extract from the 76th half yearly report of the Directors of the Bishnath Tea Company Limited for the half year ending the 30th June 1901 and to say that the attention of the Chief Commissioner has been drawn to the last paragraph of this report regarding the health of coolies on the estate. The Chief Commissioner would be glad to receive a report as to whether it is true that several deaths were due to excessive drinking at the Government Grog shops.

I have &c.,
(Sd) J. DONALD,
for Secretary.

The Bishnath Tea Company Limited.

(Extract from the 76th half yearly report of the Directors of the Bishnath Tea Company Limited.)

The following extracts are taken from the seventy-sixth half yearly report of the Directors of the Bishnath Tea Company Limited for the half year ended the 30th June 1901, which was presented to the shareholders at their meeting on the 25th instant:—

"Health of coolies.—The half year under report has been a very unhealthy one for coolies, but although the sick list has been high, the death rate stands the same as last year for the period, viz, 51 deaths including several from cholera and excessive drinking at the Government Grog shops."

From Captain H. W. G. Cole, I. s. c., Deputy Commissioner, Darrang, to the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, No. 820 E., dated Tezpur, the 14th November 1901.

SIR,

With reference to your memorandum No. 2711 G., dated the 9th ultimo, forwarding copy of Secretary to the Chief Commissioner's letter No. 584 Emgn./3550 R., dated the 4th October last for report as to whether it is true that several deaths of coolies belonging to the Bishnath Tea Company's garden were due to excessive drinking, I have the honour to state that from 1st January to 8th June 1901, there occurred 49 deaths among which 10 were due to cholera and none to excessive drinking.

2. There was one death in December which was due to excessive drinking.

3. The enclosure received with your letter under reference is returned herewith.

I have &c.,
(Sd.) H. W. G. COLE,
Deputy Commissioner, Darrang.

Memo No. 2988/G

Dated Gauhati, 22nd November 1901.

Copy forwarded to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam with reference to his letter No. 584 Emgn./3550 R., dated the 4th October 1901.

(Sd.) A. PORTEOUS,
Officiating Commissioner.

AMGOORIE P. O.,
Assam, December 21st 1901.

FROM

J. BUCKINGHAM ESQ., C. I. E.,
Chairman Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

TO

THE SECRETARY CHIEF COMMISSIONER, ASSAM,
Shillong.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 11th December giving extract from the yearly report of the Directors of the Bishnath Tea Coy., Ltd., regarding deaths from drink.

I will, with your permission, delay placing the correspondence before our Association until the Superintendent of the Bishnath Tea Coy. has had an opportunity of explaining the statement made.

It is quite possible that many of the deaths alluded to were from the indirect effects of drink, for example, pneumonia brought on from a drunken coolie lying exposed all night. This I believe would be entered in the death returns, simply as pneumonia.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,
(Sd.) J. BUCKINGHAM,

Chairman, Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

BISHNATH TEA Co., Ltd.

Pertabghur,

Assam, January 1st 1902

MY DEAR BUCKINGHAM,

As regards your letter of the 21st ultimo I enclose a report of Dr. Smith, on the deaths which occurred during the first half of last year in this Company which he considers were caused by excessive drinking at Government Grog shops. As you surmised, these deaths were the indirect results of drinking, but were so sudden as to leave no doubt, as to the *cause* of the disease. Besides these, there were numerous cases, which were saved by careful treatment in hospital. All the Divisions in this Company are most unfortunately situated as regards Grog shops, Dekorai being one mile, Pabhoi 1½ miles, Pertabghur and Diplunga 3 miles from a Grog shop, and the drinking that goes on, on leave days is something awful, coolies lying helpless on the road sides, and unable to return to the gardens, thereby getting a chill which generally leads to Pneumonia. Only a few months ago, the Daroga at Sootia sent an urgent message here to send Chowkidars and carts to take away drunken coolies, as he was afraid they would come to some harm.

As the result of all this drinking, numbers of coolies are off work on Mondays, and serious cases of assault are continually taking place in the lines. One serious case happened at Pertabghur, when a woman was beaten to death, and her body thrown into the river, and an exactly similar case happened a few years before, when a fine young coolie was the victim. About 18 months ago a Pabhoi coolie who had been drinking at the Grog shop was found dead and partly eaten by jackals within a few hundred yards of the Grog shop, and with regard to the case mentioned in Capt. Cole's report I enclose the Dekorai Manager's report on the subject.

Another case worth mentioning happened during the past year. My Head Syce and his brother, a Sirdar on this garden, went to the Sootea

Grog shop, got drunk, and on the way home assaulted a carter, and looted his cart with the result that they got 3 years imprisonment each. They were both very steady men as a rule, and it was simply through drink that they committed the crime. They both have families on the garden, who have to be supported by the garden in their absence.

I think I have mentioned quite enough cases to show that I had just grounds for mentioning the subject of drink in my half yearly report to the shareholders, as I consider this Company has suffered, and is still suffering very heavy losses on account of these Government Grog shops. And I sincerely trust that now that Chief Commissioner's attention has been drawn to the subject that he will do something to help us to check this cause.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) W. H. B. LAWES.

Chotapukri,
CHERALI P. O.
January 1st 1902.

W. H. B. LAWES Esq.,

SUPERINTENDENT BISHNATH TEA COMPANY LD.

DEAR SIR,

In compliance with your request in your letter dated December 27th 1901, I herewith give particulars of the deaths which occurred during the first half year among the coolies in the Bishnath Company's employ, which I consider due to excessive drinking. Although the deaths are returned under the headings of cholera, pneumonia &c., the primary cause was excessive drinking.

INSTANCES:—

Dikoraî.—(1) Adhui, Kol, age 25, received his pay on the 14th February, and died in the lines on the 15th, he drank heavily after receiving his pay, and developed symptoms of cholera and died before he could be removed to Hospital.

(2) Manick, Komar, age 55, (addicted to drink) was paid on the 13th April and died in the lines on the 14th after a heavy bout of drinking. At the time of these two deaths there were no cases of cholera either in the Bustees or the lines.

Diplunga.—(1) Sonichur, Bhumij, age 30, died of apoplexy June 16th, brought on by excessive drinking on a Saturday night.

(2) Satoor M. Beldar, age 46, died March 12th of Pleurisy; he drank heavily on Sunday at the hât, and was unable to walk home, and spent the night by the roadside, contracted Pleurisy from exposure, and died on the following Tuesday.

Pabhoi.—(1) Durupady (Female) age 25 Gour (addicted to liquor) contracted pneumonia on 19th March, and died on the 25th.

(2) Goolap 1 Male, age 32, Dom, (notorious drunkard) admitted to Hospital 16th June, and died on 17th from "choleraic diarrhœa."

In the above cases you will notice that all the deaths occurred within a day or two of pay day.

In the case of the *Pabhoi* coolies I had all the wells thoroughly disinfected on the first appearance of choleraic diarrhœa, but it was not until I requested your Manager to put on Chowkedars to check the excessive abuse of liquor, that the cases diminished, since then, only one case has occurred up to date.

It is a well known fact that "drunkards Pneumonia" is one of the worst forms of pneumonia to treat, and I am very sure that had I gone thoroughly into each case as it occurred and noted whether or not the patient had been addicted to liquor, you would not have been surprised at the number of cases, as you know the habits of the coolies better than I do, and the same may be said of choleraic diarrhoea cases which generally occur on a Monday.

Trusting that the information I have given you will be sufficient.

Yours faithfully,

(Sd.) HUGH S. SMITH.

Medical Officer Bishnauth Tea Company.

BISHNAUTH TEA COMPANY LD.

DEKORAI DIVISION,

SOOTEA P. O.

Assam, December 29th 1901.

MY DEAR LAWES,

The man Sookoi was found dead on the roadside on this side of the Dekorai bridge, he had been drinking heavily at the Grog shop at Saibarri the whole evening and was returning home when he was overcome by the effects of liquor, and expired on the roadside, his body was found early next morning, the matter was reported to the Police who asked for men to take the body into the station for an inquest, the men were supplied, and the body taken in, the result of the inquest I do not recollect having heard, my Dr. Baboo Rosun Alli, C. M. S., V. L. M. S., went to see the body with the Sub-Inspector, and reported to me that the man Sookoi had without doubt died of alcoholic poisoning, and the entry in my Act XIII death book is as below.

Date of death.	Name of deceased.	sex.	Locality of birth place.	Date of arrival
13-12-1900.	Sookoi	M.	Nagpore	10-6-95
Age at time of death.	Cause of death.			
30 years.	Alcoholic poisoning.			

The man was by caste a Chamar, and was a strong young man and a good worker, he was entered in the Vital Statistic form under the heading of "Other Causes" as there is no heading for alcoholic deaths. There have been many cases of excessive drinking at the Grog shops, and very often after pay day and on Monday mornings men are unable to turn out to work from the effects of Grog supplied them, only the other day a man by the name of Lalla was brought early in the morning in a state of collapse, he had sent to the Grog shop and got a large quantity of native liquor, which he drank during the night the Dr. Baboo says, that this unconscious state of alcoholic poisoning was undoubtedly due to the excessive amount he had drunk of country liquor, it was only with the greatest difficulty he was brought round.

Any night after pay day and Sunday nights one can meet with men lying dead drunk on the road from Lai-barri to Dikorai, this state of affairs is brought about by the native liquor supplied at the Government Grog shops.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd) E. H. BULL

AMGONGME P. O.
Assam, January 10th 1902.

FROM

J. BUCKINGHAM, Esqr., C. I. B.,
Chairman Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

TO

F. J. MONAHAN, Esqr., I. C. S.,
Secretary to the Chief Commissioner Assam.
SHILLONG.

SIR,

I now have the honor of forwarding to you original letters from Mr. Lawes and others with regard to the statement made by the Directors of the Bishnath Tea Coy. in their last report on deaths from Alcoholic poisoning.

We are now in a position to see both sides of the question. I beg to thank His Honor the Chief Commissioner for allowing me time to collect the accompanying interesting facts which undoubtedly strengthen the position the Association has always taken with regard to the Grog question.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. BUCKINGHAM,
Chairman Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

Letter from Mr. Henderson, Nowgong, re Grog cases in his district one case being that of a coolie who was run over when drunk on 21st September 1901, and died in Hospital on 31st January 1902.

NOWGONG BRANCH INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION.
13th February 1902.

THE SECRETARY,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association,
DIBRUGARH.

DEAR SIR,

I have the pleasure to send you the following papers *re* grog shops in this District.

Letter from Mr. Lumsden ...	Jiajuri
Do Olney ...	Loongsoong
Do Davis ...	Kellydon
Do Nurbocks ...	Nowgong

I beg to report with reference to the coolie, Munda, referred to in my letter to you of 28th September last, that he remained in hospital till he died on 31st ultimo. Further I have to state that two coolies Helmah and Retha of Langting garden got drunk on 10th December last, and during a quarrel Retha did so severely bite Helmah that he had to remain in hospital for 19 days.

I am, yours faithfully,
JOHN HENDERSON,
Chairman.

11th February 1902.

MY DEAR HENDERSON,

The Sapanulla grog shop has been a standing disgrace (to Government) and a source of mischief and loss to the gardens in this neighbourhood to my knowledge for the past 9 years. It is situated about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles from Jiajuri.

I could cite cases without number in which it has proved to be the direct cause of drunken rows in the lines, ending in little short of murder. The coolies implicated in these rows have invariably been found to have been half mad with drink bought at the grog shop.

I may mention one case which occurred only about three weeks ago. It happened on a Saturday night, Saturday being my leave day.

A quarrel arose in the lines over some trifle or other, and those concerned in it being very drunk, a young married girl about 16 years old who had nothing whatever to do with the affair, got a blow with a stick or some blunt implement across the face knocking one of her eyes completely out.

I could go on and multiply cases in which coolies maddened by drink have committed crimes and cruelties almost too bad to write about.

Could some restriction be put on the sale of liquor, and also on the quality of the spirit sold it would be of vast importance to us in this locality.

I would suggest that these grog shops be not allowed to sell liquor to garden coolies without first receiving from the said cooly, a chit from the Manager or from some one authorised to give him one.

Yours truly,

O. LUMSDEN,

LOONGSOONG TEA ESTATE,

SAMAGURI P. O.

9th February 1902.

J. HENDERSON Esq.

DEAR SIR,

I have received the Tea Association Circular re liquor shops. I consider that these shops are the cause of nearly every row that occurs in the lines. Every Hât day numbers of my coolies come back intoxicated. Liquor shops are generally situated near Hâts and the coolies going to hât with money in their hands are tempted to purchase grog far more than they would be if they had to go out of the way to get it, also they purchase more than would be the case if they went alone or in small numbers. On 15th December last one of my Munda coolie women called Mandi was very severely injured by her husband, Bononrai, when he was drunk. Another similar case happened a few days afterwards also the result of liquor. Musters on Monday the day after hât day, are invariably short entirely owing to coolies being unable to work on account of the previous day's intoxication.

The price of liquor at the Chapanulla shop is Ans. 4, 6 and 8 per bottle.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

H. B. ALLAN OLNEY.

A man named Siblal of Kellyden Tea Estate got very drunk from liquor obtained from the Borelligaon grog shop, on the 15th April last. On returning to the garden he had a row with his wife, and fractured her arm with a *lathi* she was unable to work for about three months in consequence.

A chowkidar named Gopal died from excessive drinking in December 1900, after an attack of Pneumonia.

In December last a sirdar named Birsing died from excessive drinking after having been twice cured from Pneumonia.

KELLYDEN T. E.

W. N. DAVIS.

11th February 1902.

Nowgong,
23rd January 1902.

JOHN HENDERSON Esq.,
SALONAH.

Sir,

With reference to your favour of the 21st instant I beg to inform you that on enquiry I found that there were 9 cases instituted against the grog-shop-licensees in the district for breach of their license rules in the year 1901. Of the nine, five were *convicted* and fined, and *four* were *acquitted*.

I beg to remain,
Sir,
Yours most obediently,
NURBUKSH.

SALONA TEA COMPANY, LIMITED.
SALONAH DIVISION,
Nowgong, 28th September 1901.

THE SECRETARY,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

DEAR SIR,

With regard to grog shops I have to state that liquor is sold at Ans. 4 a bottle in three shops near here. Last Sunday I saw 28 bottles being taken up by my Langting coolies—all of which were bought at Ans. 4 per bottle. I have written and spoken to the Deputy Commissioner about these shops and hope there will be a raid made on them all to-day.

I have further to state that one of my coolies got drunk at one of the shops. So drunk that he lay down on the road, and a cart went over him, hurting him severely. He has now been in hospital for a week.

Some considerable time ago my ticca carters—I employ about 30—reported to me that while travelling at night their carts went over a drunk man lying on the road.

I am, yours faithfully,
JOHN HENDERSON,

SALONAH TEA COMPANY LIMITED
SALONAH DIVISION,
Nowgong, 10th October 1901.

THE SECRETARY,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

DEAR SIR,

I have your letter of 2nd instant and note all you write.

The name of the coolie referred to is Moonda, of Langhting garden, and while lying drunk on the road a short distance from the grog shop he was run over by a cart on 21st ultimo. He is still in hospital and likely to remain there for some time yet. When found he had a bottle of liquor with him.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,
JOHN HENDERSON.

P. S.—The enclosed letter from Mr. White of Palkoi concern speaks for itself and I shall be glad if you have the matter put right.

J. H.

**List of Grog shops in Nowgong District showing
an increase of Government Revenue
during last two years of about
50 per cent.**

List of country grog shops in Nowgong District.

No.	Name of place	Monthly Rent 1899-1900	Monthly Rent 1900-1901	
		Rs.	Rs.	
1	Bagri	52	85	
2	Jokhlabandha	249	270	
3	Boraligaon	98	146	
4	Samaguri	77	130	
5	Borjuri	215	371	
6	Chapanala	181	225	
7	Bamonee	75	125	
8	Nowgong Town	261	310	
9	Ranguluhat	103	163	
10	Jomunamukh	43	20	
11	Lonka	22	20	
12	Chapormukh	33	35	
13	Nelli	91	86	
14	Coolikushi	32	52	
15	Nakhola	24	40	
16	Loomding	267	455	
17	Kampur	...	20	
	TOTAL	1,823	2,553	per Month
		Rs. 21,876	Rs. 30,636	per year

*(Forwarded to the Secretary Assam Branch Indian Tea Association
for his information.)*

ASSAM COMPANY,

Suntok, January 16th 1902.

F. E. HULBERT Esq.

General Manager Assam Company,

NAZIRA.

DEAR SIR,

I have to report that on Monday last only 111 men out of 151 on hoeing were able to do full tasks. This shortage was entirely due to drunkenness on the previous day. On Saturday evening I paid the factory, and on the following day a quantity of liquor was bought at the grog shops and brought into the lines. Some of the men were still drunk when they went out to work on the Monday morning, and incapable of any attempt at work whatever. I also have to report that a serious assault took place on Tuesday night when one of the coolies had his skull fractured with a dhaw. The wounded man tells me that he bought and brought into the lines 5 bottles of liquor from the Kachari-pookri liquor shop, for which he paid at the rate of annas 3 per bottle. This he says is the usual price charged to Suntok coolies. After he and his assailant had drunk 1½ bottles, the latter struck him on the head. The man is in hospital in a critical state. I have sent notice to the Police Inspector at Bortolla, and asked him to come out and investigate the case.

Yours faithfully,

B. EVANS,

Manager, Suntok.

TIPHUK TEA COMPANY LTD.
11th January 1902.

THE CHAIRMAN,
Sub-Committee, Amguri Circle.

SIR,

In connection with Circular No. 816 *re* liquor shops I have to inform you a boy named Goraya, aged 12, died from effects of alcoholic poisoning on the 25th September 1900, and another boy named Bootu Goroo, aged 10, was in hospital from the 4th to 11th June 1901 from the same cause.

Yours faithfully,
A. C. SHOWERS.

Re Khoemtai Grog Shop.

SIBSAGOR.

<i>Name of informant</i>	... Komolanando Boruah.
<i>Charge</i>	... Selling liquor in Khoomtai cooly lines.
<i>Accused</i>	... 1 Borsing boy, 2 Jhaloo boy, 3 Nagniram.
<i>Convicted by</i>	... Mashiat Ullah Ahamed, Extra Assistant Commissioner Sibsagor.
<i>Sentence</i>	... Borsing and Jhaloo boys had been whipped with 5 lashes of cane each, and Nagniram had been sentenced to undergo one month's rigorous imprisonment and fined Rs. 20.
<i>Date of conviction</i>	... 9th May 1901.
<i>Remarks</i>	... Komolanando will get Rs. 10. Kanchon Chowkidar, " " 5. Sonaram Gogoi " " 5.
On realization of the fine of Rs. 20.	

Letter from Mr. Begg, Hoolungooree, to Assistant Commissioner Jorhat.

HOO LUNG OOREE TEA CO, LD.
28th October 1901.

L. O. CLARKE ESQ., I. C. S.,
Jorhat.

SIR,

I have the honor to draw your attention to a practice of recent years prevailing in this neighbourhood, and which does a deal of harm to the labour of the gardens *viz.* the festival or entertainment during the Doorga Pooja holidays given by the grog sellers of the Moriani and the Debrapar grog shops.

This entertainment started this year on Saturday evening the 19th October.

On that evening my line Chowkidars report was—

"We are unable to tell correctly who are in the lines and who are not, as many have gone to Moriani and Debrapar."

On Sunday evening the report was—

"We have not the least idea who are in the lines and who are not but there are fewer people in the lines than out of them. We trust however they will all return in due course."

On Monday at 11 o'clock A. M. the report was—

"Many have not returned yet, but are coming in gradually and many are drunk and unfit for work."

At 5, the same evening the report was --

"All have returned barring 3 (2 women and a man). They were last seen at Mofani. The 2 women were sober, but the man was left lying drunk in a drain."

One of the women has since been found but the other 2 up to date have not been heard of.

You will observe that it was 5 P. M. on Monday evening before I got any definite account of my coolies. In this connection I beg to draw your attention to the Honorable the Chief Commissioner's comments on the report by the Civil Surgeon on the inspection of this garden for last year as under --

"The garden was last unhealthy in 1898. The Civil Surgeon reports that this is a well managed garden: the heavy death rate is however a blot on the management and the Chief Commissioner is not satisfied that it is altogether due to non-preventible causes."

With all due respect I beg to point out that the above is a preventible cause, but it is beyond my control and I have the honor to request that you will be good enough to bring this to the notice of the Honorable the Chief Commissioner.

I am told that the grog sellers do not give this entertainment with any religious intent, but simply for the purpose of a profit. The coolies who attend it spend their money in a reckless way, many of them return unfit for work, and in a state highly prone to insubordination.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) J. BEGG.

ASSAM COMPANY,

Mackaypore, 28th November 1900.

F. E. HULBERT, Esq.,

General Manager Assam Company.

DEAR SIR,

I would wish to point out the great harm that is being done by the liquor shop close to this Factory. There are frequent drunken rows, in some cases culminating in a free fight like the one on Sunday week in which a man had his head broken and is still lying unconscious; in this case two men came from the liquor shop drunk, and started to quarrel with another man, whose friends came to his rescue, result a free fight with the above consequences. On another occasion a man from Mazengah had brought over a pet cobra which he was showing off, one of my men in a drunken fit tried to catch hold of it with the result that he was bitten and died in a few hours. Another time four men when drunk had a row together and one of them was too badly hurt to work for a few days. Besides this there are constant cases of men beating their wives when drunk, so badly that some times they cannot work for several days. The liquor shop is far too near to my Factory and I would ask if it could not be moved, if not altogether at any rate to some place where it would not be so easily accessible to my coolies.

Yours faithfully,

(Sd.) G. R. A. GAIR,

Manager.

MACKAYPORE.

Nahor Habi Tea Estate,

NAZIRA P. O.

Assam, 17th July 1901.

MY DEAR BUCKINGHAM.

I think the grog shop arrangements want a strict enquiry into them. A great deal of sickness is no doubt caused by them. As the water it is made of is out of the nearest filthy holla. It is no good trying to prosecute them as they wear you out with steady postponements. We had a case on for several months last cold season but it came to nothing. Brander will tell you all about it as he was principal witness in the case.

Yours sincerely,

J. GEDDES.

Cases of Drunkenness reported by Mr. Grimston,*1st February 1902.*

Eastern Assam Company, Ltd.

BALIJAN FACTORY,

CHABWA P. O.

DIBRUGARH.

Grog Shops.

1. Some coolies belonging to the Rangmala Tea Estate were passing through the above garden on 23rd March 1899 at about 8 P. M., and had some bottles of country liquor with them. All the coolies were more or less under the influence of liquor.

One man fell down insensible on the road about 100 yards distance from the Hospital. He was carried to the Hospital and the native Doctor of the garden was sent for, and treated him, but he died about 3 hours afterwards.

Two of his companions remained with him, and the other went on to Rangmala to report the matter to the Manager.

The corpse was removed to Rangmala by the coolies of that garden.

NAME	SEX	AGE	CASTE	DATE OF DEATH
Nanakram	male	35	Nunia	23-3-1899

2. *August 1901* (exact date not known). A boy of this garden was found on the Tram line between Balijan Garden and the Sadiya Road in a state of drunkenness.

He was picked up and brought in on a trolley to the Hospital.

The native Doctor treated him, and he recovered, but was unconscious for nearly 9 hours.

NAME	SEX	AGE	CASTE
Bhunia	male	14	Paharia.

3. *August 1901* (exact date not known). Circumstances similar to No. 2; the coolie recovered under treatment, but was unconscious for several hours.

NAME	SEX	AGE	CASTE
Gopal	male	24	Paharia

All the above cases were reported to me by Babu Bhogaban Chandra Dass, the native Doctor of this garden.

There have been various minor cases of drunkenness at various times, which have temporarily incapacitated coolies from work. The above cases, especially No. 1, would point to the grog being adulterated, although there is no proof forthcoming.

I may also mention that, for 3 years, at the request of the native establishment of the garden, I gave here for the Doorga Poojah festivals, to enable them to hold a big festival on the garden, but a good proportion of the coolies, owing to drunkenness, were unable to turn out to work the day following that on which their leave expired, and some of them were absent for several days. This disorganised the labour force to such an extent that I had to stop giving leave.

BALLJAN,
1st February 1902.

L. A. GRIMSTON,
Superintendent.

Hulwating Factory,

Memo of cases of excessive drinking.

In December last Ramsing, Birloo, and Sookram were mixed up in a drunken row at the liquor shop and were so knocked about that two of them were off work for 10 days, and the other for one day.

A coolie, Monger, was off work 4 days in November last, and 4 days this month suffering from the effects of excessive drinking.

Mr. Ferguson's Report.

Hunwal Tea Co. Ltd.,
MORIANI, P. O.,
ASSAM.

11th March 1902.

The following case illustrates how gardens suffer from grog shops being planted on sites within a mile or so of several concerns :—

On the 7th of February several coolies went down to the grog shop in evening, and on their returning afterwards to the garden, had a row, with the result that one of them was murdered, put into the Desoi river, and left there, the body was only discovered on the 14th. On investigation, 2 men have been committed to the Sessions, so we have lost in all 3 good men.

JOHN F. FERGUSON,
Manager.

Memo re liquor shops.

Liquor shops placed in the vicinity of tea gardens are an almost unmitigated nuisance, with one exception the few advantages are from a planters' point of view not advantages at all, and the one exception cuts in reality both ways. The advantages that occur to me are the following :—

From the point of view of Government.

- (1) A fertile source of revenue.
- (2) A fruitful origin of paras for the annual labour report, it is a question if His Honor the Chief Commissioner could fill this satisfactorily to himself, without their valuable assistance.

From the point of view of the planter.

- (3) They prevent coolies becoming too wealthy and independent, and encourage them to renew their agreements instead of settling in the villages.

From the coolies point of view.

- (4) The facility for getting drunk.

To place against the above doubtful advantages are the following.

- (1) The general health and the death rate of the garden labour force are directly affected, the former suffers and the death rate is raised.
- (2) The birth rate is liable to be adversely affected also, over indulgence in the liquor sold being a sure method of procuring abortion, I am told.
- (3) The absentee list is increased, and desertion also.
- (4) Domestic cruelty (wife-beating, starvation) and immorality are direct consequences.
- (5) Poverty is a direct consequence, resulting in high advances; given to prevent them from starving. These sums are a dead loss as a rule to the estate.
- (6) They demoralise the labour force, and nullify the effect of those variable quantities, moral persuasion and personal respect, on which the Managers of gardens are now entirely dependent for obtaining obedience; and they directly encourage violent insubordination against all authority.

To take the very doubtful advantages first.

No. 1.—A reference to Government returns will answer this.

No. 2.—A reference to the Chief Commissioner's report for 1900 will answer this.

No. 3.—is a necessary result of the disadvantages noted under heading No. 5.

No. 4.—A visit to a grog shop after pay day on a neighbouring estate will satisfy anyone who doubts it.

Taking the disadvantages in their order, I will quote one or two of the cases which have come under my own observation during the past year, but if Nos. 4 and 6 can be proved then all are proved.

No. 1.—*The death rate.* I have no cases directly attributable to drink in the past year, but they have been not infrequent formerly, and the case of the man Hazary mentioned below, will I am afraid soon be added to these.

Sickness.—Hookma, a Borbam coolie, a blacksmith, was seized with double pneumonia on the 28th December last, resulting from a chill from exposure the night previously, he had I am informed been indulging to excess in liquor. Hazary, a good coolie (Borbam), was paid a bonus of Rs. 12 on the 1st of October last, he spent the day at the liquor shop and was seized with epileptic fits during the night, he is now a confirmed invalid and the Doctor reports to me that he cannot recover.

No. 2.—I am happy to say no cases have occurred to my knowledge during the past year, but why coolies should be given every facility for obtaining abortion, a custom to which they are always prone to resort, and which the Government professes itself as extremely anxious to check, is incomprehensible.

No. 3.—The police caught the liquor-seller allowing a Borbam coolie Soroo, M, to take more at one time than the regulations permit, they do not often do this, but on this occasion Soroo was called as a witness he lost 7 days in November last, 5 days in February last, he walked approximately 92 miles and received no compensation, losing his liquor and the money he paid for it.

No. 4.—Kisto, M., a Bagjan coolie, beat his wife severely on the 14th February last. Kisto was drunk at the time. Jhitoo beat his wife Bhowra. Jhitoo was suffering from the effects of drink at the time, his wife was lost for two days, the 19th and 20th January last.

No. 5.—Taking the case of Hazary, M., previously mentioned, who received on the morning of 1st October last a bonus of Rs. 12, as a result of drunken excess he has since cost the estate a total of Rs. 80 for medical comforts in the shape of sago and other suitable foods, we have also lost the services of a valuable coolie.

No. 6.—On March 7th 1901, the day succeeding Fagoos, the annual holiday given to coolies, the labour forces on two neighbouring gardens were so demoralised by drink that it was considered inexpedient to insist on their turning out to work, a mob of drunken coolies from one of these gardens visited Borbam during the day, and gave considerable trouble by their example and behaviour.

It would not be difficult by reference to several gardens to find I believe within a few months, cases that would prove to the hilt my contentions.

BORBAM TEA ESTATE;
1st March 1902.

C. SIMKINS.

Moheema Tea Estate,
ASSAM.
12th March 1902.

To CHAIRMAN,

Assam Branch Indian Tea Association.

SIR,

I have the honour to lay before you the following correspondence, illustrative of the accuracy of the statements which have been made to the effect that the Government of Assam does not concern itself to check abuses in connection with grog shops in Assam and also that the liquor sold at those shops is highly injurious as a beverage to human beings. When visiting my Tea Estate last year, shocked at the spectacles of drunkenness amongst my coolies. I sent the following application to the sub-divisional officer at Golaghat, as follows:—

MOHEEMA, 4th July 1901.

To

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,
Golaghat.

SIR,

I have the honour to request that the outstill and grog shop at Dukenhengra may be removed to a distance of at least 5 miles from this garden. This grog shop placed in close proximity to this estate, has a

most demoralizing influence amongst my coolies who are an industrious peaceable people excepting when under the influence of the drink which they procure with such facility that they cannot resist the temptation of indulging in it. This grog shop of which I complain is the cause of disgraceful drunkenness amongst my coolies often resulting in blows and serious injuries. I take the strongest exception to having any grog shop placed within easy reach of my people.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
S. H. SHAW,

Proprietor of the Moheema Tea Estate.

To this I received no reply.

I proceeded to collect some samples of grog from various shops, sending coolies to buy it, as if for themselves I took several specimens to Calcutta to Messrs. Waldie and Co. for analysis.

I append their analysis and comments in full, which leaves no room for doubt that the liquor supplied at these shops, is highly injurious to the consumers. It is a matter of great importance that this should be established beyond controversy.

The large proportion of Fusil oil shewn to exist in this grog, accounts for the maddening effect on those who take it, and the permanent deleterious effect on their constitutions. In the few weeks I have been residing here numerous assaults, quarrels and disgraceful drunken brawls have taken place and a life has been lost as a direct result of indulgence in this baneful liquor.

The bad effects of this grog are not to be wondered after studying Messrs. Waldie and Company's analysis, and I trust that Government may be induced to discontinue auctioning grog shops for the sale of such liquor. In the samples analysed, no injurious adulterations appear to have taken place, but it is believed that Datura is commonly used for the purpose.

I again addressed the Sub-divisional Officer at Golaghat in December last, and append a copy of my letter and his reply.

To

The Assistant Commissioner,
GOLAGHAT.

20th December 1901.

SIR,

Will you kindly allow me to call your attention to the fact that grog is being sold illegally at 0-2-6 per bottle at the Dukenhengra grog shop. According to the Excise Act no grog shall be sold for less than 0-6-0 per bottle. I can produce witnesses to substantiate the above statement if you will kindly send some one direct here to take down their depositions. My coolies complain of getting very bad headaches after drinking a small quantity of the stuff sold at this shop. May I call your attention to the fact that in July last, I asked that the grog shop might be removed to a greater distance from my garden. The matter has doubtless escaped your attention as no notice seems to have been taken of my letter. I therefore again ask you that this shop may be removed to some place 5 miles away from this estate as it is a nuisance and causes illness amongst my coolies also preventing them from working and earning pay which they would otherwise do.

Yours faithfully,
(Sd) S. H. SHAW,

I received the following reply--

FROM

CAPT. A. PLAYFAIR, I. S. C.,
Assistant Commissioner Golaghat.

SIR,

I am in receipt of your letter of yesterday's date and I thank you for your information regarding the liquor shop vendor. I am unable to send anyone to your garden to record your coolies' evidence, but should I think fit to take up the case I shall be glad to have them in Court and will summon them through you.

I did not inform Capt. Playfair that the witness was a coolie the most important was a European lady!

I thank you also for reminding me of your letter regarding the situation of the liquor shop.

The matter had by no means escaped my memory but unfortunately other Managers have the same right as yourself and you will doubtless admit that should they all insist on a five mile limit my task in choosing a site would be no easy one.

I regret your coolies should suffer from such headaches and can suggest that they abstain from drink in future.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) A. PLAYFAIR.

This correspondence shows the absolute futility of complaints to Government, and it is not to be wondered at that many Planters give it up as hopeless.

Now, Sir, this grog shop which I complain of is placed in a position in direct contravention of the Excise Act, in no less than five different points. See clause 15 Chapter VI. "No liquor shop should ordinarily be in a bazaar or at the entrance to a bazaar nor near a bathing place nor (I) *place of public resort*, school, hospital, place of worship (II) *Factory*, the (III) *interior of a village*. The side of a road leading to a bathing Ghat or a place of water supply. A liquor shop should not be inaccessible to persons requiring liquor but it should not be in such a situation as (IV) *to obtrude itself on the attention of the public* or (V) *to render persons passing by subject to annoyance from persons drinking*."

This shop is near a very large market "*place of public resort*." It is near a *Factory* (a few hundred yards only from the lines) it is *in the interior of village* as the houses clustering around it testify. It is *on the side of a road* (only a few yards from it) and "*it renders persons passing by subject to annoyance from persons drinking*." As the sight of coolies pouring spirits down their throats in various stages of drunkenness (*especially when they are your own people who you try to improve and elevate*) is a very serious annoyance indeed in addition; they reel about the road or literally drop down dead drunk on it. So that the greatest caution must be exercised in either riding or driving, which certainly constitutes an "annoyance," yet representations of these evils have been made again and again about this very shop, with requests for its removal by others besides myself.

The case illustrates what occurs all over Assam, and is therefore of more importance than if it constituted an isolated instance.

I regret I cannot send you the analysis of grog sold at this Dukenhengra shop. As an accident occurred to the specimen I gave Messrs. Smith Stanistreet and Co. for analysis but some samples taken at the

grog shop leave for Calcutta to-day for analysis. These samples are the very bottles which were sold 0-2-6 on the 22nd of December in direct breach of the law (the case duly reported to the Executive but no notice taken thereof). "Four bottles were sold to one man at 0-2-6 a bottle. See Chapter II Part III 15. "The sale of any exciseable article in a larger quantity than is specified below shall be deemed to be a sale by wholesale and pachwai. One seer or one reputed quart bottle " and Chapter V Clause 12. "In the case of country spirits, the minimum price has been fixed at annas 6 a bottle in all districts of the Province except the Khasi Hills in which the minimum price is annas 8." These offences are (Chapter II Clause 74) punishable with a fine of Rs. 200, and upwards but where Government directly countenances breaches of the law, the latter becomes worse than a dead letter, in that it only serves to mislead the public as to the real attitude of Government.

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
S. H. SHAW,
Proprietor of Mohesma Tea Estate.

Analytical Chemical Laboratory.
D. WALDIE & Co.,
KONNAGAR.
OFFICE No. 1, NEW CHINA BAZAR STREET,
Calcutta, ^{25th}/_{28th} November 1901.

To

S. H. SHAW Esq,
Rockville,
DARJEELING.

DEAR SIR,

We have completed the examination of three samples of Country Rum marked

" Sample bottle of Grog purchased at the Duffating
Grog shop for ... 3 annas only 10-7-01"
" Purchased at Badlipar ... 8 " 19-7-01" &
" Purchased at Golaghat ... 4 " 18-7-01"
received through E. Cable Esq. together with his letter of 4th October last and enclose results.

Sample marked "Duffating" is 84.8 u. p. and contains 8.7 per cent of Alcohol.

Sample marked "Badlipar" 8 annas is 69.3 u. p. and contains 33.08 per cent of Alcohol,

Sample marked "Golaghat" is 73.3 u. p. and contains 27.64 per cent of Alcohol.

The amount of acidity in the samples is rather large being .23 per cent, .29 per cent and .26 per cent respectively. The total amount of solid matter present is about the same .03 per cent and .02 per cent.

We have carefully tested the spirit for poisonous alkaloids but do not find any present.

The chief characteristic of the spirits is the large amount of Fusel Oil they contain and the particular flavoring matter due to Mohowa plant.

All three samples have evidently been prepared from the Mahowa flower.

The large amount of Fusel Oil present in each sample renders their use as a beverage very deleterious.

The chief constituent of Fusel oil is Amyl alcohol.

The following extract from the celebrated Chemist Allen's work bears on this point:—

"Amyl alcohol is very injurious. A few drops will produce all the intoxicating effects of a large quantity of Ethyl alcohol, with giddiness, nausea, and other unpleasant symptoms. In larger doses it proves fatal. To its presence in new whisky the injurious effects of that spirit are attributable."

In the report of the commission appointed by the Government of Bengal to enquire into the Excise of country spirit in Bengal 1883-84, the following remarks occur by Dr. Warden:—

"The worst sample of Indian Liquor thus contains nearly seven times as much Fusel Oil per fluid ounce as Dr. Dupre's sample of unrectified Scotch Whisky, while the least contaminated contains rather less than half the amount found in fine 'Samsho.' This method of indicating the relative purity of the spirits is correct as long as we compare the volumes of the various liquors. But low class consumers of liquor take it for the effects which it produces. An ounce of Chirkunda at nine pie per bottle does not equal an ounce (say) of Scotch whisky or 'Samsho' in alcoholic strength. To institute therefore a comparison between Indian country liquors and the spirits examined by Dr. Dupre; the ratio which the Fusel Oil bears to the ethylic alcohol must be the standard; and by this standard the least contaminated of the Indian country liquors contains twice the amount of Fusel oil present in Cape Smoke."

KONNAGAR, ... }
The 25th November 1901 ... }

Yours faithfully,

D. W. WARDIE & Co.

ANALYTICAL LABORATORY.

W. W. WARDIE & CO.

The following are the results of our Analysis of sample of Rum received from S. H. Shaw Esq. through E. Cahle Esq.—

Date ... 4th October 1901.

Marked ... Sample bottle of Grog purchased at the Duffing Grog shop for three annas only 10-7-1901.

Specific Gravity	...	...	9868
Alcohol	...	8.07	per cent
Total acid	...	.23	
(Calculated as Acetic)			
Fusel Oil	...		Large amount
Total solid matter	...	.03	per cent
Alkaloids	...		None
Sedimen	...	.001	
Water etc.	...	91.669	

100

Original Rum	...	84.8	u. p.
Amount of Proof Spirit	...	17.5	per cent.

Marked ... Purchased at Badlipar annas 8 19-7-1901.

Specific Gravity	...	...	9774
Alcohol	...	...	15.33 per cent
Total acid	...	...	.29 "

(Calculated as Acetic)

Fusel Oil	...	...	Large amount.
Total solid matter	...	...	.02 per cent.
Alkoloids	...	...	None.
Sediment	...	...	.026 per cent.
Water etc.	...	...	84.334 "

100

Original Rum	...	...	69.3 u. p.
Amount of Proof Spirit	...	...	33.08 per cent.

Marked ... Purchased at Golaghat annas 4 18-7-1901.

Specific Gravity	...	...	9805
Alcohol	...	...	12.77 per cent
Total acid	...	...	.26 "

(Calculated as Acetic)

Fusel oil	...	...	Large amount.
Total solid matter	...	...	.03 per cent.
Alkoloids	...	...	None.
Sediment	...	...	.003 per cent.
Water etc.	...	...	86.937 "

100

Original Rum	...	...	73.3 u. p.
Amount of Proof Spirit	...	...	27.64 per cent.

KONNAGAR, CALCUTTA, }

Dated ^{25th}/_{28th} November 1901. }

(Sd.) D. WALDIE & Co.

75311:567:261

D2

70339

**Analysis of Samples of Grog sent to Messrs.
Waldie & Co., by Doctor Smith from
the Pabhoi Grog shop Bishnath.**

ANALYTICAL LABORATORY,
D. WALDIE & Co.

The following are the results of our Analysis of sample of Grog received from Hugh S. Smith Esqr.:

Date ... 19th January 1902.

Marked ... 29th December 1901 8 annas.

Specific Gravity	...	...	9637
Alcohol	...	26.07	per cent
Total acid	...	.136	per cent
(Calculated as Acetic.)			
Fusel Oil	...		Large amount
Total solid matter	...	.012	per cent
Containing Ash	...	.004	per cent
Alkaloids	...		None
Water &c.	...	73.782	
		100	
Original Liquor	...	47.2	per cent u. p.
Amount of Proof Spirit	...	55.46	per cent

KONNAGAR, CALCUTTA, }
Dated 19th March 1902, }

(Sd.) D. WALDIE & Co.

Marked ... 29th December 1901 6 annas.

Specific Gravity	...	...	9829
Alcohol	...	10.92	per cent
Total acid	...	.144	per cent
(Calculated as Acetic.)			
Fusel Oil	...		Large amount
Total solid matter	...	.016	per cent
Containing Ash	...	.002	per cent
Alkaloids	...		None
Water &c.	...	88.920	per cent
		100	
Original Liquor	...	80	per cent u. p.
Amount of Proof Spirit	...	13.52	per cent

Marked ... 19th December 1901 4 annas.

Specific Gravity	...	...	9733
Alcohol	...	18.62	per cent
Total acid	...	1.47	per cent
(Calculated as Acetic.)			
Fusel Oil	...		Large amount
Total solid matter	...	0.14	per cent
Containing Ash	...	0.002	per cent
Alkaloids	...		None
Water &c.	...	81.219	per cent
		100	
Original Liquor	...	61.5	per cent u. p.
Amount of Proof Spirit	...	22.82	per cent

KONNAGAR, CALCUTTA,
Dated 19th March 1902. }

(Sd.) D. WALDIE & Co.

Analytical Chemical Laboratory.
D. WALDIE & Co.,
KONNAGAR.
OFFICE No. 1, NEW CHINA BAZAR STREET,
Calcutta, 19th March 1902.

To

HUGH S. SMITH Esqr.,
Chotapukri
CHARALI P. O.,
BISHNATH.

DEAR SIR,

We herewith send our results of the three samples of grog marked 8 annas, 6 annas and 4 annas received together with yours of 19th January last.

Sample marked 8 annas contains 26 per cent alcohol equal to 55.46 per cent Proof Spirit.

Sample marked 6 annas contains 10.92 per cent alcohol equal to 13.52 per cent Proof Spirit.

Sample marked 4 annas contains 18.62 per cent alcohol equal to 22.82 per cent Proof Spirit.

We have carefully examined the samples for Alkaloids especially Alkaloids of Dhatura stramonium but do not find any present.

In all three samples of spirit, there is however a large amount of Fusel Oil present also faints—the peculiar matter which comes over on distilling weak spirit from impure materials.

The grog represented by these samples is scarcely fit for human consumption owing to the amount of Fusel Oil and other deliterious matters present.

Yours faithfully,
D. WALDIE & Co.

Copy of Judgment passed against a Liquor shop vendor in Nowgong for retail sale of Liquor.

802 of 1902.

No. 466 G. R. Form kept under Section 263, Act X of 1882.

Serial number ...
 Date of report or complaint ... 19-12-01
 Name and residence of complainant Benirai Chaukidar of Sagmoti Solal
 for Sagmotia Tea Estate.
 Name, parentage, and residence
 of accused. ... Horku Sing, Son of Narsing of
 Jakholabandha.

The offence complained of and date of its alleged commission :—Illicit sale of country spirit Section 53. VII. 78.

16th December 1901.

The plea of the accused, and his examination (if any) :—Denies having sold any spirit at the Sagmoti cooly line. He went to see if any Pachwai was being sold there.

The finding (guilty or not guilty), and the offence proved, if any, and in cases coming under clause (d), clause (e) or clause (f) of Section 260, the value of the property in respect of which the offence has been committed :—Guilty under Section 53 Excise Act.

The sentence or other final order, and the date on which the proceedings terminated :—Accused to pay a fine of Rs. 10 in default rigorous imprisonment for a week 6th January 1902.

Summary and Reasons :—*Adhar Babu.* I am Babu of Sagmotia Tea garden. My place is about 4 miles from the Jakholabandha grog shop of which the accused is the licensed vendor of liquor. The accused was brought to me by Beni Rai Chaukidar. I asked "why did you sell liquor in the cooly line?" He said he had sold only two bottles of country spirit and no more and he asked me to let him off. I sent a report to the Police who came and took up the case. *Beni Rai Chaukidar of Sagmotia cooly line*—I saw the accused sell 2 quart bottles of (Fuli) country spirit to Pareram and Temu each for annas ten. Accused's shop is 4 miles from the line. Took the accused to Adhar Babu. *Temu*—Purchased one quart bottle of Fuli country spirit for ten annas from Horkusing. Pareram also purchased one bottle. Pareram same as Temu. Dumba and Raghubar saw the accused sell two bottles of country spirit to Pareram and Temu. Dombar cooly. Saw the sale by the accused.

(Sd.) K. CHOWDRY,
 23rd December 1901.

Mohonlal Kya.—Was present when the accused admitted before Adhar Babu that he had sold only 2 bottles of country spirit in the cooly line. The accused asked for forgiveness.

(Sd.) K. CHOWDRY,
 3rd January 1902.

Witness for the defence.

Sitanath Dhar.—I sent the accused to the Sagmotia cooly line to see if Pachwai was being sold in the line. Accused took no spirit from his shop. *Devaki Hazam*—Saw accused take no liquor from his shop when he left it.

(Sd.) K. CHOWDRY,
 3rd January 1902.

From the above record it appears that the accused Horkusing sold two bottles of country spirit at the Sagmotia cooly line for which he had no authority. His licensed shop is at Jokhlabandha which is about 4 miles from the cooly line. He could sell liquor there but had no authority to sell 4 miles off. It is however not shown that the accused was in the habit of selling his grog at the Sagmotia cooly-line or that his sale there on the day he was detected injuriously affected any other liquor shop in the vicinity.

(Sd). K. CHOWDRY,

6th January 1902.

Reward.

Adhar Chandra Babu	...	Rs. 6.
Beni Rai Chaukidar	...	" 4.
		" 10.

Memorial to Government.

To

THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER IN CHARGE OF THE EXCISE
Department, Sibsagar Division.

THROUGH

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,

Golaghat.

SIR,

We, the undersigned Proprietors and Managers of the Tea Estates in the vicinity of the Dukenhengra grog shop, have the honour to address you with regard to it, and to lodge an objection against this grog shop in its present position, requesting that it may be removed to some point about 5 miles distant from all our estates. This grog shop is the cause of drunkenness, disorder, and rioting amongst our coolies demoralizing and destructive to them and rendering a number of them unfit for work after the drunken debauches in which they frequently indulge. We would suggest as a suitable position for the grog shop a site on the Dooder Ali towards Golaghat about half a mile from the Kumarbund ali Station, Assam Bengal Railway.

(Sd.) SHULDHAM H. SHAW,
Proprietor, Moheema Tea Estate.

(Sd.) WM. MARILLIER,
Manager, Assam United Tea Co's.

(Sd.) W. C. SMITH,
Manager, Kingsley Golaghat Tea Co's.

(Sd.) J. B. WOOSNAM,
Manager, Borjan Tea Co's.

March 17th 1902.

Moheema,

ASSAM,

9th April 1902.

To

CAPT. PLAYFAIR,
Assistant Commissioner,
GOLAGHAT.

SIR,

I have the honour to report to you that the grog shop at Dukenhengra has again on the occasion of the "Fagna" been selling grog to my coolies at annas 4 and annas 2 per bottle—prices which are in contravention of

the Excise Act Sec. [Note, Chapter V. Clause 12. "In the cases of country spirits, the minimum price has been fixed at six annas a bottle in all districts of the Province except the Khasi Hills, in which the minimum price is annas 8]. My coolies have also been supplied individually with six bottles of Rum at a time. Another breach of the law, see Excise Act for Assam Chapter II Part III clause 15, the amount sanctioned for retail sale being "one seer or one reputed quart bottle.

I have the honour to be,
Yours faithfully,
(Sd). SHULDHAM H. SHAW.

Correspondence which appeared in the "Statesman" in 1888.

THE OUTSTILLS AND THE TEA GARDENS

We have received by the mail, the copy of a despatch addressed by the Secretary of State (Lord Cross) to the Governor-General in Council dated 31st January last, on the outstill question as it affects the tea gardens, in Assam. Lord Cross informs the Viceroy that a member of Parliament has placed in his hands five letters from certain tea planters in Assam that were received by him a few months ago from Messrs. Finlay, Muir and Co., in reply to a circular addressed by them to the gardens, for which they were acting as agents in Calcutta. Now in these letters, the writers complain, as Lord Cross points out, of the way in which outstills have been opened—sometimes in spite of the planters' protests—close to, or upon their gardens, and they affirm that the facilities thus given for drinking, have led to an increase both of intemperance amongst their coolies, and of revenue to the Government. The letters are so simply written, and their moral is so clear, that we think it desirable to produce three of their number *in extenso* ;—

I

CHUBWA, LAKHIMPUR, ASSAM,
3rd October 1888.

Dear Sirs,—I beg herewith to reply to your circular letter, regarding the working of the outstill system. I may commence by saying that it is a subject which has been attracting a good deal of my attention lately, and I have even been planning over in my mind the best means of bringing such a crying evil before the notice of the public. I am therefore sincerely glad to learn that the Calcutta Missionary Conference has taken the matter up.

There is not the slightest doubt that the "Government grog shops," as they are commonly termed, are doing a vast amount of harm among the native population, and specially to garden coolies. It is quite beyond the planter's power to prevent his people from obtaining the liquor (the shop here is open from 6 A. M. to 9 P. M.). Wherever there is a large-sized garden, a grog shop is sure to be found at the nearest convenient point. Planters have protested over and over again against their erection, but without effect; in fact, I know of a case in which Government tried to force a shop on to land actually belonging to the garden, and it was only after a long fight that the manager won the day.

Sunday is, of course, the great day for drinking, and driving by I have come across coolies lying literally dead drunk at intervals in the road, covered with mud from head to foot, and have had to have them rolled on one side to clear the way for my trap. One of my best men got leave one day, bought six bottles of country spirits at a shop about four miles away, and on his way home fell across the railway line, smashing his bottles, and lying insensible, until, luckily, picked up by another coolie. It is needless to say that the drinking leads to rioting and wife-beating; cases, however, seldom come before the notice of the Government; were

they to do so, coolies would be constantly absent from the gardens, so the planter, as a rule, settles these matters himself.

On Mondays the coolies take longer over their work, and some of them fail to accomplish their very moderate tasks at all, and the unvarying and stereotyped excuse of the Mohurirs is this, "They were drunk yesterday, they are feeling it to-day."

Speaking to my native doctor the other day as to the harm the grog shop was doing, he told me it was just the same in Bengal, and that when he returned there on leave after several years' absence in Assam, he was astonished to find that the most respectable people had taken to drinking country spirits.

Six bottles per head is the Government allowance for sale daily; this rather puts the old "two bottle" days of our forefathers in the shade. The Chubwa grog shop license cost Rs. 2,500; the yearly profit amounts, I understand, to Rs. 1,200 or 48 per cent on the capital invested.

In former days, when the license purchase did not amount to any great sum, planters occasionally bought them up; now the price is very different.

It is easy enough to give you statements of facts (although Chubwa is really a very quiet garden), but it would be impossible for me to suggest any remedy that would wipe out the evil and still suit the Government exchequer. It is a terrible evil, and a growing one, and for "poor humanity's" sake, I can only hope this well directed agitation may lead to the discovery of some practical scheme to effect its cure. I am, &c.,

(Sd) GERALD FITZGERALD.

Messrs. Finlay, Muir & Co.

II

GOOMBIRA DIVISION, 8th October 1888.

DEAR SIRs,—I am in receipt of your letter, dated the 17th of September, soliciting information regarding the outstill system.

I regret to state the sad fact that drunkenness among garden coolies has spread to an alarming degree, since its promotion and encouragement by this outstill system. Any attempt to abolish or even lessen this growing evil will be hailed with pleasure.

Since the introduction of this odious system in 1883, the consumption of country spirits has, I am certain, increased sevenfold (possibly more), and it is increasing yearly, judging from the new stills that periodically spring up here and there all over the district.

The Local Government allow and cherish these stills contiguous to our gardens and bazaars. There are cases on record of proprietors and managers having laid the matter before the Local Government, clearly demonstrating the injury the industry and the health of the coolies had and were receiving at their hands from the propagation of such a system, but the said Local Government only lent a deaf ear. There are cases where managers have objected to allowing a still in the grants under their charge, but to no purpose: they were enforced.

The manufacturing places are chosen and fixed by the Local Government. These outstills are put up to auction yearly, and the right to manufacture and sell country spirits knocked down to the highest bidder. They are readily disposed of at large prices to eager competitors, bent on aggrandizement at the expense of our tea gardens and coolies' health, by making and selling them a venomous compound at four annas per quart bottle and termed by the Local Government, wholesome country spirits.

Before these outstills were created, shops where spirits could be procured by coolies were few and far between, and the said spirits could not

be purchased at less than one rupee per bottle. During these times the coolies had little or no temptation to drink, and were, although earning less money, in a much better pecuniary state than at present. The roadside and bazaar outstill absorbs their surplus cash, and more, because food and clothing are often curtailed to provide the grim fire-water.

I am not aware of any one exercising the function of an excise officer by way of testing the quality of the liquor sold to the natives, to see that the spirit so manufactured and sold contains no deleterious ingredient likely to cause hurt to the immediate health of those indulging. So that, as far as I know, there is no check upon the avaricious lessee of the said stills, and the consequence is spirits are made from the cheapest material found to yield the greatest return for the outlay, and is, as a rule, largely adulterated with most obnoxious and injurious stuffs. Just for a moment consider the price, four annas for a quart bottle, and you will readily comprehend the kind of liquor the coolie gets for his money. I may mention they don't only get drunk upon it, but go mad, and become raving, bedlamites for some time.

I also note that since the introduction of this outstill system, the coolies who indulge are much more liable to sink under an attack of sickness, and, if the Sanitary Reports are correct, sickness has increased since the system in question came into force. I don't mean to say that the whole increase is due to the greater facilities the natives now have of obtaining intoxicating liquors, but we can with safety credit it with a very heavy percentage.

On many gardens work is often much impeded by coolies being incapacitated for labour by the over indulgence in these spurious spirits, thereby rendering an injury not only to the coolies but to the planter.

I can only add, in conclusion, that the revenue derived from the outstills is directly at the expense of the welfare, health, and lives of the natives, not to speak of the tea industry.

I have confined my remarks to natives employed on tea work; other than this I am not conversant with, but I have no doubt they suffer in a like ratio. Yours, &c.,

(Sd). W. HENDERSON.

Messrs. Finlay, Muir & Co.

III

GROG SHOPS AND DRUNKENNESS.

Tafflong, 14th October 1888.

DEAR SIRS.—Tafflong is well supplied with the former, and the latter is the consequence; six years ago there was only one grog shop at the north-east corner of the garden, where the bazaar is held twice weekly, when the people fully availed themselves of the convenience. Two years later the garden was extended two miles to the west, and the people on the garden increased from 300 to 600, and it must have been thought that another grog shop at the west end would be a sure source of revenue. There is not a habitation within a mile of it. I was asked if I objected to place a shop there, and protested all I could to prevent it. The shop was placed there, and is there now, and only 200 yards from the cultivation, to induce the coolies working there to part with their money. I have often sent carts and men to carry home the helpless coming from the east and from the west, some more or less injured by falls and fights, and unable to work for days, and some for weeks. This is going on every week. But, as yet only three cases proved fatal on the spot,—one woman was trampled to death; another young man was left drunk in the garden by his brother and crawled home himself; next morning the skeleton of the other was found surrounded by jackals; lastly, another man in a mad fit of drink, killed his wife with an axe. I have no doubt half the sickness on the garden is caused by the stuffs supplied at these shops,

and to which, so far as I know, there is no limit or restraint. If the coolies go beyond these shops a mile or thereabout to Khassia villages for grog they consider better, and are caught, they are either imprisoned or fined one or two or three months' pay. These may be coolies of Act I of 1882 for the protection of immigrants. This incapacity for work chiefly through drink has been a great source of annoyance to managers and a great loss to gardens, while it seems impossible to prevent it. For when a site is applied for any grog shops it is sure to be granted, let the objections be what they may, I am, &c.

(Sd.) J. G. FRASER.

MESSRS. FINLAY, MUIR, AND Co., CALCUTTA.

Now, we do not produce these letters as a reproach to the Commissioner of Assam, but no one can read them, we think, without the conviction arising in his mind, that the authorities who have acted as here shown, are wanting in that earnestness of purpose from which alone, we can expect reform. And it is clear from the terms of the despatch itself that Lord Cross suspects this to be the case. He is plainly not satisfied with the report upon the subject made by the Commissioner of Excise in Assam (Mr. Williams) and writes in the final paragraph of his despatch as follows:—

There has been much said about the liquor traffic in the tea districts, and there is some apparent discrepancy between the account of matters given by the planters and the account gathered from official reports. I therefore commend the matter to the consideration of your Excellency's Government, with the suggestion that further and very careful inquiry into the facts, and into the need for change in the excise administration of the tea districts, may be advisable. The paper published at pages 2096—2100 of the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 17th October last, shows that an independent inquiry into allegations made regarding excise affairs in the Hooghly district brought to light valuable information and formed the basis for important changes in the local Excise arrangements. I should be glad to receive at an early date a copy of any instructions you may issue upon this matter.

We know well the difficulty of the subject, and the pressure upon the Government to obtain from its present sources of revenue, an income equal to its annual expenditure, without resorting to new methods of taxation. The conviction of our own mind is, we confess, that it is the want of legitimate control over the annual expenditure that produces this pressure. We are throwing upon the Indian revenue, charges that ought to be borne by the mother-country, and then attempting to 'finance' a very large expenditure upon railway extension and frontier defences out of taxes, instead of borrowing capital at home, with the result of making the Government look askance at every suggestion to reform the Abkari system. India wants a Viceroy who will stand between her people and the Home Government, and until she finds such a Viceroy, the ordinary revenues of the country will never meet an expenditure over which India has no control whatever.

EXCISE ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S DESPATCHES.

The following is a return of the Despatches from the India Office to the Viceroy regarding the Resolution moved by Mr. Samuel Smith, and carried by the House on 30th April—

To His Excellency the Most Honorable the Governor-General of India in Council.

INDIA OFFICE, LONDON, *May 16th 1889.*

My Lord Marquis,—In continuation of my Despatch (No. 28, Revenue), dated 19th April 1888, I enclose a copy of a report of a debate

in the House of Commons, which took place on the 30th ultimo, on the Excise Administration of the Government of India. You will observe that a Resolution concerning that system in general terms and calling for its immediate reform was carried by a majority of 113 to 103. I desire to call Your Excellency's attention particularly to the speech of Sir John Gorst, Under-Secretary of State for India, which represents my views upon the subject under discussion.

2. The Resolution, you will perceive, does not discriminate between the different systems, of Abkari administration prevailing in the several provinces of India, nor between the variation in the carrying out of those systems which circumstances render necessary in different districts of the same province; nor is any alternative policy laid down by the House of Commons in this Resolution for the guidance of the Government of India in the very difficult task of regulating the consumption of intoxicating liquors by the various populations of India. Her Majesty's Government, however, gathered from the debate which took place and the speeches by which this Resolution was recommended to the adoption of the House of Commons, that the principles enunciated in my Despatches of the 19th April 1888 and the 14th March 1889 met with the entire approval of all parties in the House of Commons. These principles were:—

(1) That any extension of the habit of drinking among Indian populations is to be discouraged.

(2) That the tax on spirits should be as high as may be possible without giving rise to illicit methods of making and selling liquor.

(3) That, subject to these considerations, a maximum revenue should be raised from a minimum consumption of intoxicating liquors.

3. I understand that these principles have been frankly assented to by the Government of India and by all the Provincial Governments, and are indeed those to which those Governments have long endeavoured to make their Abkari administration conform.

4. I fully appreciate the opinion expressed by Your Excellency with regard to this matter in the recent discussion of the Budget as reported in the *Gazette of India* of the 30th day of March last, and I have every confidence that Your Excellency, in view of the opinion expressed by the House of Commons, and in accordance with your own views, will proceed with as little delay as possible to carry into effect the measures which you already have under consideration for the more effectual control and discouragement of the liquor traffic, according to the various circumstances of the populations under your Government.

5. It was asserted in the debate that, however sound the views and intentions of the Government of India and of the Provincial Governments might be, those intentions were not carried in all cases into practical effect by some of the executive officers of the Abkari Department. As an illustration of this the passages transcribed below* from the Report on the Excise Administration of the North-West Provinces and Oudh for 1885-86 were cited, to show that attempts were sometimes made to force intoxicating liquor upon unwilling consumers, contrary to the principles laid down.

* Report on the Excise Administration of the North-West Provinces and Oudh, for the year ending September 1886.

Page 7. "In some districts where the number of shops was below the Government standard, attempts were made to increase them, but not with conspicuous success."

Page 13. "*Bawal*.—Efforts are being made to bring the number of shops up to the prescribed standard. Besides the 57 shops now opened licences were granted for others, but they were withdrawn when it was found that no liquor was sold at those shops.

"*Etah*.—At the last settlement efforts were again made to induce the Abkars to open new shops, but as last year to no purpose; no one would bid even a nominal price for them.

"*Muttra*.—Licences were taken out for 37 shops, but six had to be withdrawn."

A perusal of the whole of this Report would show that such expressions as those quoted below misrepresent the policy of the local administration; they are, moreover, peculiarly liable to misconstruction, and when separated from the rest of the Report appear to be entirely contrary to the policy of Government. I have no doubt that if these passages had been supposed by Your Excellency's Government to bear the meaning that has been placed upon them, they would not have been allowed to pass unnoticed.

6. While, therefore, I am unable to see in the Resolution of the House of Commons any reason for departing from the principles of Abkari Administration which I have pressed upon Your Excellency in the Despatches above mentioned, Your Excellency may with advantage make use of the Resolution for the purpose of inculcating on the several Provincial Governments increased vigilance in watching the practice of their Executive officers in order to secure a conformity in all districts of the Indian Empire to the Abkari policy which has been adopted, and in the case of those provinces in which a reform of Abkari administration is in progress, for the purpose of expediting the completion of each reform without delay.

I have, &c. (signed) Cross.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India in Council.

India Office, London, 19th April 1888.

My Lcmd,—In continuation of my Despatch, No. 63, dated 18th August last, I forward a copy of "Times" newspaper report of a debate in the House of Commons on " * * * the extension of the sale of intoxicating liquors for (Indian) revenue purposes with serious results to the moral and material welfare of the people." A copy of Your Excellency's Despatch, No. 166, dated 25th June 1887, which reported fully upon the Indian Excise administration, had been printed by Order of the House of Commons, and was in the hands of the Honourable Members before the recent debate.

2. I am satisfied that, in controlling and directing the Indian Excise Administration, the Supreme and Local Governments are following and have followed the principle that as high a tax as possible should be placed on spirits without giving rise to illicit distillation. In the interests of the Indian people, as well as in the interest of the Indian Treasury, the Excise systems of India must always be based upon the considerations,—

(1.) That an extension of the habit of drinking among Indian populations is to be discouraged.

(2.) That the tax on spirits and liquor should be as high as may be possible without giving rise to illicit methods of making and selling liquor.

Subject to the above considerations, as large a revenue as possible should be raised from a small consumption of intoxicating liquors.

3. Your Excellency's recent Despatch, and also the periodical Excise reports, show that your Government and the Local Governments practically shape the Indian Excise administration in conformity with these considerations. At the same time, I occasionally find in periodical reports passages which read as if the increase of the Excise revenue was the paramount object of good Excise administration, and as if additional facilities for liquor drinking might be sometimes given more readily than the actual needs of the people demand. I think it desirable that Your Excellency's Government should take an early opportunity of drawing the attention of Local Governments to the principles by which their Excise administration ought to be guided.

4. The Report of the Bengal Excise Commission points to the conclusion that some years ago the number of licensed outstills and liquor shops was unduly increased in parts of Bengal. And I am glad to find that the action taken by the Government of Bengal on that Report has resulted in a considerable reduction of liquor shops, and of the estimated quantity of spirits passed into consumption. I incline to the view—a view upon which the Local Governments appear generally to act—that the central distillery system is preferable to the outstill or the contract system, for all places and tracts where the population is large and where adequate means exist for supervising and controlling the distillery arrangements. Under that system every gallon of spirit passed into consumption must pay the full duty; whereas under the contract system, and still more under the outstill system, it is the interest and in the power of the distiller to make as much spirit and to push the sale thereof by cheapening liquor as far as he possibly can.

5. I shall be glad to receive a copy of any instruction that Your Excellency may see fit to issue in accordance with the remarks contained in the foregoing paragraphs.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CROSS.

Extract from Revenue Despatch, No. 31, of 14th March 1889, from the Secretary of State for India to the Governor-General of India in Council.

I desire to remind Your Excellency that, in my Despatch of the 19th April 1888 (No. 28 Revenue), I laid down the principles (1) that any extension of the habits of drinking among Indian populations is to be discouraged; (2) that the tax on spirits and liquors should be as high as may be possible without giving rise to illicit methods of making and selling liquor; and (3) that, subject to these considerations, a *maximum* revenue should be raised from a *minimum* consumption of intoxicating liquors. In other words, to quote from the Report of a Committee appointed by the Government of Madras in the year 1884, "it should always be borne in mind that the taxation of the sale of intoxicating liquors is imposed primarily in order to restrain the consumption of such liquors, and not for the purpose of making money out of their sale." I am confident that Your Excellency's Government will adhere strictly to these principles in any measures which you may think fit to adopt, and that you will do all that lies in your power to ensure that they shall be observed by all who are engaged in the work of the Excise Department.

**Extract from Minutes of meeting of the Assam
Branch Indian Tea Association held
in July 1899.**

When the Chairman said—

Liquor Shops.

The proposal put forward last year, *viz.* that liquor shops within 2 miles of a garden should be first offered to the Proprietor or Manager of that garden, so that more efficient control might be exercised over the sale of liquor, has not met with any success, and I hope I am able to give a satisfactory reason for this.

Mr. Davis in his note of the 17th May 1898 quotes Mr. Driberg as follows:—

"It has been alleged that the larger revenue we obtain from the 'country spirit shops is evidence of a larger consumption, but I cannot agree in this view.

"It is rather evidence of less unlicensed distillation going on, of greater supervision by our district, Police, and Excise officers and of greater endeavours, successfully made, to ensure people, who must drink obtaining excise liquor.

"It must be recollected that under the present system our object is, to make liquors as expensive as possible, and the only way we can do so, is to make the *Abkars* pay as high a license fee as liquor will bear without making its price prohibitive to the general consumers. We cannot tax the materials from which country spirits are made, and we adopt the only possible method to prevent liquor from being sold cheap. A large revenue is quite compatible with high priced liquor, and a small consumption. Indeed, the more we endeavour to obtain this end by improving our system, the larger our receipt, up to a certain limit, will be."

Mr. Davis evidently endorses this theory but would it not be equally possible, that larger consumption might be due to a reduction in price? Mr. Driberg and Mr. Davis appeared to shut their eyes to the possibility of Lessees being able to evade the law, owing to stringent measures adopted by the District Magistrates and Police for the inspection of liquor shops.

No Planter would think of buying up a liquor shop, at the average it fetched for the last few years, simply because the loss would be too great, and yet the competition for these grog shops is enormous. We need not go far to trace the reason, ask any Bengalee what he pays for his liquor, and he will tell you 0-4-0 a bottle, but Planter would sell this at the legal minimum price of 0-6-6.

In a case brought against a Grog shopwallah at Golaghat about 2 months ago the evidence showed that 0-4-0 was the only charge known.

In another case a Manager said he could produce any number of coolies to prove that 0-4-0 was the common charge and this Grog shop was under the very eyes of the Police.

Another Manager being unaware that 0-4-0 was an illegal charge, himself bought Rs. 25 worth for the Poojabs.

The Chief Commissioner's letter No. 2096 dated 3rd November 1880 gives instructions that strict control should be kept over liquor shops, and that if drunkenness and violence occur, the shops should be closed, what then may we ask are the Police and others responsible doing in the matter? How many shops have been closed on the above grounds? where have these tens of coolies, we see on a leave day lying on the roads, or even across the Railway track, obtained the liquor? I should be surprised to hear if one Grog shop have been closed in consequence.

I regret to say that the policy of Government with regard to Grog shops, is one that does not encourage action on the part of Divisional or Sub-Divisional Officers which would tend to the reduction of Excise revenue.

An intelligent investigation regarding the prices paid for Grog shops would long ago have convinced Government that the Lessees had to make their profits otherwise than by legitimate means, the foregoing proves what these means are.

It is a sufficient censure on Government for us to say that for the present we do not ask them to do anything more than to see that their own laws are strictly carried out, and obeyed, when this is done and not until then can we confidently assert if we have any grievance against the law as it stands.

I was much struck the other day with the evidence of Major General Burnett before the licensing commission with reference to the management of army canteens, the circumstances being so paralled with our own. Lord Peel asked the witness to explain what he meant by unaccountable profits, the answer was that among other things there was a large amount of cheap beer supplied to the men in mixtures.

The General went on to say that although drunkenness had been rife in his regiment in Gibraltar there was practically none at Cork, and asking an old soldier the reason, he said, that whisky was too expensive to buy and that it would take more than all the porter in Ireland to make a man drunk, generally speaking he said the soldier attributed drunkenness to *bad liquor*.

I maintain that if the quality and price of liquor be raised we shall very soon see a marked improvement in the health and physique of our coolies.

Gentlemen, I have dealt rather longer than I intended on this subject, but it affects us so materially, I may say, morally and financially, that I don't think we can be too earnest, if we have been apathetic to date on this matter let us make up for lost time, and all go heartily to work together to lessen an evil that undoubtedly accounts for a very large number of deaths among our coolies.

Discussion in the House of Lords in May 1901 on Indian Liquor and Opium shops.

(Extract from the "Akbari.")

We publish on another page a verbatim report of a discussion, which took place in the House of Lords recently, between The House of Lords and Indian Liquor Shops. Lord Kinnaird and the Under-Secretary of State for India—Lord Hardwicke—on the question of liquor shops on the Assam tea estates. The tea planters have often protested against the way in which shops are opened all round their plantations, resulting in the demoralization of the coolies whom they bring from different parts of India, at great expense. From letters recently received we gather that strong indignation is being felt in Assam against the recent attempts of the Excise department in this direction. The planters naturally object to the establishment of Government grog-shops on the edge of their estates after they have had the trouble of opening up wild tracts of country, cultivating them, and populating them with immigrant coolies. For our part we object to this policy more for the sake of the coolies themselves, who are degraded and befouled by these drinking dens—for they are no better than that. We find one or two paragraphs bearing upon this question in the Assam Excise Report for 1899-1900. Commenting on an increase in revenue, the Commissioner says:—

"The country spirit revenue naturally tends to increase with the increase in the foreign population, tea-garden, and other coolies, as the larger demand, and consequently larger profits, induce keen competition for shops on the part of rival *abkars*."

Some effort appears to have been made by the Excise Commissioner to induce planters themselves to accept the settlement and control of country spirit shops, but it is not a very reasonable thing to expect tea-planters to turn publicans; and indeed, the idea of establishing what would be little better than truck-shops in the hands of unscrupulous managers is open to very serious objection. We are satisfied that if some one would take the trouble to send a circular letter to every tea-planter in Assam, asking for a definite opinion on this subject, there would be an enormous majority in favour of the absolute suppression of all liquor-shops on tea estates. As the Government of India profess to be guided by the principle of local option in these matters, the reply of Lord Hardwicke to Lord Kinnaird can only be regarded as quite inadequate and inconclusive. We understand that it is Mr. Caine's intention to refer to the matter at some length during the debate on the Indian Budget.

Indian Liquor and Opium Shops.

DISCUSSION IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

On May 20th Lord Kinnaird asked the Under Secretary of State for India if the attention of the Secretary of State had been called to the repeated complaints of tea planters in Assam, Darjeeling, and other

parts of Northern India with regard to the location of liquor shops and opium shops in the coolie villages attached to plantations; if he had observed the statement of the Excise Commissioner of Assam in his report for the year 1899-1900 to the effect that the consumption of country spirit naturally tended to increase with the foreign population of tea garden and other coolies, which induced keen competition for shops on the part of rival liquor sellers; if he was aware that the planters themselves were now entering into competition with the liquor sellers, and that in Sylhet six licences had been taken up by tea planters last year; and, if so, would he put a stop to a practice which could only result in increased consumption of spirits, in contradiction to the policy of the Government of India as declared in their despatch to the Secretary of State, No. 29, 4th February 1890? The question was, he said, one of considerable importance. Coolies were brought long distances at great expense to the planters, and often from parts of the country where they had not been accustomed to take strong drink, and it had been found in many cases that their health largely suffered owing to the facilities of obtaining liquor. He did not approach the question so much from the Temperance standpoint as from the point of the injustice of the Government, who were all-powerful as to the opening or closing of grog shops, increasing the number of centres of danger to the coolies simply for the purpose of raising additional revenue.

The Under Secretary of State for India (the Earl of Hardwicke): My lords, I will say just one or two words as to the coolies who come to these tea plantations to work. The noble lord has implied that they come from parts where drink is unknown to them. I think the noble lord is incorrect in stating that. They are aboriginal tribes coming from the north eastern frontier, and, I believe, are addicted to a certain kind of drink which they manufacture themselves out of a herb. I believe that long before we went to India they were drinking this production to a considerable extent. In proof of this I may mention that in Assam and Darjeeling, the places to which this question refers, the local inhabitants drink hardly at all. In fact, nearly the whole of the Excise revenue is derived from the drinking habits of coolies. The noble lord seems to be under the impression that the policy of selling shops to the tea planters or their managers is contrary to the policy that has been adopted under the despatch of the Government of India of 4th February, 1890. The system that exists at present is to fix in each locality the number of shops that are necessary to supply a certain quantity of spirits to the coolies. Whether the shops are sold to the planters or in the open market does not increase the number of them. The number is at a fixed limit, but the Excise Commissioners have sold in Assam during the past year eleven shops to the tea planters, who bought them with only one object, namely, to be able to control the natives whom they employ, and prevent them from indulging excessively in drink. That, so far from being in contradiction to the policy of the Government of India, is directly in accordance with their policy. The noble lord asks whether the Secretary of State has observed the statement of the Excise Commissioner of Assam in his report for the year 1899-1900, to the effect that the consumption of country spirit naturally tends to increase with the foreign population of tea garden and other coolies? I think that is a self-evident proposition. Of course, as more coolie emigrants arrive in any district more liquor will be consumed. At the same time, it does not follow that the individual coolie has greater opportunities for drinking. That this increase induces keen competition for shops on the part of rival liquor sellers is, I think, also evident. The more coolies there are employed, the more liquor is sold, and consequently the more valuable each of these shops become. But, as I have said, the number of shops do not increase. In all, eleven licences have been taken up by planters. With regard to the latter part of the question, I think it is unnecessary again to state that it is not the opinion of the Government of India, or of my noble friend the Secretary of State, that the policy adopted will result in an increased consumption of spirits; and in the opinion of the Secretary of State the policy that is now enforced is in every way consistent with the policy laid down in the despatch referred to.

103, CLIVE STREET,
Calcutta, 5th September 1899.

MY DEAR MR. BUCKINGHAM,

Grog Shops.

I was so pleased to read your remarks at the Annual General Meeting at Moriani, and you will since have noticed an article in the *Indian Planters' Gazette* of 26th August, referring to my general representations as far back as March 1898. The Association here seems to have allowed it to lapse during my absence, and I am now writing to More and Hudson per copies of letters enclosed. I also hand you copy of all correspondence to date, some of which you no doubt have, and should be greatly obliged if you would give me any further information and facts you know of, so that the Association here may also bring the matter up again and refer to it in the minutes of the next General Committee Meeting.

Believe me,
Yours sincerely,
GEORGE A. ORMISTON,

103, OLIVE STREET,
Calcutta, 5th September 1899.

MY DEAR MORE/HUDSON,

Grog Shops.

No doubt you will have read the leading article on the front page in the *Planters' Gazette* of August 26th, under the head of "Excise Administration in Assam," also the Excise report of 1898-1899 to which it refers. This is the first notice I have seen of any doubt having been expressed in regard to the general remarks made in my letter of 28th March last, as I thought the Committee of the Indian Tea Association in my absence from Calcutta for so long last and this year, (15 months) would have made the further reference required to substantiate the information I gave, but, as this was not done at the time, I now would like to go into the matter and repudiate the assertions made by Mr. Davis.

I have taken copies of all the papers exchanged with the Association and enclose them, from which, you will observe specially, that, the statement of figures in regard to revenue were not mine, but, taken from the Dibrugarh paper made public property.

In making liquors as expensive as possible, it does not appear to me to have had the desired effect, as in making Abkars pay higher for their licenses it has only gone further to compel the Lessees to sell inferior liquor to reimburse themselves for the increased tax paid in securing their shops.

The fact brought to light since this matter was referred to go to prove that the liquor sold is to a large extent very inferior, and the greater supervision which Mr. Davis states has been exercised by the Excise officers must be very lax.

There is little use in sending Government officers in their official capacity to draw samples of liquors, as it is natural to expect that the vendors would not give them anything but the best quality which they have in reserve. If Government were to depute private detectives, there is some chance of finding out culprits and bringing them to justice.

In regard to my general remarks as to the report given to me by Mr. Winsland that some deaths had taken place in North Lakhimpur

owing to bad liquor, I should be pleased if you could give me some actual facts, names and dates, in regard to this, so that I might verify the general statement then made.

In reference to the shop in North Lakhimpur, I understand it was removed sometime ago and I should like if you can give any particulars of cases, so that I may bring them to prominence before the Association and the Government. The only letters and petitions I have, are annexed pointing out to the Sub-Divisional officer of North Lakhimpur how serious the matter was, and I understand further petitions and representations were sent in but I have not copies.

Further information of this kind I should like to receive, and would no doubt read Mr. Buckingham's able remarks at the last Annual Meeting of the Association at Moriani, which practically settled the points raised by Government against my representations made in March 1898, and which gives sure proof of the inferior stuff sold to the public, and further proves that the supervision by the Excise officers are far from satisfactory. These facts will show that the complaints made in my letter of 28th March 1898, were not unfounded, and many other cases which took place only confirm all that has been said and the effect was, that the shop referred to, was eventually removed.

I hope you will pardon me for asking you for all information you can give, as I still think that the way in which grog shops are conducted is a very serious matter for the industry.

Trusting to hear from you very soon,—before our next meeting in 3 weeks or so.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) GEORGE A. ORMISTON.

Calcutta, 28th March 1898.

MY DEAR WHITE,

Probably the Committee of the Indian Tea Association noticed the para which appeared in the *Times of Assam* dated 16th February 1898 regarding the sale of Country Liquor and Retail Rum shops. It said "The sale of these shops in Dibrugarh held on the 21st instant fetched Rs. 6,01,032 or Rs. 5,04,180, over that of last year. Comment "on this is not necessary. The sale of opium shops is not concluded yet."

I do not know whether it is that Government have sanctioned more liquor shops being opened or whether it is the competition for the existing ones, in any case it appears that the trade is a good one for the vendors and if they have paid more for their licenses they will doubtless have to make up the difference in more "deadly stuff" than previously supplied.

I would instance a case which came before me when on my recent tour through Assam. A Manager gave Rs. 10 each to a lot of Sirdars to proceed to the Districts to recruit—They only got as far as the nearest grog shop and some hours after the Manager happened to be passing along and saw most of them on the road more dead than alive with the vile stuff which they had got from the shop-keeper and some deaths were reported to have occurred. No check seems to be kept as to the quality or quantity of Liquor supplied and I think Government should be called upon to do something to stop a grave misfortune to the Industry—what is Revenue to the Government at the expense of the Tea Industry. This is not the way to assist in peopling Assam, which Government are so desirous of doing.

Opium shops are as bad and something should also be done in respect to them.

I view the opening of Grog and Opium shops to the extent they have lately been—with alarm and in the interests of the Tea Industry, I trust the Association will look carefully into the matter and take what steps are necessary to restrict them and to see that they are not opened near gardens to disorganise labor.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) GEORGE A. ORMISTON.

J. D. P. WHITE Esq.
Assistant Secretary,
INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION.

INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION.
Calcutta, 11th April 1898.

No. 95-0

MY DEAR ANDERSON,

As arranged at the meeting of the General Committee I send you a copy of Mr. Ormiston's letter about increase in the number of licenses issued for country liquor and retail rum shops in Assam. You undertook to communicate in the first instance, privately and unofficially, with the Chief Commissioner on the subject.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd) W. PARSONS.

Enclosure.

Copy of letter of 28th March from Mr. G. A. Ormiston.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
SHILLONG.
27th May 1893.

MY DEAR ANDERSON,

In continuation of my letter of the 27th April about country spirit shops in the Assam Valley I enclose for the information of your Committee a note from Mr. A. W. Davis, Commissioner of Excise, which deals with the various questions raised in Mr. Ormiston's letter of the 28th March. I have taken the opportunity of looking up the records of the elaborate enquiry which was made in 1889 at the instance of the tea industry regarding the Excise system of the province and cannot but regard it as a satisfactory symptom that so few complaints should since that date have been put forward by tea planters on the subject. None were made to me while on tour either this year or last. I am disposed to think therefore that there is not very much to complain about. At the same time I fully recognise the general grievance and can only give you my assurance that whenever anything definite is brought to my notice which appears to need a remedy I will lose no time in taking steps to apply it. Upon general statements such as have been made in the present correspondence I think it would be useless to take further action.

I am, yours sincerely,
(Sd.) H. J. S. COTTON.

G. G. ANDERSON Esq.,
President of Tea Association,
103, CLIVE STREET.

Note on country spirit shops in the Dibrugarh Sub-division of Lakhimpur District.

As the complaints made in the letters sent to me relate apparently only to the Dibrugarh Sub-division of the Lakhimpur District I have in this note dealt only with that Sub-division.

3. The complaints made may be summed up under two heads—

- (1) that the number of shops has been largely increased.
- (2) that no supervision is exercised by Government over the quality of the liquor sold at the shops.

I don't think that there is any foundation for either of these complaints. As regards (1) the following statement shews the number of shops that have been open in the Dibrugarh Sub-division since 1890-1901 *i. e.* since that date of the special enquiry into the grog shop question made by Mr. Driberg in 1889—

Year	No. of shops	Revenue Demand.
1890-1891	19	Rs. 51,144
1891-1892	19	" 53,904
1892-1893	18	" 61,368
1893-1894	20	" 67,011
1894-1895	20	" 95,265
1895-1896	20	" 87,211
1896-1897	19	" 94,077
1897-1898	20	" 92,059
1898-1899	21	" 1,42,785

From this it will be seen that the number of shops has remained about the same while the revenue demand has very largely increased. The increase of the demand for 1898-1899 as compared with the previous year is about 50,000 and not five lakhs as shewn in Mr. Ormiston's letter. In addition to the 21 country spirit shops 10 kum shops have been settled for 1898-1899 for a revenue of Rs. 10,260 as against 9 settled in 1897-1898 for a revenue of Rs. 5,114.

3. A certain increase in the revenue demand was to be expected as the immigrant population of the Lakhimpur District has increased from 80,551 in 1891 to 1,24,943 in 1897, the last year for which figures are available. In addition there has, I believe, been a very considerable increase in the population of Dibrugarh Town. Part of course of the very great rise in the demand as compared with the previous year is due to keen and jealous competition at the auction sales and will probably be followed by a considerable drop during next year; a glance at the figures given above shows that the fluctuations since 1894-1895 have been very considerable.

4. It is however by no means certain that a large increase in license fees implies a corresponding increase in consumption. On this point I would beg to quote certain remarks made by Mr. Driberg at page 29 of his special report.

"It has been alleged that the larger revenue we obtain from the country spirit shops is evidence of a larger consumption, but I cannot agree in this view. It is rather evidence of less unlicensed distillation going on, of greater supervision by our district and Police and Excise officers and of greater endeavours successfully made to ensure people, who must drink, obtaining Excise liquor. It must be recollected that under the present system our object is to make liquors as expensive as possible and the only way we can do so is to make the *abkars* pay as high a license fee as liquor will bear without making its price prohibitive to the general consumers. We cannot tax the materials from which country spirits are made and we adopt the only possible method to prevent liquor being sold cheap. A large revenue is quite compatible with high priced liquor and a small consumption. Indeed, the more we endeavour to obtain this end by improving our system, the larger our receipts up to certain limit will be."

5. Now with reference to the second complaint that Government exercises no supervision over the quality of the liquor sold at the license

shops. Shops are regularly inspected by district and Sub-divisional officers and also by the Police, the strength of the liquor sold is tested and specimens of the liquor are occasionally sent down to Calcutta for analysis. These analyses have never resulted in the detection of any deleterious substances in the spirits sold so that Mr. Ormiston's complaint as to quality of the liquor sold appears to be unfounded. That the liquor is weak is evident from the tables shewing the strength of country spirits which are published every year in the provincial Excise reports. During the year 1896-1897 the strength of the stronger description of country spirits in the Dibrugarh Sub-division was 55.3 under proof and the price was Re. 1 a bottle, while that of the weaker liquor was 71.5 under proof and the average price 8 annas the minimum price at which liquor can be sold being 6 annas.

6. It is of course open to any one who doubts the analyses or the tests for strength to institute enquiries on his own behalf. It seems a pity that Mr. Ormiston took no steps to verify the occurrence of several deaths that are said to have occurred among certain garden sirdars as the result of drinking country spirits on a particular occasion, which he mentions, or that the Manager of the estate to which the men belonged did not obtain specimens of the liquor which proved so deadly.

7. Now as to the location of country spirit shops. Since Mr. Driberg's special enquiry in 1889 as the result of which many country spirit shops in the province were closed and the sites of others were altered in deference to complaints made, complaints have been very few indeed. As far as I can ascertain there have since 1889 been only 6 formal complaints for the whole province. As the result of these complaints objectionable sites were altered in 5 cases and in one case a shop in the Darrang district (paying an annual license fee of Rs. 6,000) was closed.

8. Only one of these complaints relates to a shop in the Dibrugarh Sub-division: This was the Ledo shop the site of which was objected to on sanitary grounds by the Assam Railways and Trading Company. This was in 1894 and as a result of the complaint the site of the shop was altered.

9. Any complaints that may be made are certain of due consideration by District officers and by myself as Commissioner of Excise. As I am sure that there is no desire on the part of officers of the Administration to establish unnecessary shops. The object of the Excise Administration of this Province has always been to have open only so many shops as are required to keep down illicit distillation and to get from those shops the maximum in the way of license fees with the object of keeping up the price of liquor and so limiting the consumption.

10. As regards opium shops which are alluded to by Mr. Ormiston, I would beg to call attention to the fact that the customers of these shops are the indigenous inhabitants of the country who have from time immemorial been accustomed to the use of the drug, the consumption of which has shewn a considerable falling off during recent years. The tea planting community too would appear not to be unanimous on the subject of opium shops. During the current year in the Nowgong district 13 shops some of which were situated on tea gardens, were closed, the number of shops in the district being reduced from 148 to 135. A protest against the closing of these shops was at once made by the Nowgong branch of the Indian Tea Association to the Chief Commissioner thus shewing that in Nowgong at any rate the closing of opium shops is not approved by the planting Community.

(Sd) A. W. DAVIS,
Commissioner of Excise.

DATED SHILLONG,
The 17th May 1898.

INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION,
Calcutta, 18th June 1898.

No. 191-0.

J. BUCKINGHAM ESQ., C. I. E.,
Amgoorie P. O. Assam.

DEAR SIR,

In reply to your letter of 7th instant I have now the pleasure to enclose copies of the correspondence in connection with Grog and Opium shops in Assam.

The delay in sending these to you is due to the fact that Mr. Davis Note dealing with the questions raised in Mr. Ormiston's letter of 28th March was in course of circulation to the General Committee.

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) JOHN T. ROBERTSON,
Assistant Secretary

9th November 1897.

FROM THE MANAGER,
Joyhing Tea Estate,

TO THE SUB-DIVISIONAL OFFICER,
North Lakhimpur.

SIR,

I beg to bring to your kind notice a scene witnessed by myself yesterday outside the native liquor shop situated at the corner of the Joyhing and Dejoo roads.

Some 50 recruiting Sirdars leaving Joyhing for the recruiting districts, were joined by a large number of their friends at the liquor shop, and the scene when I drove along during the afternoon can only be described as disgraceful for I can truly say that for a mile on either side of the liquor shop, I saw dozen and dozens of men and women lying prostrate on the Government road. Outside the shop itself I had the greatest difficulty in getting the bodies of men and women dragged off the road before I could pass and the wonder was that no accident occurred through these coolies still able to keep their legs mobbing and holding on to my buggy, there could not have been less than 100 coolies here, some lying in heaps one on the other, and others screaming, fighting and rioting. The whole thing of course was a drunken orgie, but very disgraceful for all that and harmful to all concerned.

I do not know the law on the matter but if this shopkeeper is not legally entitled to such absolute free license, I would request that an enquiry be made into the matter and if my statement be found correct, the man be properly punished failing this I beg to petition that immediate steps be taken to have this shop removed to a distance less convenient to the coolies of this estate.

I have &c.,
(Sd.) F. E. WINSLAND,
Manager, Joyhing Tea Estate,

DEJOO TEA COMPANY LIMITED,

North Lakhimpur.

Upper Assam, 2nd February 1898.

H. A. COLQUHOUN Esq., I. C. S.,

North Lakhimpur.

SIR,

Yesterday I sent into the Thanna the body of one Goya Kharia, which was found on the road between the Grog Shop and Stills—the man having died from the effects of alcohol—having been too drunk to get as far even as the village, midway between this and the grog shop. It is but a very short time ago since Joyhing coolies were seen lying about the road most disgustingly drunk and absolutely incapable of either moving or speaking—now a healthy old man has succumbed.—Whether the man in charge of the grog shop was punished over the Joyhing scandal or not I do not know, but the fact remains that it is nothing less than disgraceful that a man (for want of proper supervision) may ply coolies with grog till they are literally dead drunk, week after week with impunity. I should like to know the result of the Native Doctor's *Post mortem* examination on the body, for that the man Goya died from natural causes I deny, and can produce European testimony as to the state the man was in on Sunday evening and the distance from the grog shop. The grog shop man deserves severe punishment and the cancelment of his license and I trust steps will be taken to put an end to, for good and all, the disgraceful scenes I have witnessed for years in the vicinity of the grog shop—for the neighbouring gardens are the losers in many ways

I have &c.,

(Sd.) W. A. HUDSON,

Manager.

DEJOO TEA COMPANY LIMITED,

North Lakhimpur.

Upper Assam, 10th January 1899.

H. A. COLQUHOUN Esq., I. C. S.,

Sub-Divisional Officer,

NORTH LAKHIMPUR.

SIR,

I regret I have once more to protest against the want of proper supervision at the Dejoo Joyhing grog shop. Another of my coolies (the third within a year) died on Sunday night from the effects of alcoholism and exposure. It is very evident there is a want of supervision for either too much is sold to individual people or the liquor is of a very poisonous nature, and not fit for human consumption. In each case the victims have been healthy coolies, and I beg that the shop may be removed to a site nearer the station where more control can be given than in the case at present. The sights one can see almost any Sunday afternoon in the vicinity of the shop are simply disgusting, and apparently no steps are taken to mitigate the evil. I would draw your attention to its magnitude, more especially as my garden is on the unhealthy list, with a view (1) to the removal of the shop and (2) wherever it may be placed a better

system of supervision, while a periodical analysis of liquor sold might also be made with advantage to the health of those who drink it.

I have &c.

(Sd.) W. A. HUDSON,

Manager.

13th January 1899.

H. A. COLQUHOUN ESQ., I. C. S.,

Sub-Divisional Officer,

NORTH LAKHIMPUR.

SIR,

In continuation of my letter of the 10th instant, *re* the Dejoo Joyhing grog shop, finding that Mr. Winsland has the same objections to it as I have, and also that he petitioned for its removal over a year ago, I now beg that it may be abolished altogether.

Similar objections to those raised some years ago when I petitioned (successfully) for the removal of the opium shop from Dejoo will no doubt be made; but I venture to say, as has been proved in that case since the opium shop was abolished, that the objections to the removal of the liquor shop will be found groundless and in time vanish too. At present it is little short of a premium on crime and drunkenness, detrimental alike to coolies and garden proprietors, and the fact that large gardens like Lilibarrie, Silonibarrie, and Harmuty can get along without reach of a liquor shop at their doors, is I hold, reason enough for its removal. I trust you will see your way to abolish it and thus greatly benefit the Joyhing and Dejoo gardens.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) W. A. HUDSON,

Manager.

Dated 13th January 1899.

FROM THE MANAGER,

Joyhing Tea Estate,

TO THE SUB-DIVISIONAL OFFICER,

North Lakhimpur.

SIR,

Liquor Shop on Dejoo-Joyhing Road.

Mr. Hudson, the Manager of the Dejoo Tea Company, having informed me that his garden has again just suffered loss by the death of another good coolie from the effects of liquor sold at this shop, I am quite willing to repeat my request contained in my complaint dated 9th November 1897 to have this shop removed or abolished from its present site as it undoubtedly is a standing danger to both our gardens.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) F. E. WINSLAND,

Manager.