

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA

NORTH-EAST FRONTIER (ASSAM) TRIBAL
AND
EXCLUDED AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE

Volume I (Report)



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TRIBAL AND EXCLUDED AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE**

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FROM

The 28th July, 1947.

THE CHAIRMAN,
NORTH-EAST FRONTIER (ASSAM) TRIBAL & EXCLUDED AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE.

TO

THE CHAIRMAN,
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, MINORITIES, TRIBAL
AREAS, ETC.,
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA,
COUNCIL HOUSE, NEW DELHI.

SIR,

I have the honour to forward herewith my Sub-Committee's report on the Tribal and Excluded Areas of Assam. The report has been drawn up by us after a tour of the Province which included visits to the Lushai Hills District, the North Cachar Hills Sub-Division, the Mikir Hills and the Naga Hills District. The Committee could not visit the Garo Hills District on account of bad weather and difficult communications and the Jowai Sub-division of the Khasi Hills District could not also be visited for the same reason. We however examined witnesses and representatives of the Garo Hills District at Geuhati and paid a visit also to certain Garo villages on and near the Goalpara road. At most of the places we visited, we had to be satisfied with a visit to the headquarters of the district or tract and with a visit to one or two villages in the neighbourhood. To visit places in the interior would have taken us a great deal more of time and delayed our report considerably. Representatives of the tribes however visited the headquarters, even from long distances, and on the whole we feel that we have been able to get into contact with all the important representatives of the hill people and to take their views on the future administration of the areas. We have also taken the views of the different political organisations in the province and recorded the evidence of officials.

2. Except for the Frontier Tracts and Tribal Areas, we co-opted two members from the tribes of each of the districts visited. The co-opted members, with the exception of Mr. Kezhol (representative of the Kohima section of the Naga National Council and himself an Angami) who submitted his resignation during the final meeting at Shillong, discussed the proposals and signed (subject to dissent in the case of Mr. Kholousho & Mr. Aliba Imti) the minutes of the meeting.

3. In connection with the co-option of members we would like to mention the "District Conference" convened by the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills as an elected body purporting to be representative of the whole of the Lushai Hills. The election to this body which consisted of twenty chiefs and twenty commoners with the Superintendent himself as President was boycotted by the Mizo Union which was the only representative body of the Lushais at that time and clearly could not be regarded by us as representing more than a section of opinion, largely that of certain officials and chiefs controlled by them. Consequently the criticism that we co-opted members without consulting the Superintendent or his conference carries, in our opinion, no weight.

4. In the Naga Hills, the Committee had to face a similar situation in the sense that certain officials were influencing the extreme elements of the Naga National Council. Discussion of a number of points could not be carried on to the full extent on account of lack of agreement within the Naga National Council but we understand that on the occasion of the Governor's visit to Kohima, the more reasonable elements put forward their views. We find that our proposals not only contain the substance of these but go further in some respects. The resignation of Mr. Kezhol was due to the fact that his section of the Naga National Council was dissident. Our proposals correspond fully to the spirit of the resolution of the Naga National Council passed at Wokha in June 1946, and we feel confident that the majority of people in the Naga Hills District will find that our proposals go a long way towards meeting even their present point of view.

5. Our report (Volume I) is divided into two parts and the evidence forms a separate volume (Volume II). In the first part of our report we have given a bird's eye view of the areas as a whole, noting in particular their common features and giving the frame work of the scheme of administration recommended by us. In Part II a largely descriptive account of the different areas is given separately and we have mentioned their special features or needs.

6. We regret that our colleague Mr. Aliba Imti has not been able to attend the meeting to sign the report and hope that he will be able to attend the meeting of the Advisory Committee.

I have the honour to be

SIR,

Your most obedient servant,

G. N. BARDOLOI,

Chairman,

*North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas
Sub-Committee.*

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON NORTH-EAST FRONTIER (ASSAM)
TRIBAL AND EXCLUDED AREAS.

PART I

INTRODUCTORY.—The Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas of Assam as scheduled by the Order-in-Council under the Government of India Act, 1935, are as follows :—

Excluded Areas.—The North-East Frontier (Sadiya, Balipara and Lakhimpur).

Tracts.—The Naga Hills District.

The Lushai Hills District.

The North Cachar Hills Sub-Division of the Cachar District.

Partially Excluded Areas.—

The Garo Hills District.

The Mikir Hills (in the Nowgong and Sibsagar Districts).

The British portion of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District, other than Shillong Municipality and Cantt.

There is also an area to the east of the Naga Hills District known as the Naga Tribal Area the position of which is covered by the provisions of Section 311 (1) of the Government of India Act: The Tirap Frontier Tract which adjoins the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract has no defined boundary with Burma.

The Assam Tribal and Excluded Areas Sub-Committee is required to report on a scheme of administration for all these areas.

2. GENERAL DESCRIPTION—

(a) **The Frontier Tracts.**—The Schedule quoted above shows the North-East Frontier Tracts as excluded areas. In considering the list of areas to be excluded or partially excluded and making recommendations to H. M. G. in 1935 the Government of India wrote as follows :—

“Balipara, Sadiya, and Lakhimpur are essentially frontier areas inhabited by tribes in an early stage of development. Balipara has no defined outer boundaries and extends to the confines of Bhutan and Tibet.” It will be seen that it was mentioned that Balipara has no definite outer boundaries but the position of Sadiya and Lakhimpur or the Tirap Frontier Tract was apparently the same. On the Tirap Frontier Tract in fact, the boundary with Burma has yet to be settled and all three regions include considerable areas of as yet virtually unadministered and only partially explored territory. The position of Balipara and Sadiya however differs from that of the Tirap Frontier in that there exists a boundary between Tibet and India. The facts are that in 1914 there was a tripartite convention with Tibet and China regarding the relations of the three Governments and in particular regarding the frontier between India and Tibet. The convention which contained an agreement about the frontier line between India and Tibet was ratified by the Tibetan authorities at Lhasa, and the line known as the MacMahon Line was indicated on a map of which a copy was given to the Lhasa Government which acknowledged it. The existence of this line was for a long time not known to the Assam Government, and on the other hand it was found that there was no notification under Section 60 of the Government of India Act, 1919, specifying the northern frontier of Assam, with the result that the MacMahon Line which is the frontier between Tibet and India is the legal boundary of Assam as well. In practice the position is peculiar. Though the Governor of Assam is vested with authority over the Frontier Tracts, it is taken to be exercised, not by virtue of the provisions applicable to excluded areas of the Government of India Act, 1935, but as the agent of the Governor-General under Section 123 of the Act, *vide* notification No. I-X, dated the 1st April 1937 of the Government of India in the External Affairs Department (Appendix B). All the costs of administration of the tracts are also borne by the Central Government and the Central Government are inclined to treat them as tribal areas within the meaning of Section 311 of the Government of India Act. On the other hand, the local officials

treat the area as consisting of two parts, one, which they call the Excluded Area and stretches up to the "Inner Line" boundary, and the Tribal Area, which by them is understood to mean the area beyond the "Inner Line" boundary. The "Inner Line" boundary is roughly along the foot of the hills and the area bounded by it is occupied by a somewhat mixed population, while the hill portions beyond it are purely inhabited by the tribes. This treatment again does not appear to be strictly justifiable in law though it may be convenient to think of the administered plains portion of the area separately from the not fully administered hills. Since the frontier tracts are administered in practice by the Central Government as tribal areas, the absence of a notification under Section 60 of the Government of India Act, 1919, was regarded as an oversight. The position of these areas will be discussed further at a later stage, but it is clear from the foregoing that the Naga Tribal Area on the Eastern Frontier and the Balipara, Sadiya and Lakhimpur or Tirap Frontier Tracts on the North-Eastern Frontier fall under one category. The Balipara Frontier Tract which includes the Subansiri area is the tract over which there is as yet the smallest measure of control and administration. This tract and the Sadiya Frontier Tract are inhabited by tribes such as the Senjithonji, Dasia, Apa Tani, Momba (Balipara) the Abor, Mishmi, Hkampti (Sadiya). The Tirap Frontier contains Singphaws (who were originally Kachins) and a number of tribes classed as Naga, while the Naga Tribal Area is largely inhabited by Nagas of the Konyak group. The policy on these Frontiers is to establish administration and control over the whole area right up to the frontier, and a five-year plan has been sanctioned by the Government of India. This plan mostly covers the Sadiya and Balipara Tracts but a few schemes of the Naga Tribal Area are also included in it. A separate plan for the development of the latter is under consideration.

(b) **The Excluded Areas.**—The Excluded Areas of the Naga Hills District, the Lushai Hills District and the North Cachar Hills Sub-division fall within the second category of areas over which the Provincial Ministry has no jurisdiction whatever and the revenues expended in this area are not subject to the vote of the provincial legislature. The Naga Hills District is the home of a good number of tribes classed as Naga, such as Angami, Ao, Sema, Lhota. Adjoining it is the Naga Tribal Area in the eastern portion of which a good deal of head hunting still goes on. Though the tribes are all called Naga, they speak different languages and have differing customs and practices also. The Lushai on the other hand, though consisting of a number of clans, are practically one people and speak a common language. The Kuki in the North Cachar Hills and elsewhere are people of the same stock as Lushai or Mizo and speak the same language or a dialect. The Lushai Hills District except for an inappreciable number of Lakhers in the extreme south contains a uniform population. The North Cachar Hills, on the other hand, provide sanctuary for the Kachari, Naga, Kuki, Mikir and Khasi. The largest of the tribes here are the Kachari and the villages of the different tribes, are more or less interspersed.

(c) **Partially Excluded Areas.**—The third category is the Partially Excluded Areas consisting of the Khasi Hills District (British portion), the Garo Hills District and the Mikir Hills which fall in two districts, viz., Nowgong and Sibsagar, are administered by the Provincial Government subject to the powers of the Governor to withhold or apply the laws of the Provincial Legislature with or without modification, or to make special rules. The Khasis, incidentally, are the only one of the tribes in this area who speak a Monkhmer language; all the other tribes speak Tibeto-Burmese languages. Generally speaking, they inhabit the areas which bear their names but there are villages outside these districts which also contain some of the tribes. Thus, the Garo inhabit a number of villages in the Mymensingh district of Bengal in addition to many villages in the districts of Kamrup and Goalpara in Assam. The Khasi population is not only to be found in the British portion of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, but the States (which comprise a fairly large area) round about Shillong are inhabited by the Khasis. These States, twentyfive in number, have the special feature that their chiefs are actually elected in a few cases by free election, though in the majority of cases the election is confined to a particular clan, the electorate consisting of Myntries of the clan only in some states, by a joint electorate of

Myntries and electors elected by the people in general in others. The States have comparatively little revenue or authority and seem to depend for a good deal of support on the Political Officer in their relations with their peoples. There is a strong desire among the people of the States to "federate" with their brothers in the British portion, a feeling which the people on the British side reciprocate. Some of the Siems also appear to favour amalgamation but their idea of the Federation differs from that of the people in that the Chiefs seek a greater power for themselves than the people are prepared to concede to them.

Of the people in the Partially Excluded Areas, the Khasi are the most advanced and the Mikir the least. Unlike the Naga and the Lushai Hills these areas have had much more contact with people in the plains, situated as they are between the valleys of the Brahmaputra and the Surma. They have representatives in the provincial legislature who, in the case of the Garo and the Mikir Hills, are elected by franchise of the Nokmas and the village headmen respectively.

3. DEVELOPMENT.—As regards the degree of development and education in the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas, the most backward areas, comparatively appear to be the Mikir and the Garo Hills, both of which are Partially Excluded Areas. The Frontier Tracts, parts of which must be inhabited by people with no contact with civilisation or education, are of course on a different footing. The Khasi Hills have probably benefited by the fact that the capital of the province is situated in them. In the Garo Hills, Christian Missions have spread some education along with Christianity but the Mikir Hills have suffered from the fact that they are divided between two districts, Nowgong and Sibsagar, and thus nobody's child. Partial exclusion has in a way been responsible for their backwardness also, since both the Governor of the province and the Ministry can disclaim the sole responsibility for the area. The Sub-divisional Officers and Deputy Commissioners of these Hills moreover seem to have taken little interest in them and hardly any touring has been performed by officers in the Mikir areas. On the whole, however, the Hill Districts show considerable progress. The Khasi Hills have provided Ministers in the Provincial Government. The people of the Lushai Hills who have benefited by the activities of the Missionaries among them cannot be said to be behind the people of the plains in culture, education and literacy. In literacy particularly they are in a better position than a good number of the plains areas and the general percentage of literacy among them is about 13 per cent, while the literacy among men only is about 30 per cent. Among the Naga also may be found a number of persons of college education, though the district as a whole appears to be less advanced than the Lushai Hills. In the Naga Hills, the demand for education is keener in the Mokokchung Sub-division than in the Kohima Sub-division. In the North Cachar Hills, the development of the people has not been impressive and the Sub-division as a whole should be classed as more backward than other areas and comparable with the Mikir rather than the Lushai Hills. While education has made some progress in all these areas, the conditions of life and pursuit of non-agricultural occupations cannot be said to have reached the level attained in the plains, although the degree of intelligence necessary is undoubtedly available in most of the areas, even in the tribal areas. We were in fact impressed by the intelligence of the Abor and Mishmi, the Sherdukpen, the Hkampti and even the Konyak of the tribal area. The skill of many of the tribes in weaving and tapestry contains the elements of a very attractive cottage industry—at present articles are made largely for personal use—but agriculture is practically the only occupation, and with the exception of considerable areas occupied by the Angami in the Naga Hill under terraced and irrigated cultivation and the advanced cultivation in the Khasi Hills, the mode of agriculture is still the primitive one of *jhuming*. Portions of the forest are burnt down and in the ashes of the burnt patch the seeds are sown; the following year a new patch of forest is felled and cultivated and so on, the first patch perhaps being ready again for cultivation after three or four years. The *jhuming* patches develop a thick growth of bamboo or weeds and trees do not grow on them. Thus the method is destructive of good jungle.

In certain parts, of course, conditions may be said to be unfavourable to the terracing of the hillsides and there is no source of water supply other than rainfall. In the Lushai Hills for instance comparatively few areas have the gradual slope which renders terracing easy; in the North Cachar Hills Sub-division, irrigation is difficult to arrange and the small hamlets occupied by the tribes cannot provide enough labour for terracing work. Attempts have however been made to introduce terracing and improved methods of cultivation as well as the growing of fruits, and there is little doubt that good progress will soon be feasible in these directions. A certain amount of political consciousness has also developed among the tribes, and we were much impressed by the demand of the Abor in the Sadiya Frontier Tract for representation in the provincial legislature. The idea of Government by the people through their chosen representatives is not a totally new conception to most of the hill people whose ways of life centre around the tribal and village councils, and what is required now is really an understanding of the mechanism and implications as well as the responsibilities of the higher stages of administration and the impracticability as well as the undesirable results of small groups of rural population being entrusted with too much responsibility. Generally speaking, it can be stated that all the excluded areas of the province, not taking into account at this stage the frontier and tribal areas, have reached the stage of development when they can exercise their votes as intelligently as the people of the plains. On the ground of inability to understand or exercise the franchise therefore, there is absolutely no justification for keeping the excluded areas in that condition any longer.

As regards the Frontier Tracts, not only has there been little education except in the fringes or plains portions, but administration has yet to be fully established over large tracts and the tribes freed from feuds or raids among themselves and from the encroachment and oppression of Tibetan tax collectors. The removal of the trade blocks set up by these Tibetans on the Indian side of the MacMahon Line sometimes creates delicate situations. Thus the country is in many ways unripe for regular administration. Only when the new five-year programme has made good headway will there be an adequate improvement in the position. Even the village councils in these tracts appear to be ill-organised and there seems to be little material as yet for local self governing institutions though it may be possible to find a few people who can speak for their tribe. The plains portions are however on a different footing and the question of including them in the provincial administration needs careful examination. For example, we are of the view that *prima facie* there is little justification to keep the Saikhoaghat, the Sadiya plains portion and possibly portions of the Balipara Frontier Tract under special administration.

4. THE HILL PEOPLE'S VIEWS.—Though the Constituent Assembly Secretariat and we ourselves, issued a leaflet to provide information and create interest in the political future of India, the Constituent Assembly's functions and the objects of our tour, the Hill people, even of the Excluded Areas, were not found lacking in political consciousness. Perhaps not without instigation by certain elements, this consciousness has even instilled ideas of an independent status the external relations under which would be governed by treaty or agreement only. In the Lushai Hills District the idea of the Superintendent who constituted himself the President of the "District Conference" which he himself had convened (see para 5 Part II) was that the District should manage all affairs with the exception of defence in regard to which it should enter into an agreement with the Government of India. A "Constitution" based on this principle was later drafted by the Conference. (The great majority of the Lushai however cannot be regarded as holding these views and it is doubtful if the District Conference represents the views of anybody other than certain officials and chiefs). In the Naga Hills, although the original resolution as passed by the Naga National Council at Wokha contemplated the administration of the area more or less like other parts of Assam, a demand was subsequently put forward for "an interim Government of the Naga people" under the protection of a benevolent "guardian power" who would provide funds for development and defence for a period of ten years after which the Naga people would decide what they would do with themselves. Here again it seems to us clear that the views of a small group of people, following

the vogue in the Naga Hills of decisions being taken by general agreement and not by majority—gained the acceptance of the National Council, for little more purpose than that of presenting a common front. In other areas more moderate views prevail. In the Garo Hills the draft constitution asked for all powers of government including taxation, administration of justice etc. to be vested in the legal council and the only link proposed with the Provincial Government was in respect of a few subjects like higher education, medical aid etc. other than the subjects of defence, external affairs and communications which were not provincial subjects. In the Mikir Hills and in the North Cachar Hills, which are the least vocal and advanced of the areas under consideration, there would probably be satisfaction if control over land and local customs and administration of justice are left to the local people. The Khasi Hills proposals were for a federation of the States and British portions; otherwise the proposals were similar to those made for the Garo Hills. A feeling common to all of the Hill Districts is that people of the same tribe should be brought together under a common administration. This has led to a demand for rectification of boundaries. The Lushai want the Kuki of Manipur and other areas in their boundaries, the Naga want the Zemi areas of the North Cachar Hills included in their district and so on.

5. POLITICAL EXPERIENCE.—Except for the Municipality of Shillong, there are no statutory local self-governing bodies in any of the Hill Districts. The partially excluded areas have elected representatives in the provincial legislature but in the Garo Hills the franchise is limited to the Nokmas and in the Mikir Hills to the headmen. Generally however, the tribes are all highly democratic in the sense that their village councils are created by general assent or election. Chiefship among certain tribes like the Lushai is hereditary (although certain chiefs have been appointed by the Superintendent) but among other tribes appointment of headmen is by common consent or by election or, in some cases, selection from particular families. Disputes are usually settled by the Chief or headman or council of elders. In the Naga Hills what is aimed at is general agreement in settling disputes. Allotment of land for *jhum* is generally the function of the Chiefs or headmen (except in the Khasi & Jaintia Hills) and there are doubtless many other matters pertaining to the life of the village which are dealt with by the chiefs or elders, but while this may form a suitable background for local self-government the tribes altogether lack experience of modern self-governing institutions. The "District Conference" of the Lushai Hills, the tribal council of the North Cachar Hills and the Naga National Council are very recent essays in organising representative bodies for the district as a whole and have no statutory sanction. While there is no doubt that the Naga, Lushai, Khasi and Garo will be able to manage a large measure of local autonomy, the North Cachar tribes and the Mikir may yet want a period of supervision and guidance.

6. THE SPECIAL FEATURES.—Whatever the capacity of the different councils or conferences to manage the affairs of the areas may be, the general proposals for the administration of these areas must be based upon the following considerations:—
(a) the distinct social customs and tribal organisations of the different peoples as well as their religious beliefs. For instance, the Khasi and the Garo have a matriarchal system, the Lushai have hereditary chiefs, the Ao Naga have got the council of elders called '*tatar*' which is periodically renewed by election. The laws of succession of the Lushai permit the youngest son of the family to succeed to the property of his father. Similarly, in the case of the Garo, the youngest daughter gets her mother's property and so on. Christianity has made considerable headway among the Lushai, Khasi and the Garo, but large numbers of the hill people still continue their own tribal forms of worship which some people describe as 'animism'.

(b) the fear of exploitation by the people of the plains on account of their superior organisation and experience of business, the hill people fear that if suitable provisions are not made to prevent the people of the plains from acquiring land in the hill areas, large numbers of them will settle down and not only occupy land belonging to the hill people but will also exploit them in the non-agricultural professions. Thus, the hill people seem to attach special value to the present system of an 'Inner Line' to cross which non-tribals entering the area require a pass, and the pro-

visions prohibiting non-tribals from settling down or carrying on business without the approval of the district-officer. It is felt that even industries should not be started in the hill areas by non-tribals because that might mean exploitation of the people and the land by the non-tribals. In addition to these main points there is the question of preserving their ways of life and language, and method of cultivation etc. Opinions are expressed that there could be adequate protection in these matters only by transferring the government of the area entirely into the hands of the hill people themselves.

(c) In the making suitable financial provisions it is feared that unless suitable provisions are made or powers are conferred upon the local councils themselves, the provincial government may not, due to the pressure of the plains people, set apart adequate funds for the development of the tribal areas. In this connection we invite a reference to the views expressed in the Assam Government's Factual Memorandum on p. 67 of Constituent Assembly Pamphlet Excluded & Partially Excluded Areas—I.

7. PROVISIONS OF 1935 ACT.—The provisions of the Government of India Act are based on the principle that legislation which is passed by the Provincial Legislature is often likely to be unsuitable for application to the Hill Districts. The mechanism provided for "filtering" the legislation is therefore to empower the Governor of the Province to apply or not to apply such legislation. The full implications of the provisions of the Government of India Act are discussed in the Constituent Assembly pamphlets on "Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas" Parts I & II, and it is perhaps not necessary to discuss them exhaustively here. The main features of the provisions are that certain areas have been scheduled as excluded or partially excluded; it is possible for areas to be transferred from the category of excluded to the category of partially excluded by an Order-in-Council and, similarly, from the category of partially excluded to the category of non-excluded; legislation will not apply automatically to any such scheduled area even if it is a partially excluded area, but will have to be notified by the Governor who, if he applies them at all, can make alterations. The revenues for excluded areas are charged to the revenues of the Province and special regulations, which do not apply to the rest of the Province, may be made by the Governor in his discretion for excluded and partially excluded areas.

8. FUTURE POLICY.—The continuance or otherwise of exclusion cannot be considered solely from the point of view of the general advancement of an area. If that were so, all that would be necessary in the case of areas like the Lushai Hills which are considered sufficiently advanced would be to remove the feature of exclusion or partial exclusion. Such action may be suitable in the case of certain partially excluded areas in other parts of India. But in the Hills of Assam the fact that the hill people have not yet been assimilated with the people of the plains of Assam has to be taken into account though a great proportion of hill people now classed as plains tribals have gone a long way towards such assimilation. Assimilation has probably advanced least in the Naga Hills and in the Lushai Hills, and the policy of exclusion has of course tended to create a feeling of separateness.

On the other hand, it is the advice of anthropologists (see Dr. Guha's evidence) that assimilation cannot take place by the sudden breaking up of tribal institutions and what is required is evolution or growth on the old foundations. This means that the evolution should come as far as possible from the tribe itself but it is equally clear that contact with outside influences is necessary though not in a compelling way. The distinct features of their way of life have at any rate to be taken into account. Some of the tribal systems such as the system of the tribal council for the decision of disputes afford by far the simplest and the best way of dispensation of justice for the rural areas without the costly system of courts and codified laws. Until there is a change in the way of life brought about by the hill people themselves, it would not be desirable to permit any different system to be imposed from outside. The future of these hills now does not seem to lie in absorption in that the hill people will become indistinguishable from non-hill people but in political and social amalgamation.

9. THE HILL PEOPLE'S LAND.—The anxiety of the hill people about their land and their fear of exploitation are undoubtedly matters for making special provisions; it has been the experience in other parts of India and in other countries, that unless protection is given, land is taken up by people from the more advanced and crowded areas. The question has already acquired serious proportions in the plains portions of Assam and the pressure of population from outside has brought it up as a serious problem which in the next few years may be expected to become very much more acute. There seems to be no doubt whatever therefore that the hill people should have the largest possible measure of protection for their land and provisions for the control of immigration into their areas for agricultural or non-agricultural purposes. It seems also clear that the hill people will not have sufficient confidence if the control on such matters is kept in the hands of the provincial Government which may only be too amenable to the pressure of its supporters. Even the Head of the State under the new Constitution will probably be an elected head, and even though he may be elected also by the votes of the hill people, they may still have the fear that he will give way to the pressure of the plains people on whose votes he may be largely dependent. The atmosphere of fear and suspicion which now prevails, even if it is argued that it is unjustified, is nevertheless one which must be recognised and in order to allay these suspicions and fears, it would appear necessary to provide as far as possible such constitutional provisions and safeguards as would give no room for them. Moreover, in the areas where no right of private property or proprietary right of the chief is recognised the land is regarded as the property of the clan, including the forests. Boundaries between the area of one hill or tribe are recognised and violation may result in fighting. Large areas of land are required for *jhum* and this explains in part the fear of the tribesman that its availability will be reduced if incursions by outsiders is permitted. In all the hill areas visited by us, there was an emphatic unanimity of opinion among the hill people that there should be control of immigration and allocation of land to outsiders, and that such controls should be vested in the hands of the hill people themselves. Accepting this then as a fundamental feature of the administration of the hills, we recommend that the Hill Districts should have powers of legislation over occupation or use of land other than land comprising reserved forest under the Assam Forest Regulation of 1891 or other law applicable. The only limitation we would place upon this is to provide that the local councils should not require payment for the occupation of vacant land by the Provincial Government for public purposes or prevent the acquisition of private land, also required for public purposes, on payment of compensation.

10. FOREST.—As part of the question of occupation of land, the transfer of the management of land now classed as reserved forest has also been raised. We have recommended that the legislative powers of the Local Councils should not cover reserved forests. While accepting the need for centralised management of the forests, we would strongly emphasise that in questions of actual management, including the appointment of forest staff and the granting of contracts and leases, the susceptibilities and the legitimate desires and needs of the hill people should be taken into account, and we recommend that the Provincial Government should accept this principle as a part of its policy.

11. JHUMING.—We recommend further that the tribes should have the right of deciding for themselves whether to permit *jhum* cultivation, or not. We are fully aware of the evils of *jhum* cultivation that it leads to erosion, alteration of the rainfall, floods, change of climate etc. The tribes may not always be aware of these dangers but they have definitely begun to realise that settled or terraced cultivation is the better way. The Angami terrace now on a large scale and in most of the hills definite attempts at introducing settled cultivation are being made. The main difficulty however is the fact that all hill areas do not lend themselves to terracing equally well and in some parts, there may be a portion which could be terraced without prohibitive cost, or economically cultivated, by this method. Terracing means labour, a suitable hill side and the possibility of irrigation. When these are not all available it is obvious that the tribes cannot

be persuaded to take up terracing and must continue *jhum*. While therefore, we feel strongly that *jhuming* should be discouraged and stopped whenever possible, no general legislative bar can be imposed without taking local circumstances in the account. Besides there is a feeling among the tribes that *jhuming* is part of their way of life, and that interference with it is wanton, and done with ulterior motives. The wearing out of that feeling must come from within rather than as imposition from outside which may cause undue excitement among the tribes. We propose therefore that the control of *jhuming* should be left to local councils who, we expect, will be guided by expert advice.

12. CIVIL AND CRIMINAL COURTS.—On the principle that the local customary laws should be interfered with as little as possible and that the tribal councils and courts should be maintained we recommend that the hill people should have full powers of administering their own social laws, codifying or modifying them. At present the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Civil Procedure Code are not applicable to the hill districts though officials are expected to be guided by the spirit of these laws. In practice, criminal cases, which are not of a serious nature like murder and offences against the State, are left to the tribal councils or chiefs to be dealt with in accordance with custom. Usually offences are treated as matters for the payment of compensation and fine are inflicted. There appears no harm and a good deal of advantage in maintaining current practice in this respect and we recommend accordingly that all criminal offences except those punishable with death, transportation or imprisonment for five years and upwards should be left to be dealt with in accordance with local practice and that so far as such offences are concerned the Code of Criminal Procedure should not apply. As regards the more serious offences punishable with imprisonment of five years or more we are of the view that they should be tried henceforth regularly under the Criminal Procedure Code. This does not mean that tribal councils or courts set up by the local councils should not try such cases and we contemplate that wherever they are capable of being empowered with powers under the Criminal Procedure Code this should be done. As regards civil cases (among the tribes there is little distinction between criminal and civil cases) we recommend that except suits arising out of special laws, all ordinary suits should be disposed of by the tribal councils or courts and we see no objection to the local councils being invested with full powers to deal with them, including appeal and revision. In respect of civil and criminal cases where non-tribals are involved, they should be tried under the regular law and the Provincial Government should make suitable arrangements for the expeditious disposal of such cases by employing Circuit Magistrates or Judges.

13. OTHER LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT.—As regards such matters as primary schools dispensaries and the like which normally come under the scope of local self-governing institutions in the plains it is needless for us to say that the Hill Districts should get all such powers and except in the North Cachar Hills and the Mikir Hills, we are of opinion that the Hill People will be able to take over control of such matters without much difficulty. With a view to providing some training and thereby smoothening the transition, the Chairman of our Sub-Committee has already taken up the question of establishment of councils with powers of local boards. The difference between the councils we contemplate for the Hill Districts and Local Boards will already have been clear from the foregoing paragraphs. It is proposed to entrust these councils with powers of legislation and administration over land, village forest, agriculture and village and town management in general, in addition to the administration of tribal or local law. Over and above these matters the tribes are highly interested in education and feel that they should have full control over primary education at least. We have considered this question in all its aspects and feel that the safe policy to follow in this matter is to leave it to the local councils to come to a decision on the policy to be followed. We recommend that primary education should be administered by the Local Councils without interference by the Government of Assam. The Assam Government will however always be available to provide such advice and assistance as the Local Councils may require through its

Education Department particularly with reference to the linking up of primary with secondary education. As regards secondary school education we do not consider that the Hill People in general are able to look after this subject themselves nor do we consider that this stage should be left without some integration at least with the general system of the Province. There is of course no objection to Local Council being made responsible for the management of secondary schools where they are found to have the necessary material. But we consider that no statutory provision for this is necessary and that it should be open to the Council and the Government of Assam by executive instructions to make the necessary arrangements. The Local Councils will have powers of management in all other matters usually administered by local boards and we consider that on account of the special circumstances in the hills the councils should have powers to make their own administrative regulations and rules. We expect however that in all matters, particularly those involving technical matters like the management of dispensaries or construction of roads, the Local Councils and their staffs will work under the Executive guidance of the corresponding Provincial Department.

For the Mikir and the North Cachar Hills, we recommend that the necessary supervision and guidance should be provided for a period of six years which we expect will be the term of two councils by the appointment of the District or Sub-Divisional officer, as the case may be, as ex-officio President of the Council with powers, subject to the control of the Government of Assam, to modify or annul resolutions of the Council and to issue instructions as he may find necessary.

14 FINANCE (a) Powers of the Council.—The next question we propose to consider is finance. A demand common to the Naga Hills, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Garo Hills and the Lushai Hills is that all powers of taxation should vest in the National Councils. The National Conference of the Garo and of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills suggested a contribution to the provincial revenues or a sharing of certain items. If this were accepted even the Centre would have no powers to levy finances in these areas. Suggestions regarding contribution to provincial revenues are obviously based on the assumption that the district, in addition to what it needs for its own expenditure, will have a surplus to make over to the Provincial Government. In the case of the Garo Hills, it was suggested that the abolition of zamindari rights in that area would result in a considerable augmentation of the revenues of the district which would then be able to spare a certain sum to the Provincial Government, and generally the idea seems to be that given sufficient powers the Districts will be able to increase their revenues by exploitation of forests, mineral and hydro-electrical potentialities. Not only do some of the districts feel that they will have plenty of money in due course but the demand for all powers of taxation is based to a large extent on the fear that if the Provincial Government has those powers they may not get a fair deal and there may be diversion of money to other districts. Districts which, on the other hand feel that they do not command potential sources of revenue or at least realise that the development of the resources will take time during which they remain deficit can only make a vague demand for allocation of funds from a benevolent Province or Centre to supplement local resources.

The question of finance and powers of taxation in an atmosphere of suspicion and fear is not an easy one. Any surplus district is likely to examine the provincial expenditure with a jealous eye to find out whether it gets a good share of expenditure for its own benefit or not. The extreme case is the expectation or demand that all the revenues derived from a particular district must be spent within that district itself. It is obvious however that where different districts are functioning under a common Provincial Government, the revenues of the whole area become diverted to a common pool from which they are distributed to the best possible advantage of the Province as a whole. Should all powers of taxation and appropriation of revenues be placed in the hands of the hills districts, the plains districts will not fail to make a similar demand, and if they do, there would be little justification to refuse it to them. The concession of such a demand to the various districts virtually amounts to breaking up the provincial administration. Besides, giving unregulated powers of taxation in

general to small units is undesirable as it would result in different principles, perhaps unsound principles, being adopted in different places for purposes of taxation and in the absence of coordination and provincial control, chaos is more likely than sound administration. Further it is obvious that a local council and a local executive would be much more susceptible and amenable to local pressure and influence than either the Provincial Government or its executive and will therefore not find it possible to undertake measures of taxation which the Province as a whole can. Even if taxes can be adequately resorted to by the local council, the proposal that an appropriation could be made for the provincial revenues does not sound practicable, for what the quantum of that will be is to be determined only by the National Council and it is quite obvious that the Council will decide the quantum from the point of view of its own need rather than the needs of the Province as a whole. The areas which feel that they have large potential sources of revenue must not forget that their demands for educational and other development are also very large and expanding. Various other factors such as the efficiency of tax collection and the cost of collecting staff have to be taken into consideration and we are of the view that the only practicable way is to allocate certain taxes and financial powers to the Councils and not all powers of taxation. Accepting this conclusion then we can consider what powers they should have. It goes without saying that they should have all the powers which local bodies in a plains district enjoy and we recommend that in respect of taxes like taxes on houses, professions or trades, vehicles, animals, octroi, market dues, ferry dues and powers to impose cesses for specific purposes within the ambit of the Councils, they should have full powers. We expect that the Councils will seek the advice of the Provincial Government in exercising these powers but in view of the democratic spirit and nature of tribal life, we do not consider that any control by the Provincial Government which is prescribed by statute is necessary. In addition we would recommend powers to impose house tax or poll tax, land revenue (as land administration is made over to the Councils), levies arising out of the powers of management of village forest, such as grazing dues and licences for removal of forest produce.

(b) **Provincial Finance.**—There is no doubt that for some time to come the development of the Hills must depend on the rest of the province and they will be regarded as "deficit areas". As their development must be regarded as a matter of urgency considerable sums of money will be required but it is equally certain that measures of development are needed in other districts also and the claims of the Hills will not find a free field. The expenditure on the excluded areas has so far been a non-voted charge on the provincial revenues but unless it is provided in the Constitution that sums considered necessary by the Governor for the Hills will be outside the vote of the legislature we have to consider how the provision of adequate revenues can be secured. In this connection, we would point out the admission in the Factual Memorandum* received from the Government of Assam that while the excluded areas have benefited by the provision in the Government of India Act regarding them, the partially excluded areas in respect of which the funds are subject to the vote of the legislature have suffered greatly. In particular, the position of the Mikir Hills seems to be a bad example. Here, only a small proportion of the revenue derived from the area which contains rich forests is utilised in the district and the position in respect of provision of schools, medical facilities etc. is unsatisfactory. We have noted the views of witnesses from the various political organisations that there is a lot of goodwill among the plains people towards the tribes but we feel that a more concrete provision is necessary as practical administration must be taken into account. It is admitted all round that the development of the hills is a matter of urgency for the province as a whole and there should therefore be a good measure of support for a specific provision.

Coming to the actual provision to be made, it has been suggested in some quarters that the revenue to be spent within a Hill District should be earmarked by provision in the Constitution and should form a definite proportion of the revenue of the Province. This, in our opinion, is an impracticable proposition since any statutory ratio is in

*P. 67 Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas—I.

variable for a number of years and there are no simple considerations on which it can be based. If it is based on the population, it is obvious that the expenditure would be totally inadequate, for the hill areas are generally sparsely populated. On the other hand, if a certain stage of development has been reached, the provision of funds on the basis of area may amount to pampering the tracts, while revenue is needed elsewhere. We have no doubt that the fixation of a rigid ratio by statute would not be suitable for the Provincial Government to work on and may not be in the interests of the Hills themselves. We feel that placing the sums outside the vote of the legislature is likely to be distasteful to the Legislature and contrary to the democratic spirit and proceed therefore to consider an alternative.

It appears to us that the main reason why the needs of the Hills are apt to be overlooked is due to the clamour of more vocal districts and the facts that there is little attention to or criticism of, the provisions made for the Hills, which in the case of voted items are merged in general figures. If therefore a separate financial statement for each such area showing the revenue from it and the expenditure proposed is placed before the legislature, it would have, apart from the psychological effect, the advantage that it would draw attention specifically to any inadequacy and make scrutiny and criticism easy. It can of course be objected that criticism may be ignored and that the separate statement may therefore not serve any really useful purpose, but we nevertheless recommend the provision of a separate financial statement as likely to fulfil its purpose. We also recommend that the framing of a suitable programme of development, should be on the Govt. of Assam, either by statute or by an Instrument of Instructions, as an additional safeguard.

(c) **Central Subventions.**—While the Province may be expected to do its best to provide finances to the limit of its capacity, it seems to us quite clear that the requirements of the Hills Districts, particularly for development schemes, are completely beyond the present resources of Assam. Though the Districts are more developed than the Frontier Tracts in respect of which the Central Government has recognised the need for special grants for development, the position of the Hill Districts in comparison with the plains districts is not radically different. The development of the Hill Districts should for obvious reason be as much the concern of the Central Government as of the Provincial Government. Bearing in mind the special position of this province in respect of sources of central revenue, we consider that financial assistance should be provided by the Centre to meet the deficit in the ordinary administration of the districts on the basis of the average deficit during the past three years and that the cost of development schemes should also be borne by the Central Exchequer. We recommend statutory provisions accordingly.

(d) **Provincial Grants for the Local Councils.**—Some of our co-opted Members have expressed the apprehension that the sources of revenue open to them may not provide adequate revenue for the administration of the District Council, particularly where there are Regional Councils. We have not made a survey of the financial position of the new councils and their requirements in the light of the responsibilities imposed on them but we recognise their claim for assistance from general, provincial revenues to the extent that they are unable to raise the necessary revenue from the sources allotted to them for the due discharge of their statutory liabilities.

15. CONTROL OF IMMIGRATION.—The Hill People, as remarked earlier, are extremely nervous of outsiders, particularly non-tribals, and feel that they are greatly in need of protection against their encroachment and exploitation. It is on account of this fear that they attach considerable value to regulations like the Chin Hills Regulations under which an outsider could be required to possess a pass to enter the Hill territory beyond the Inner Line and an undesirable person could be expelled. They feel that with the disappearance of exclusion they should have powers similar to those conferred by the Chin Hills Regulations. The Provincial Government, in their view, is not the proper custodian of such powers since they would be susceptible to the influence of plains people. Experience in areas inhabited by other tribes shows that even where provincial laws conferred protection on the land they have still been subjected to expropriation at the hands of money lenders and others. We consider therefore that the fears of the Hill People regarding unrestrained liberty to outsiders to carry on money lending or other non-agricultural professions is not

without justification and we recognise also the depth of their feeling. We recommend accordingly that if the local councils so decide by a majority of three-fourths of their members, they introduce a system of licensing for money-lenders and traders. They should not of course refuse licences to existing money-lenders and dealers and any regulations framed by them should be restricted to regulating interest, prices or profit and the maintenance of accounts and inspection.

16. MINES AND MINERALS.—The present position is that except in relation to the Khasi States all powers are vested in the Provincial Govt. The hill people strongly desire that revenues accruing from the exploitation of minerals should not go entirely to the Provincial Govt. and that their Council should be entitled to the benefits also. In order to ensure this they demand that control should be vested in them in one way or another. We have considered this carefully keeping particularly in mind that the Khasi Hill States are now entitled to half the royalties from minerals and feel that the demand of the hills should be met, not by placing the management in their hands, but by recognising their right to a fair share of the revenue. The mineral resources of the country are limited and it is recognised by us that the issue of licences and leases to unsuitable persons is likely to result in unbusiness like working and devastation. We consider that the best policy is to centralise the management of mineral resources in the hands of the Provincial Govt. subject to the sharing of the revenue as aforesaid and also to the condition that no licences or leases shall be given out by the Provincial Govt. except in consultation with the local Council.

17. LEGISLATION.—The position under the Government of India Act, 1935, has already been described. It has been argued in some quarters that no provincial legislation should be applicable to the hills except with the approval of the Hill Council. This, we consider, is a proposition which cannot be acceded to without reservations. It is true that no legislation is now applicable without a notification by the Governor but the Governor in practice would apply the legislation unless there is a reason why it should not be applied, while the Council would probably be guided by other considerations. There are many matters in which the legislature has jurisdiction which has nothing to do with special customs in the hills and to provide that such legislation should not apply directly would only amount to obstruction or delaying the course of legislation which ought to be applied: It may also frustrate the application of a uniform policy through the whole province and subject everything to the limited vision of a local council. The Hill Districts will of course have their representatives in the provincial legislature and we feel that a bar should be placed only in the way of provincial legislation which deals with subjects in which the Hill Councils have legislative powers or which are likely to affect social customs and laws. We consider therefore that there is no need for a general restriction and we have provided accordingly for limited restriction in clause L of Appendix A to this Part. We have also included in this draft a clause concerning the drinking of rice-beer which is very much a part of the hill people's life. We feel that the Council should have liberty to permit or prohibit this according to the wishes of the people. We would draw attention to the fact that the rice-beer (Zu or Laopani) is not a distilled liquor and that its consumption is not deleterious to the same extent as distilled liquor consumed by tribes in other areas.

18. REGIONAL COUNCILS.—The conditions obtaining in the Naga Hills and the North Cachar Hills, in particular, need special provision. The Naga Hills are the home of many different tribes known by the general name of Naga; in the North Cachar Hills, there are Naga, Cachari, Kuki, Mikir and some Khasi or Synteng. Other Hills also contain pockets of tribes other than the main tribe. The local organisations referred to earlier have themselves found the need for separate Sub-Councils for the different tribes and the conditions are such that unless such separate councils are provided for the different tribes may not only feel that their local autonomy is encroached upon but there is the possibility of friction also. We have therefore provided for the creation of Regional Councils, if the tribes so desire. These Regional Councils will have powers limited to their customary law and management of their land and villages. We also propose that the Regional Councils shall be able to delegate their powers to the District Councils.

19. EMERGENCY PROVISIONS.—The picture drawn thus far is therefore that of an autonomous Council for the district with powers of legislation over the land, village, forests, social customs, administration of local law, powers over village and town committees, etc., with corresponding financial powers. These are far in excess of the powers of Local Boards. What if the Council or the executive controlled by it should misuse the powers or prove incapable of reasonably efficient management? Some of the Hill Districts are on the borders of India. What if their acts prove prejudicial to the safety of the country? Experience all over the country indicates that local bodies sometimes mismanage their affairs grossly. We consider that the Governor should have the power to act in an emergency and to declare an act or resolution of the Council illegal or void, if the safety of the country is prejudiced, and to take such other action as may be necessary. We also consider that if gross mismanagement is reported by a Commission, the Governor should have powers to dissolve the Council subject to the approval of the Legislature before which the Council, if so it desires, can put its case. (See clause Q of Appendix A.)

20. THE FRONTIER TRACTS.—(a) **Central Administration recommended.**—We have indicated the difference between the Frontier Tracts and other Hill Areas already. It is clear that the legal position on the Balipara and Sadiya Frontier Tracts is that they are part of the province right up to the MacMahon Line. Regular provincial administration is however not yet possible (except perhaps in the plains portions before the Inner Line) on account of the circumstances prevailing there. The policy followed in these tracts as well as on the Tirap Frontier (where there is no delineated frontier with Burma yet) and the Naga Tribal Area is that of gradually extending administration. We recommend that when the Central Government which now administers these areas (and which we consider it should continue to do with the Government of Assam as its agent) is of the view that administration has been satisfactorily established over a sufficiently wide area, the Government of Assam should take over the administration of that area by the issue of a notification. We also recommend that the pace of extending administration should be greatly accelerated and that in order to facilitate this, steps should be taken to appoint separate officers for the Lohit Valley, the Siang Valley and the Naga Tribal area which at present is in the jurisdiction of two different officers (the Political Officer, Tirap Frontier Tract and the Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills District). We have provided that the administration of the areas to be brought under the provincial administration in future should also be similar to that of existing Hill Districts.

(b) **Lakhimpur Frontier and Plains Portions.**—Regarding the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract, it appears to be the view of the External Affairs Department that this Tract does not differ from the plains "and need not be considered in relation to the problems of the hill tribes." Our information goes to show that a portion of the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract was recently (during the war) included in the Tirap Frontier Tract. The view of the Political Officer regarding this portion differed from that of other witnesses and the circumstances here seem to need closer examination, as the Political Officer has stated that the area is inhabited by tribes people. There are certain Buddhist villages inhabited by Fakials who should be brought into the regularly administered area if possible. About the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract which is under the Deputy Commissioner Lakhimpur we have no hesitation in recommending that it should be attached to the regular administration of the District. The report of the Deputy Commissioner produced before us in evidence is clear on the point. We also conclude from the evidence collected at Sadiya that the Saikhoaghat portion of the excluded area south of the Lohit river and possibly the whole of the Sadiya plains portion up to the Inner Line could be included in regular administration, but feel that the question needs more detailed investigation and recommend that it should be undertaken by the Provincial Government. The portion of the Balipara Frontier Tract round Charduar should be subjected to a similar examination, and the headquarters of the Political Officer of this tract should be shifted into the hills as early as possible.

(c) **Posa Payments.**—Certain payments are being made at present to the tribes on the North East Frontier. In the Balipara Frontier Tract payments called *posa*

which total in all to about Rs. 10,000 per year, and certain customary presents are paid. These are vestigial payments of sums which the tribes used to claim in the days of the Ahom kings whether by way of *quid pro quo* for keeping the peace on the border and not raiding the plains or in recognition of a customary claim on the local inhabitants or territory. On the Tirap Frontier a payment of Rs. 450 per year is made to the Chief of Namsang as lease money for a tea garden. We have considered the question whether these payments should be continued in view of the costly development schemes being undertaken, and have come to the conclusion that it would be a mistake to stop them. The effect upon the tribes of such a step would be the feeling that the first act of the new Government was adverse to them and the result of any disaffection in this area might seriously jeopardise our aims of establishing administration and bringing the tribes, who are well disposed at present, into the fold of civilisation within our boundaries. The payments are negligibly small in comparison with the large sums of money required for these areas and we recommend that they should continue unchanged at any rate till there is a suitable opportunity for a review of the position.

21. REPRESENTATION—(a) Adult Franchise.—The partially excluded areas are already represented in the provincial legislature. In the Garo Hills and Mikir Hills the franchise as already stated is a restricted one. The excluded areas have no representation at present. So far as the frontier tracts tribal areas are concerned they have no representation and the circumstances are such that until it is declared that an area is or can be brought under regular administration, representation cannot be provided. We are of opinion that examination should be made as soon as possible of this question in view of the very clear desire expressed by the Abor, Hkampti and others for representation. Meanwhile, we are of the view that there is no longer any justification for the exclusion of the Naga, Lushai and North Cachar Hills and that these areas should be represented in the provincial legislature. The restriction on the franchise in the Garo and Mikir Hills should be removed and, if there is universal adult franchise elsewhere, that system should be applied to all these Hills. We would note here that our colleagues from the Lushai Hills expressed some doubts about the feasibility of adult franchise in the Lushai Hills and seemed to prefer household franchise. We do not anticipate any real difficulty in adult franchise here if it is feasible elsewhere but would recommend that the position of the Lushai Hills may be considered by the appropriate body which deals with the question of franchise.

(b) Provincial Representation.—As regards the number of representatives of the Hill Districts in the provincial legislature, we are of the view that if the principle of weightage is recognised for any community, the case of the hill people should receive appropriate consideration in that respect. Though we do not propose that there should be any weightage for the hill people as a principle, we are clear that the number of representatives for each of the Hill Districts should not be less in proportion to the total number than the ratio of the population of the district to the total population even though this may, in some cases, mean a slightly weighted representation in practice. In the draft provincial constitution we find that it is provided that the scale of representation in the provincial Assembly is not to exceed one representative for every lakh of the population. On this basis, the Hill Districts would, according to the minimum recommended by us, obtain representation as follows:—

	No.	Population
Khasi & Jaintia Hills	2	105,463
Garo Hills	3	223,569
Mikir Hills	2	149,746
Naga Hills	2	189,641
Lushai Hills	3	152,786
North Cachar Hills	1	37,361
Total	12	858,566

It will be seen that if the total population of the Hills is taken, the number of representatives for all the Hills will be somewhat in excess of the number which would be arrived at on the basis of one representative for each lakh of the population. We are not only of the view that in the special circumstances of the Hills, representatives as recommended by us is necessary to provide proper representation but that the excess should not be adjusted to the detriment of the rest of Assam out of the total number admissible under Section 19(2) of the draft provincial constitution. We have provided accordingly that in reckoning the number of representatives for the rest of Assam, the population and the number of representatives of the Hills shall not be taken into account. We contemplate that the Khasi & Jaintia Hills should include the Municipality and Cantonment of Shillong which is at present a general constituency. This will be an exception to the provision barring non-tribals from election in the Hill constituencies.

(c) **Federal Legislature.**—The total population of the Hill Districts given above clearly justifies a seat for the Hill Tribes in the Federal Legislature on the scale proposed in Section 13 (c) of the Draft Union Constitution.

(d) **Joint Electorate.**—The Hill Districts have this simple feature, that their populations are almost entirely tribal. In the Khasi and Jaintia Hills (a pocket of Mikir excepted) in the Garo Hills, the Mikir Hills (some Rengma and Kuki excepted) the population is uniform. In the Naga Hills, among the different tribes like the Angami, Ao, Sema, there is now the beginning of a feeling of unity. The Naga Hills District has a population of 1·85 lakhs and is likely to get two representatives at least which might enable the allocation of one each to the two main centres of Kohima and Mokokchung. In the North Cachar Hills the position is less satisfactory but in all these areas we consider that the electorate should be joint for all the tribes and non-tribals residing there. In view of the preponderance of tribal people we consider that no reservation of seats is necessary and the only condition which we propose is that the constituencies should not overlap across the boundaries of the district (in the case of North Cachar, the subdivision).

(e) **Non-Tribals Barred.**—We have considered the question of non-tribals residing permanently in the hills. Some of these have been in residence for more than one generation and may well claim the right to stand for election but we find that the feeling against allowing them to stand for election is extremely strong. It is felt that even though in a predominantly tribal constituency the chances are all in favour of a tribal candidate, the non-tribals, in view of their greater financial strength can nullify this advantage. We recommend therefore that plains people should not be eligible for election to the provincial legislature from the Hill Constituencies.

22. **THE PROVINCIAL MINISTRY.**—That the Hills can already provide representatives who can take part in the provincial administration is obvious. On four occasions residents of the Khasi Hills have occupied a place in the provincial Executive Council or Cabinet. The hitherto excluded Lushai and Naga Hills have the same potentiality. With Ministers from the Hills in the Cabinet it may be expected indeed that their interests will not be neglected. The doubts raised are: will there necessarily be a Minister from the Hills even when a suitable person is available? If not who will look after the interests of the Hills? The Hill areas contain close upon a million people and in view of the great importance of the frontier hills in particular, it would be wise of any Ministry to make a point of having at least one colleague from the Hills. It is our considered view that representation for the Hills should be guaranteed by statutory provision if possible. If this is not possible, we are of the view that a suitable instruction should be provided in the instrument of instructions or corresponding provision. The development of the Hills however is a matter which requires special attention in the interests of the province and we feel that if the circumstances necessitate it, the Governor should be in a position to appoint a special Minister who should, if possible, be from among the hill people. In this connection we would refer to the need for a special development plan which we have referred to in Para. 16 (b).

23. **THE SERVICES.**—A good deal of discussion has centred round the problem of providing suitable officials for the hills. The number of suitably qualified candidates

from the hill people themselves has been inadequate hitherto and the utilisation of other candidates has of course been found necessary. No special service has been considered necessary for the hills. On the other hand there has been a certain amount of feeling against the plains officials notably against inferior staff, who have been posted there. We have considered this question carefully and come to the conclusion that no separate service for the Hills is desirable or necessary and that there should be free interchange between hill and non-hill officials, at least in the higher cadres of the provincial and All-India Services. The District Councils will doubtless appoint all their staff from their own people and to prevent interchangeability would be tantamount to perpetuating exclusion as our proposals involve a good deal of separation already. We recommend therefore that while non-tribal officials should be eligible for posting to the hills and vice versa they should be selected with care. We also recommend that in recruitment the appointment of a due proportion of hill peoples should be particularly kept in mind and provided for in rules or executive instructions of the Provincial Government.

24. A COMMISSION.—We have referred to the need for special attention to the development of the Hills. No statutory provision for the earmarking of adequate funds is considered possible. On the other hand, the Hill Councils recommended by us will have far greater powers than local bodies in plains districts. The Hills occupy a position of strategic importance and it is in our opinion of great importance for constant touch to be maintained with the development and administration of these areas. For this purpose we consider that there should be provision for the appointment of a Commission, on which we expect that there will be representatives of the tribes, to examine the state of affairs periodically and report. We recommend that there should be provision to appoint the Commission *ad hoc* or permanently and that the Governor of the province should have the responsibility and power for appointing it. The report of the Commission should enable the Government to watch the progress of the development plan and take such other administrative action as may be necessary.

25. PLAINS TRIBALS.—The total tribal population of Assam was shown in the Census of 1941 as 2,484,906. The excluded and partially excluded areas contribute to this only 863,248. About 1·6 million tribals therefore live in the plains including those who work as tea-gardens labour. The terms of our enquiry are that we report on a scheme of administration for the tribal and excluded areas and the question of tribes people in the plains strictly does not concern us. Their case will doubtless be dealt with by the Minorities Sub-Committee. The population of the plains tribals which is being gradually assimilated to the population of the plains, should for all practical purposes be treated as a minority. Measures of protection for their land are also in our view necessary. At present certain seats are reserved in the provincial legislature for them. The question of their representation and protection will we hope be considered by the Minorities Sub-Committee. We have kept in mind however the possibility of there being certain areas inhabited by tribals in the plains or at the foot of the hills whom it may be necessary to provide for in the same manner. (See clause A (3) of Appendix A.)

26. BOUNDARIES.—All the Hills people have expressed a desire for the rectification of district boundaries so that people of the same tribe are brought under a common administration. We sympathise with this desire but find that it is only outside our terms of reference but also that it would necessitate an amount of examination which would make it impossible for us to submit our report to the Advisory Committee in time. The present boundaries have, we find, been in existence for many years and we feel that there is time for a separate commission set up by the Provincial Government to work on the problems involved. An exception should however be the case of the Barpathar and Sarupathar mauzas included in the Mikir Hills which the Provincial Government have already decided should be removed from the category of excluded and added to the regularly administered areas (see memorandum of Government of Assam). We agree with this recommendation and propose that it should be given effect when the new Constitution comes into force

27. NON-TRIBAL RESIDENTS.—In the Hill Districts, a certain number of non-tribal people reside as permanent residents. They generally follow non-agricultural professions but some cultivate land also. We have recommended that these residents should not be eligible to stand for election to the provincial legislature. It is necessary however to provide them with representation in the local council if they are sufficiently numerous. We contemplate that constituencies may be formed for the local councils if the number of residents is not below 500 and that non-tribal constituencies should be formed where this is justified.

28. DRAFT PROVISIONS.—For the sake of convenience we have condensed most of our recommendations into the form of a draft of provisions in roughly legal form and this draft will be found as an appendix to this part. The draft also contains certain incidental provisions including finance not referred to in this report.

29. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS.—Reference has been made to the constitutions drafted in the different district for their local councils. This is of course the expression of the strong desire for autonomy in the Hill District. Rather more important however are the individualities of the different tribes and the distinctness of their customs and social systems. If the tribes are allowed to decide the composition and powers of their own councils it will doubtless afford them the maximum of sentimental satisfaction and conduce also to the erection of a mechanism suited without question for their own needs and purposes. While therefore it will be necessary in the existing conditions for the Governor of Assam (as the functionary who will carry on the administration till the new constitution comes into force) to frame provisional rules for holding elections and constituting the councils. We recommend that the councils thus convened should be provisional councils (one year) and that they should frame their own constitution and regulations for the future.

APPENDIX A TO PART I OF NORTH-EAST FRONTIER (ASSAM) TRIBAL AND EXCLUDED AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

A (1) The areas included in schedule A to this Part shall be autonomous districts.

(2) An autonomous district may be divided into autonomous regions.

(3) Subject to the provisions of section P the Government of Assam may from time to time notify any area not included in the said schedule as an autonomous district or as included in an autonomous district and the provisions of this Part shall thereupon apply to such area as if it was included in the said schedule.

(4) Except in pursuance of a resolution passed by the District Council of an autonomous district in this behalf the Government of Assam shall not notify any district specified or deemed to be specified in the schedule or part of such district, as ceasing to be an autonomous district or a part thereof.

B (1) There shall be a District Council for each of the areas specified in schedule A. The Council shall have not less than twenty nor more than forty members, of whom not less than threefourths shall be elected by universal adult franchise.

Note.—If adult franchise is not universally adopted this provision will have to be altered.

(2) The constituencies for the elections to the District Council shall be so constituted if practicable that the different tribals or non-tribals, if any, inhabiting the area shall elect a representative from among their own tribe or group :

Provided that no constituency shall be formed with a total population of less than 500.

(3) If there are different tribes inhabiting distinct areas within an autonomous district, there shall be a separate Regional Council for each such area or group of areas that may so desire.

(4) The District Council in an autonomous district with Regional Councils shall have such powers as may be delegated by the Regional Councils in addition to the powers conferred by this constitution.

(5) The District or the Regional Council may frame rules regarding (a) the conduct of future elections, the composition of the Council, the office bearers who may be appointed, the manner of their election and other incidental matters, (b) the conduct of business, (c) the appointment of staff, (d) the formation and functioning of subordinate local councils or boards, (e) generally all matters pertaining to the administration of subjects entrusted to it or falling within its powers :

Provided that the Deputy Commissioner or the Sub-divisional officer as the case may be of the Mikir and the North Cachar Hills shall be the Chairman *ex-officio* of the District Council and shall have for a period of six years after the constitution of the Council. Powers subject to the control of the Government of Assam to annul or modify any resolution or decision of the District Council or to issue such instructions as he may consider appropriate.

C (1) The Regional Council, or if there is no Regional Council, the District Council, shall have power to make laws for the area under its jurisdiction regarding (a) allotment, occupation or use for agricultural, residential or other non-agricultural purposes, or setting apart for grazing, cultivation, residential or other purposes ancillary to the life of the village or town, of land other than land classed as reserved forest under the Assam Forest Regulation, 1891 or other law on the subject applicable to the district.

Provided that land required by the Government of Assam for public purposes shall be allotted free of cost if vacant, or if occupied, on payment of due compensation in accordance with the law relating to the acquisition of land, (b) the management of any forest which is not a reserve forest, (c) the use of canal or water courses for the purposes of agriculture, (d) controlling, prohibiting or permitting the practice of *jhum* or other forms of shifting cultivation, (e) the establishment of village or town committees and councils and their powers, (f) all other matters relating to village or town management, sanitation, watch and ward.

(2) The Regional Council or if there is no Regional Council, the District Council shall also have powers to make laws regarding (a) the appointment or succession of chiefs or headmen, (b) inheritance of property, (c) marriage and all other social customs.

D (1) Save as provided in Section F the Regional Council, or if there is no Regional Council, the District Council, or a court constituted by it in this behalf shall have all the powers of a final court of appeal in respect of cases or suits between parties, all of whom belong to hill tribes, in its jurisdiction.

(2) The Regional Council, or if there is no Regional Council the District Council, may set up Village Councils or Courts for the hearing and disposal of disputes or cases other than cases triable under the provisions of Section F, or cases arising out of laws passed by it in the exercise of its powers, and may also appoint such officials as may be necessary for the administration of its laws.

E The District Council of an autonomous district shall have the powers to establish or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries fisheries, roads and waterways and in particular may prescribe the language and manner in which primary education shall be imparted.

F (1) For the trial of acts which constitute offences punishable with imprisonment for five years or more or with death, or transportation for life under the Indian Penal Code or other law applicable to the district or of suits arising out of special laws or in which one or more of the parties are non-tribals, the Government of Assam may confer such powers under the Criminal Procedure Code or Civil Procedure Code as the case may be on the Regional Council, the District Council or Courts constituted by them or an officer appointed by the Government of Assam as it deems appropriate and such courts shall try the offences or suits in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure or Civil Procedure as the case may be.

(2) The Government of Assam may withdraw or modify powers conferred on the Regional Council or District Council or any court or officer under this section.

(3) Save as provided in this section the Criminal Procedure Code and the Civil Procedure Code shall not apply to the autonomous district.

Note.—"Special Laws"—Laws of the type of the law of contract, company law or insurance etc. are contemplated.

G (1) There shall be constituted a District or Regional Fund into which shall be credited all moneys received by the District Council or Regional Council as the case may be in the course of its administration or in the discharge of its responsibilities.

(2) Rules approved by the Comptroller of Assam shall be made for the management of the Fund by the District or Regional Council and management of the Fund shall be subject to these rules.

H (1) A Regional Council, or if there is no Regional Council the District Council shall have the following powers of taxation :

(a) subject to the general principles of assessment approved in this behalf for the rest of Assam, land revenue, (b) poll tax or house tax.

(2) The District Council shall have powers to impose the following taxes, that is to say (a) a tax on professions, trades or calling, (b) a tax on animals, vehicles, (c) toll tax (d) market dues, (e) ferry dues, (f) cesses for the maintenance of schools, dispensaries or roads.

(3) A Regional Council or District Council may make rules for the imposition and recovery of the taxes within its financial powers.

I (1) The Government of Assam shall not grant any licence or lease to prospect for or extract minerals within an autonomous district save in consultation with the District Council.

(2) Such share of the royalties accruing from licences or leases for minerals as may be agreed upon shall be made over to the District Council. In default of agreement such share as may be determined by the Governor in his discretion shall be paid.

J (1) The District Council may for the purpose of regulating the profession of moneylending or trading by non-tribals in a manner detrimental to the interests of the tribals make rules applicable to the district or any portion of it : (a) prescribing that except the holder of a licence issued by the Council in this behalf no person shall carry on moneylending, (b) prescribing the maximum rate of interest which may be levied by a moneylender, (c) providing for the maintenance of accounts and for their inspection by its officials, (d) prescribing that no non-tribal shall carry on wholesale or retail business in any commodity except under a licence issued by the district council in this behalf :

Provided that no such rules may be made unless the District Council approves of the rules by a majority of not less than three fourths of its members :

Provided further that a licence shall not be refused to moneylenders and dealer carrying on business at the time of the making of the rules.

K (1) The number of members representing an autonomous district in the Provincial Legislature shall bear at least the same proportion to the population of the district as the total number of members in that Legislature bears to the total population of Assam.

(2) The total number of representatives allotted to the autonomous districts (which may at any time be specified in Schedule A) in accordance with Sub-section (1) of this Section shall not be taken into account in reckoning the total number of representatives to be allotted to the rest of the Province under the provisions of Section.....of the Provincial Constitution.

(3) No constituencies shall be formed for the purpose of election to the Provincial Legislature which include portions of other autonomous districts or other areas

nor shall any non-tribal be eligible for election except in the constituency which includes the Cantonment and Municipality of Shillong.

L (1) Legislation passed by the provincial legislature in respect of (a) any of the subjects specified in section C or

(b) prohibiting or restricting the consumption of any non-distilled alcoholic liquor, shall not apply to an autonomous district.

(2) A Regional Council of an autonomous district or if there is no Regional Council, the District Council may apply any such law to the area under its jurisdiction, with or without modification.

M The revenue and expenditure pertaining to an autonomous district which is credited to or met from the funds of the Government of Assam shall be shown separately in the annual financial statement of the Province of Assam.

N There shall be paid out of the revenues of the Federation to the Government of Assam such capital and recurring sums as may be necessary to enable that Government—(a) to meet the average excess of expenditure over the revenue during the three years immediately preceding the commencement of this constitution in respect of the administration of the areas specified in Schedule A ; and (b) to meet the cost of such schemes of development as may be undertaken by the Government with the approval of the Federal Government for the purpose of raising the level of administration of the aforesaid areas to that of the rest of the province.

O (1) The Governor of Assam may at any time institute a commission specifically to examine and report on any matter relating to the administration or, generally at such intervals as he may prescribe, on the administration of the autonomous districts generally and in particular on (a) the provision of educational and medical facilities and communications (b) the need for any new or special legislation, and (c) the administration of the District or Regional Councils and the laws or rules made by them.

(2) The report of such a commission with the recommendations of the Governor shall be placed before the provincial legislature by the Minister concerned with an explanatory memorandum regarding the action taken or proposed to be taken on it.

(3) The Governor may appoint a special Minister for the Autonomous Districts.

P (1) The Government of Assam may, with the approval of the Federal Government, by notification make the foregoing provisions or any of them applicable to any area specified in Schedule B to this part, or to a part thereof ; and may also, with the approval of the Federal Government, exclude any such area or part thereof from the said schedule.

(2) Till a notification is issued under this section, the administration of any area specified in Schedule B or of any part thereof shall be carried on by the Union Government through the Government of Assam as its agent.

Q (1) The Governor of Assam in his discretion may, if he is satisfied that any act or resolution of a Regional or District Council is likely to endanger the safety of India, amend or suspend such act or resolution and take such steps as he may consider necessary (including dissolution of the Council and the taking over of its administration) to prevent the commission or continuation of such act or giving effect to such resolution.

(2) The Governor shall place the matter before the legislature as soon as possible and the legislature may confirm or set aside the declaration of the Governor.

R The Governor of Assam may on the recommendation of a commission set up by him under section N order the dissolution of a Regional or District Council and direct either that fresh election should take place immediately, or with the approval of the legislature of the province, place the administration of the area directly under himself or the commission or other body considered suitable by him, during the interim period or for a period not exceeding twelve months :

Provided that such action shall not be taken without affording an opportunity to the District or Regional Council to be heard by the provincial legislature and shall not be taken if the provincial legislature is opposed to it.

Transitional Provisions :

Governor to carry on administration as under the 1935 Act till a Council is set up, he should take action to constitute the first District Council or Regional Council and frame provisional rules in consultation with existing tribal Councils or other representative organisations, for the conduct of the elections, prescribe who shall be the office bearers, etc. The term of the first Council to be one year.

(Sd.) GOPINATH BARDOLOI (*Chairman*).

„ J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY.

„ RUP NATH BRAHMA.

„ A. V. THAKKAR.

Schedule A

The Khasi and Jaintia Hills District excluding the town of Shillong.

The Garo Hills District.

The Lushai Hills District

The Naga Hills District.

The North Cachar Sub-division of the Cachar District.

The Mikir Hills portion of Nowgong and Sibsagar District excepting the mouzas of Barpathar and Sarupathar.

Schedule B

The Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tracts.

The Tirap Frontier Tract (excluding the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract).

The Naga Tribal Area.

APPENDIX B

Copy of Notification No. 1-X, dated the 1st April 1937, from the Government of India in the External Affairs Department.

In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of Section 123, read with sub-section (3) of Section 313, of the Government of India Act, 1935, the Governor General in Council is pleased to direct the Governor of Assam to discharge as his agent, in and in relation to the tribal areas beyond the external boundaries of the Province of Assam, all functions hitherto discharged in and in relation to the said areas by the said Governor as Agent to the Governor-General in respect of the political control of the trans-border tribes, the administration of the said areas and the administration of the Assam Rifles and other armed civil forces.

REPORT OF THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER (ASSAM) TRIBAL AND EXCLUDED AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE

PART II

1. **THE BALIPARA FRONTIER TRACT.**—This is the tract between the Subansiri River on the east, Bhutan on the west and the MacMahon Line to the north, with its headquarters at Charduar about 20 miles from Tezpur. It is included in the Schedule to the Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order as an Excluded Area, but in practice it is administered by the Governor of Assam as the Agent to the Government of India and is treated in this respect as a tribal area. The portion immediately to the north of Charduar and up to the Inner Line is a plains portion the area of which is estimated to be approximately 1,000 square miles. The consused portion of the area was 571 square miles and the population of 6,512 contained only 560 Daffa, the remaining number of 2323 persons enumerated as Assam tribes consisting of Cachari, Garo, Mikir and Miri. The area beyond the Inner Line is estimated to cover about 11,000 square miles and contain a population of approximately 350,000. For administrative purposes it is at present divided into two parts, the Balipara or Sela Agency and the Subansiri Area under two Political Officers. Particularly in the Subansiri Area there are portions which have not yet been explored by our officers, and the details of the tribes living there are still not fully known. In the Sela area administration has been extended as far as Dirang Dzong and this area contains tribes like the Momba, Sillung, Aka or Rhuso, Senjithonji. The Subansiri area is inhabited largely by Daffa (Nisu) and Apatani but large areas have yet to be visited and explored.

In the western portions of the tract the way of life of the tribes is influenced a good deal by Tibetan customs and Buddhist monasteries but in the eastern sector the people are much more primitive. Some terraced cultivation and orange gardens exist but people like the Aka depend on *ghuming*. Literacy among the tribes seems to be very poor in spite of the influence of monasteries. Except among the Momba there is little demand even for education. For their requirements of cloth and salt notably the inhabitants depend upon contact with the plains areas or with the Tibetans. The monastery at Towang exercises considerable influence over the lives of those tribes and puts forward claims to monastic taxation. The tribes keep poultry, pigs, goats and mithun. In the olden days some chiefs here apparently used to exercise a kind of right of levying taxes in plains villages. This appears to have been recognised by the Ahom Kings who allowed relief to the people liable to such taxes from other taxes to a corresponding extent. In connection with these levies an agreement* was entered into by the British Government for the payment of an annual subsidy, known as *posa*. Rs. 5,000 are paid to the Talung Dzongpons and the Sat Rajas of Kalaktang and some bottles of rum and cloth also are given. The tribes in return also given certain presents like ebony, a gold ring, two Chinese cups, two yak tails and two blankets. Similar payments of *posa* are made to the Charduar Bhutia or Shordukpon Thombangia Bhutia, Aka and certain other tribes. Payments to the Daffa and Miri are however made only to freemen and in all cases cease on the death of the present holder. The total payment of *posa* comes to about 10,000 rupees per year. Maintenance of law and order in this area as well as defence against external encroachment is looked after by the posts occupied by the Assam Rifles.

Though some of the witnesses who appeared before us could speak Assamese and appeared to be intelligent, we are inclined to agree with the Political Officer's view that until the five-year plan which provides for an expansion of schools and

* Clause IV of Agreement No. XLIV of 1888 with the Kapaschor or Kavatsun Akas runs as follows:—The "posa" we shall receive from Government is in lieu of the due we formerly levied on the Assamese inhabitants of the plains, and that we have no right to receive any food, service, dues or other token of superiority from any receipt in British territory....." Aitchison, Vol. XII.

communications has been given effect, there is likely to be little material in this Tract particularly in the Subansiri Area, for local self-governing institutions. For sometime the problems of administration here must remain confined largely to the maintenance of peace among the tribes, prevention of encroachment and oppression by Tibetan tax collectors, extension of communications, and elementary facilities for obtaining medicine and primary education. Tibetan officials are known to have set up trade blocks with a view to compelling trade with Tibet rather than India and the removal of these obstructions is a matter which may involve political contact with Tibetan authorities. As already pointed out large areas are as yet *terra incognita* to our officers and the attitude of the tribes is one of fear or suspicion which may easily turn to hostility. It is clear however that the southern portions of the tract will develop earlier than the northern most portions and administration of the political agency type can therefore be gradually shifted northwards. The Political officers view is that the time is not yet ripe for shifting his headquarters from Charduar to a place in the hills. The area round Charduar which is in the plains portion is inhabited mostly by non-tribals or debribalised people of tribal origin. The question of bringing it under regular administration needs therefore to be examined in detail by the Provincial Government. What we contemplate is that areas over which adequate control has been established should be brought under the regular provincial administration while areas further north remain under the control of the Central Government, as at present. The Centre should however administer the tract through the Provincial Government as its agent so that the Provincial Government remains in contact with the administration*.

We are also of the view that steps should be taken as soon as practicable to erect boundary pillars on the trade routes to Tibet at places where they intersect the MacMahon Line.

The payments of *posz* represent a small amount and the sentimental value attached to it and the probability that any cessation of it concurrently with the coming into force of the new constitution would have most undesirable consequences on the attitude of the tribes, should be kept in mind. It should clearly not be discontinued for the present.

2. THE SADIYA FRONTIER TRACT.—The Sadiya Frontier Tract is the tract between the Subansiri river on the west and the boundary of the Tirap Frontier Tract on the north-east. The latter boundary has been adjusted from time to time. The Frontier area comprising the Sadiya and Tirap Frontier Tracts is somewhat in the shape of a parabola which contains the area through which the Brahmaputra river with its tributaries debouches on to the plains. The Sadiya tract may be regarded as falling into two or three distinct portions. To begin with, there is the portion to the west consisting of the valley of the Dibang or Siang with Abor tribes like Minyong, Bori, Galong, Padam. The Valley of the Dibang in the centre covers the area inhabited by Idu or Chulikata Mishmi, and the valley of the Lohit is inhabited by Digaru and other Mishmi and certain Hkampti and Miri-tribes. Included in these three broad divisions is the plains portion of the tract (which includes Saikhoaghat on the south bank of the Lohit river) which runs up to the foot of the hill (roughly along the Inner Line). As in the case of the Balipara tract, regular administration has yet to be established in portions up to the MacMahon Line, which itself needs to be demarcated by the erection of boundary pillars at least at the points where the trade routes cross into India. The headquarters of the Political Officer is at Sadiya and there is an Assistant Political Officer at Pasighat.

The Assistant Political Officer of the Lohit Valley stays at Sadiya and his jurisdiction includes the Chulikata or Idu Mishmi in the north and the Digaru and others towards the east and south of the tract. There are no easy lateral communications between the Chulikata area and the Lohit Valley proper.

* See Assam Government's Factual Memorandum on page 70 of Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas—I (C. A. Pamphlet).

By inhabitants, the hill tract falls broadly into portions inhabited by Abor (Siang Valley) the Chulikata in the Dibang Valley and other Mishmi in the Lohit Valley, and the Hkampti or Shan who are a comparatively civilised tribe following Buddhism. In addition there is the mixed population of the Sadiya portion to the south of Inner Line containing non-tribals and some Miri. Although the Gallong Abor are somewhat different from the Padam and Minyong the languages are practically the same and the whole of the Abor Tract could be regarded as reasonably uniform. The Mishmi area, though it falls into two separate portions along the Dibang and Lohit Rivers respectively, and the tribes do not understand one another's language, could be treated as one. The Hkampti area which is the third one is small and the Sadiya population is a mixed one. The area beyond the Inner Line which is not censused is estimated to contain 250,000 Abor, 40,000 Idu, 25,000 Digaru and Miji and about 2,500 Hkampti. The censused portion is an area of 3,309 square miles with a total population of 60,118 of which 39,974 are of tribal origin.

That total area of the tract may be in the neighbourhood of 15,000 square miles and its development and administration clearly necessitate the subdivision of the tract and the appointment of more officials. In fact the Political Officer has already recommended the division of the tract into two portions based on Pasighat and Sadiya respectively. This is roughly equivalent to a division into the Mishmi area and the Abor area respectively and the proposals under consideration at present seem to contemplate the posting of a Political Officer at Sadiya for the Mishmi Agency with an Assistant with headquarters at Walong (Lohit Valley) and a second Political Officer at Pasighat (now the headquarters of an A. P. O.). The main reason for keeping Sadiya as the headquarters for the Mishmi Agency would appear to be the lack of lateral communications between the Chulikata area in the Dibang Valley and the Digaru area in the Lohit Valley. It is clear however that Sadiya and the portion up to the Inner Line is in the plains and contains a mixed population. Cultivation in this tract is also settled and the people of the tract desire that it should not continue under the present system of exclusion. Moreover, there is the area occupied by the Hkampti who are settled cultivators professing Buddhism which has also spread a good deal of literacy among them. *Prima facie* there is a strong case for treating the plains portion of the tract as well as the Hkampti portions as regularly administered areas, in the form perhaps of a separate subdivision or district. The distinctness of the Hkampti must however be borne in mind and the area will probably have to be treated as a separate taluk. An early and detailed examination of the whole question is clearly called for. If Sadiya is treated as plain, a suitable headquarters for the Political officer of the Mishmi Area needs to be looked for keeping in mind the difficulties of communication between the Dibang and Lohit valleys.

With the exception of the Hkamptis who are settled cultivators, and may be regarded as comparatively civilised, and a few people in the plains portion who also do settled cultivation, the Abor and Mishmi pursue *jhuming* and appear to exhibit little competence in the art of raising crops. They of course eke out a livelihood by keeping poultry, sheep and *mithun*. The herds of *mithun* kept by these tribes are in fact the occasion for disputes between people as raiding for *mithun* seems to be in this area what head-hunting is in the Naga tribal area. Serious quarrels arising out of raiding for *mithun* may call for the intervention of the Political officer. The tribes are generally heavily addicted to opium and attempts to keep the growth and consumption of opium in check seem to be meeting with little success. Though we feel that the Abor and Mishmi are people who can be educated and assimilated to civilised administration in a comparatively short time, there is little literacy or education among them at present, and the depth of the area over which control has been established beyond the Inner Line does not seem to be great. Communications are the urgent need so that greater contact is possible even if the lack of education is regarded as no impediment. By the time the five year plan has been worked out (it contemplates the making of a road to Walong and improvement of communications in other respects also) it may be possible to give effect to the keenly expressed desire among the Abors of a share in the provincial administration. It is obvious that the pace

of establishment of full-fledged administration in this area should be accelerated. A beginning should however be possible by way of political education of the people, if tribal councils are set up to enable the different tribes to come together to discuss matters of mutual interest and understand the problems of administration.

The forests of this tract can produce a good revenue but land revenue in the plains portions amounts to about 50,000 and the poll tax which is also levied in this area amounts to about 15,000. The forest revenue in 1946-47 was 430,000.

3. THE LAKHIMPUR AND TIRAP FRONTIER TRACTS.— The exact position, legal and *de facto* is not clear. The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract is mentioned as one of the North-East Frontier Tracts scheduled as an excluded area. No frontier has as yet been laid down between Burma and India in this region. There is an area locally known as the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract which is treated as an excluded area with the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, as the Agent or Political Officer. The Tirap-Frontier Tract, which apparently derives its name from the river of that name, is said at present to contain a number of villages added to it from the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract during the war, and the rest of the portion inhabited by Naga tribes towards the Burmese territory. In addition to the Tirap Frontier Tract the Political Officer, whose headquarters are at present in Margherita in Lakhimpur district, is also in charge of a portion of the Naga Tribal Area which stretches along the boundary of the Lakhimpur district till it touches the northern apex of the Naga Hills district boundary and then runs along the eastern boundary of the Naga Hills districts towards its southern projection towards Burma. The area of the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract as shown in the census is about 394 square miles. The area of the Tirap Frontier Tract can of course only be guessed as there is no definite boundary with Burma. It may be in the neighbourhood of 4,000 square miles. In population also the tract differs from part to part. The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract differs "in no way from the surrounding plains; possesses none of the characteristics of the hill areas and need not be considered in relation to the problems of the hill tribes". *In the portion of the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract which has now been taken into the Tirap Frontier Tract there are several villages inhabited by Kachins and others who are regarded as tribal and pay house tax. In the Tirap Frontier Tract a number of tribes classed as Naga such as Tikak, Yogli, Ranrang, Lungri, Sank-e, Mosang, Morang etc. reside. The whole of the area inhabited by the Naga tribes could appropriately be regarded as part of India since the economic relations of all these tribes are with India and not with any other country. The demarcation of a boundary with Burma is to be taken up therefore on this principle and the question is said to be now under consideration by the Government of India. It is obviously a matter which needs to be expedited.

In the northern portion of the Naga Tribal area (which may be really regarded as part of the Tirap Frontier, since for a considerable distance the boundary of this area runs along with the eastern boundary of Lakhimpur district) there are tribes classed as Konyak Naga and the relations of this area are also with the plains portion of the Lakhimpur district. For instance it is common for tribes from Namsang and Borduria to come frequently to Jaipur for their marketing etc., and a good number of them seem to speak Assamese. The area is thickly populated. The Singpho or Kachin are Buddhists and they had chiefs belonging to the old ruling family before the country was taken over in 1839. The agreements entered into in 1826 and 1836 are a dead letter and though the chiefs are consulted by the Political Officer whenever there is any dispute to be settled or other matter to be dealt with, the Political Officer is being looked up to more and more, and the chief is regarded only by way of being an adviser to the Political Officer.

Agriculture is mostly by the primitive method of *jhuming* and there are no educational facilities. The economic condition of the tract is pretty poor. The Kachin however are settled cultivators and are in a better position than the Naga. In the Naga Tribal Area head hunting is still practised and slavery also seems to exist.

* See North East Frontier Tribal and Excluded Areas (C. A. Pamphlet) paragraph 5(c).

For the Tirap Frontier Tract also the five year plan approved by the Government of India contemplates the extension of the benefits of administration. The headquarters is proposed to be moved to a place in the interior called Horukhunma and hospitals and schools are to be constructed. Both in the Tirap Frontier Tract and the Naga tribal area the policy is just the same, namely the extension of administration gradually up to the Burma frontier. This policy appears to us to be the correct one to follow, whatever the legal status of the area may be under the Government of India Act. As in the case of the MacMahon Line frontier, all the portion between the Burmese boundary and the administered area of Assam should be merged in Assam as soon as possible and the distinction between Tribal Area and administered Indian territory abolished.

The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract need no longer be treated as an excluded area. As regards the portions of this tract taken over into the Tirap Frontier Tract the justification for continuing it as a frontier area needs to be further examined and if no difficulty is likely to be caused by the inclusion of the Kachins and other tribes who live there in the Lakhimpur district the area should be merged in the district. In the rest of the area, steps should be taken to organise non-statutory tribal councils, panchayats etc., in anticipation of the time when this tract will be fit for inclusion in the provincial administration. For the proper administration of the Naga Hills tribal area it would appear desirable to provide more officials, and a separate officer with headquarters as close as possible to the area, if not inside it is necessary. It would appear that there is already sanction for a separate Sub-divisional Officer at Mokokchung under the control of the Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills district, but the present arrangement by which the tribal area is shared between the Deputy Commissioner, Kohima, and the Political Officer, Tirap Frontier Tract, needs to be further examined. It would perhaps be best to divide the portion into two districts one which will in due course either merge with the existing Naga Hills district and form a sub-division thereof or be a Konyak district, and another which will form a portion of another district under an officer with headquarters in the present Tirap Frontier Tract.

4. NAGA HILLS DISTRICT.—The Naga Hills District is an area of 4,289 square miles bounded on the east by the Naga tribal area, on the south by Manipur State and on the west by the Sibsagar district. The population was given as 189,641 of which 184,766 or 97·4 per cent were tribal, at the 1941 census. The district is inhabited by a number of Naga tribes notably the Angami, the Sema, the Lhota and the Ao. Of these tribes the Angami are the most numerous and inhabit the area round Kohima, their number at the 1941 census being slightly over 52,000. The Aos are the next numerous numbering over 40,000 and the Semas come third with 35,741. These two tribes inhabit the area round Mokokchung which is a separate subdivision of the district, and the Sema also inhabit the region to the north-west of the Angami country. The tribes speak different languages and their *lingua franca* is Assamese or Hindustani. They have also differing customs and traditions. Areas claimed by the tribe or village are jealously guarded against encroachment and to such an extent in the Naga Tribal Area that a villager seldom ventures outside his village boundary. Within the boundary of the district proper there is generally speaking regular administration though during the war a slightly different atmosphere might have been introduced. Though the percentage of literacy among male Naga is about 6 only, quite a good number of these have received high education. Female literacy among the Naga is however negligible, though in the Mokokchung Subdivision it was found to be nearly four per cent. Literacy seems to be higher in the Mokokchung area than the Kohima area and the demand for education is also keener here. As regards economic circumstances a good deal of terracing is done in the Angami areas and a number of Nagas seem to have taken up non-agricultural occupations—the planting of gardens, etc.

It has been mentioned that the district is inhabited by mutually exclusive, diverse tribes. A movement for unification has however been afoot in the last two or three years and a body known as the Naga National Council (with sub-councils of the different tribes) was formed in 1945. Though a non-official political organisation, many of its leaders and members are Government officials and the organisation has also received official recognition locally. Thus the anomalous position of Government servants participating in political activity exists and in part this situation is due to the fact, that the educated, influential and leading elements are Government servants. Though the formation of this Council may be taken as an indication that the unity of administration has given a sense of unity to the different tribes it would perhaps be a mistake to suppose that there has been any real consolidation, and the tenacity with which the tribes hold on to their own particular views or traditions is still a potent factor. A notable characteristic of Naga* tribes is that decisions in their tribal councils are taken by general agreement and not by the minority accepting the decisions of the majority. This feature, though perhaps well suited to village affairs, may lead to many an unsatisfactory compromise in matters of greater movement.

In June 1946, the Naga National Council passed a resolution expressing their approval of the scheme proposed by the Cabinet Mission in the State Paper of May 16, 1946, and their desire to form part of Assam and India. The resolution protested against the proposal to group Assam with Bengal. This resolution and the feeling which prompted it seems to have held the field throughout 1946, and the Premier of Assam who visited the district in November 1946 was greeted with the utmost cordiality. Early in 1947 the Governor of Assam, Sir Andrew Clow, visited the Naga Hills and advised the Nagas that their future lay with India and with Assam. Subsequently, towards the end of February 1947, the Naga National Council passed a resolution in which they desired the establishment of "an Interim Government of Nagas with financial provisions, for a period of ten years at the end of which the Naga people will be left to choose any form of Government under which they themselves choose to live." This resolution was of course completely different from the previous one in that it was based on the idea of being a separate nation and country. Subsequently the Naga National Council sent another memorandum in which they mentioned a "guardian power" without however stating who should be the guardian power, and it was found that they were extremely reluctant to express any choice openly between the three possibilities of the Government of India, the Provincial Government and H. M. G. It would appear that this was the formula on which a general measure of agreement could be obtained among the Nagas since there were clear indications that many of them were inclined to take moderate views more on the lines of the original resolution passed at Wokha but in view of the intransigence of certain other members, probably of the Angami group, they were prevented from doing so.

Subsequent events connected with the visit of H. E. the Governor to the Naga Hills on the 26th of June 1946 show that the Nagas have dropped their extreme demands. The substance of the claims made by the Nagas is now to maintain their customary laws and courts, management of their land with its resources, the continuance of the Regulations by which entry and residence in the Hills could be controlled and a review of the whole position after ten years.

5. LUSHAI HILLS DISTRICT.—This district has an area of 8,142 square miles and lies to the south of the Surma Valley. It forms a narrow wedged-shaped strip of territory about 70 miles wide in the north tapering to almost a point at its southern extremity and separates Burma from the State of Tripura and the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bengal on the east and south-east respectively. With the exception of a small area at its southern extremity which is inhabited by Lakhur tribesmen, the rest of the district is inhabited by the tribes known as Lushai or Mizo and found elsewhere in North Cachar sub-division, and Manipur as Kuki. The communications with the main inhabited areas of Aijal

* Other tribes have this characteristic also in greater or less degree.

(headquarters) and Lungleh are difficult and there is only a bridal path connecting Aijal with Silchar. From Serang, near Aijal, communication by river, along the Dhalowari, is possible and Dumagiri in the south is connected with Rangamati in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, by the Karnaphuli river. There is also a bridal path connecting Lungleh with Rangamati. The population of this district is 152,786 according to the last census and over 96 per cent of the population is tribal. The district as a whole is hilly, with a general elevation of between 3,000 and 4,000 feet and the slopes are usually quite steep.

Jhuming, with the exception of certain orange gardens, is the common form of cultivation, and terracing and wet cultivation present many difficulties. Spinning and weaving is a common cottage industry, and every woman in a Lushai household spins and weaves for the needs of the family. Most attractive tapestry work is done in these hills and the designs make a very colourful display. Much of the weaving and spinning is done however for personal use and not for sale. The degree of literacy in the area is very high; the reason for it being probably the fact that a large proportion of the population is Christian and the Sunday Schools have assisted the spread of literacy even among the adult men but, apart from a few Government servants, the number of people following non-agricultural occupations is negligible. The general level of intelligence and civilised behaviour in this area is high and compares favourably with most places in the plains.

There are no local self-governing institutions and village life is to a great extent dominated by the chief who is generally hereditary*. Formerly the number of chiefs was small, probably 50 or 60, but on account of the increase in population and the growth of new villages the present number is over 300. The chiefs settle disputes in the village, make a distribution of land for *jhuming* and generally carry out any orders issued to them by the officials including such work as collection of taxes. Of late the relations between the chiefs and the people has been rather strained, and it would appear that one reason for this is the convening of the so-called District Conference by the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills. The "Mizo Union" was started sometime ago by the people (including chiefs also as members) as a non-official organisation, with the consent of the Superintendent. This organisation seems to have been without a rival to begin with but in 1946 the Superintendent convened the District Conference with a membership of 40 of which 20 were commoners and 20 were chiefs. The District Conference was supposed to be elected by household franchise at the rate of one voter for every 10 houses and in the first conference, the chiefs and the people had separate electorates, that is, the people elected their own representatives and the chiefs theirs. The conference apparently created little enthusiasm and the large representation of chiefs on it must have caused some dissatisfaction. The Superintendent was the President of the conference. Towards October 1946 this conference seems to have broken down and was virtually abandoned. Shortly before the visit of the Sub-Committee however fresh elections were held by the Superintendent. At this election a change was made in the franchise so that the separate electorate was abolished and chiefs and commoners voted jointly. The ratio of chiefs and commoners was however maintained and on this account the "Mizo Union" decided to boycott the elections with considerable effect on it. In fact it is claimed by the Mizo Union that only two or three hundred voters actually took part in the elections. However this might be, the convening of the District Conference which was claimed to be an elected body obviously brought it into rivalry with the Mizo Union, and since the conference was supported by the Superintendent, the Mizo Union incurred official disfavour.† The Superintendent being the President of the conference and the chiefs being largely under official control and influence, there was apparent justification for the suggestion that the District Conference was not representative of the views of the people. In fact the attitude of the Superintendent

* A certain number of non-hereditary appointments have been made of late by the Superintendent.

† There were incidents earlier leading to the seizure of the Mizo Union's funds by the Superintendent.

gave us very good reason to believe that the District Conference was completely dominated by him and was his mouthpiece. The Superintendent himself propounded a scheme before the Committee the purport of which was that all local affairs should be managed by a constitutional body elected by the district who would have their own officers appointed by themselves and that the Government of Assam or of the Union should pay only a certain sum of money amounting to the deficit of the district and enter into an agreement regarding the defence of the district and its external relations. To what extent the Superintendent believed that the Lushais could actually administer their own affairs efficiently in every matter other than defence is a matter of some doubt because in answer to a question whether he thought that the whole administration could be managed by them, he replied "I will not guarantee that it could be done". (See p.—Vol. II Evidence). In answer to a further question he gave it as his opinion that it would not be very long before the district could manage its own affairs and that the length of the period would depend upon whether there was interference from outside by bodies that are too powerful or not. The general impressions gathered by us during our discussions with representatives of various interests in the district was that, with the exception of a few people who are under the influence of the Superintendent, the attitude of the rest was reasonable and it would not be long before disruptive ideas prevailing now completely disappear.

The main emphasis in the demands of the Lushais was laid on the protection of the land, the prevention of exploitation by outsiders and the continuance of their local customs and language.

The district has a revenue of about 2 lakhs and an expenditure amounting to about six lakhs. A high school has recently been started. The Assam Rifles are stationed at Aijal and Lungleh.

6. THE NORTH CACHAR HILLS SUB-DIVISION.—This area is a sub-division of the Cachar district whose headquarters is Silchar. It is an area of 1,888 square miles inhabited by 37,361 people of which 31,529 were tribals, the remainder being accounted for by the various railway and other colonies of outsiders. The main feature of this sub-division is that it contains a number of different tribes namely the Cachari, the Naga, the Kuki and Mikir; a small number of Synteng or Khasi also inhabit the area. The general characteristic is that the tribes named above, with the exception of one or two villages of Naga inhabited by a few Kuki, live in areas of their own and there is no intermingling of population of the different tribes in the villages. The Zemi Naga are however not in a compact block and live in three different portions with Kuki or Cachari in the intervening portions. The Mikir form a pocket to the north-west of the area and the Cachari roughly inhabit the central and south-west portions. The Cachari are the most numerous of the tribes with a population of about 16,000; the Kuki are about 7,000 and the Zemi about 6,000. Relations between the Kuki and the Naga are said to be unsatisfactory though for the time being relations appear to be good. It may be mentioned here that the Zemi have still unpleasant memories of bad treatment by the Angami of the Naga Hills District and there is not much love lost between them though they showed themselves responsive to instructions given by certain Angami officials from Kohima.

There is little literacy in this area and cultivation is by the primitive method of *jhuming*. Unlike the Angami areas in the Naga Hills District, the hillsides here are much steeper and, apart from rainfall, there is no scope for irrigation. Then again, unlike the Angami, the Zemi live in small hamlets and it is not an easy matter to find adequate labour for the introduction of terracing and wet cultivation. A certain number of orange gardens have been planted and potatoes have been introduced into the district. There is little doubt that with the encouragement of education, for which there is a demand the tribes can be brought up to the level of the others; but at present while they are quite capable of understanding the broad outlines of the democratic mechanism and can take part in elections, it is unlikely that they will be able to manage a body like a local board without official aid. The main difficulty in this portion is however that caused by the existence of different tribes who have little feeling of solidarity among themselves. Quite recently a sort of tribal council to bring together the different tribes with a view to educating them in local self-government it was undertaken by the Sub-Divisional Officer, but the Mikir, influenced as they

were by people from the Mikir Hills who wanted an amalgamation of the Mikir area with the Mikir Hills portion, would not co-operate in the joint council. Then there is the question of choosing a common representative. The Cachari being the most numerous have some advantage and the area is obviously too small for the representation of more than one in the provincial legislature. It is likely however that there will be a sufficient combination for the purpose of electing a common representative. Since this area cannot share a representative with plains areas, the population of 37,000 will have to be provided with a representative of their own. If however a local self-governing body is formed in this district it is clear that there will have to be some kind of regional arrangement by which the different tribes have their own separate councils which will then come together in the form of a council for the whole sub-division.

Like most other hill districts this area is also a deficit area. The same feeling which exists in other areas about safeguarding land and protection of the land from occupation by outsiders as well as excluding them also from other activities which may lead to exploitation prevails here. One feature of this area is that among the different tribes it is Hindustani which is more of a common language than Assamese.

7. KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS.—This partially excluded area consists of the Jaintia Hills formerly forming part of the Kingdom of the old Jaintia Kings and now forming the Jowai Sub-division, and some 176 villages in the Sadar Sub-division. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills as a whole consists of a large territory between the Garo Hills on the west and the North Cachar Hills and the Mikir Hills on the east. The Khasi States which consist of 1, 509 villages cover the western portion of the Hills and the British villages are interlaced with them. The people of the Jowai Sub-division are known as Synteng or Pnar and speak a dialect but with the exception of a small number of Mikir on the northern slopes of the Hills, the whole population of these Hills may be regarded as uniform. Unlike their neighbours who speak Tibeto-Burman tongues the Khasi form an island of the MonKhmer linguistic family.

The Khasi States, which are about 25 in number, are some of the smallest in India. The largest States are Khyriem, Myllem and Nongkhlaio and the smallest is Nonglowai. The system of inheritance of Chiefship is described as follows :—

"The Chiefs of these little States are generally taken from the same family inheritance going through the female. A uterine brother usually has the first claim and failing him a sister's son. The appointment is however subject to the approval of a small electoral body, and the heir-apparent is occasionally passed over, if for any reason, mental, physical or moral, he is unfit for the position. The electors are generally the myntries or lyngdohs, the representatives of the clans which go to form the State". In Langrin, the appointment is by popular election. In some of the States, if the Myntries are not unanimous in their choice, a popular election is held. The Chiefs are known as Siem in most States ; but in some they are called Sardar, Lyngdoh in three of them and Wahadadar in one. The functions of the chiefs are largely magisterial and in the discharge of their duties they are assisted by their Myntries. The relations between them and the Government of India are based upon sanads issued to them. For specimen of these sanads Volume XII of Aitchison's Treaties Engagements and Sanads may be referred to. Under the terms of the sanad, the chiefs are placed completely under the control of the Deputy Commissioner and the Government of India and waste lands as well as minerals are ceded to the Government on condition that half the revenue is made over to the Siems. Their criminal and civil authority are also limited. The sanads do not mention the right to levy excise on liquor and drugs and presumably the Siems have that right. Though the States are not in the partially excluded areas, the main interest attaching to them is the fact that there is an understandable feeling among the people of the States that there should be a federation between the States and the British portions so that all the Khasi people are brought under a common administration. The position is that in the British areas, though there is now the franchise and a member is sent to the provincial legislature, there is no statutory local body for local self-government. The States, on the other hand, enjoy certain rights as stated above, and the problem is to bridge the gap.

The Khasi and Jaintia Hills have the advantage of the provincial headquarters Shillong, being situated among them. Literacy among the Khasi amounts to about 11 per cent with a male literacy of 19 per cent. The district is already enfranchised and the special features which it is desirable to bear in mind is the matriarchal system prevalent there, the democratic village systems and other special customs and traditions. Cultivation in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills may be regarded as comparatively advanced. There is a good deal of wet cultivation and the culture of oranges and potatoes is common. The Khasi have also taken to non-agricultural professions much more than other hill people.

8. THE GARO HILLS.—Which is the butt-end of the range of hills which constitute the water shed for the Brahmaputra and the Surma Valleys. The Garo who inhabit these hills are people of Tibeto-Burman origin and are similar to the Cachari. The area of the district is 3,152 square miles and it is inhabited by a population of 233,569 of which 198,474 or nearly 85 per cent, are tribals, mainly Garo. The Garo inhabit not only the district which bears their name but there are villages inhabited by them in Kamrup and Goalpara also and portions of the Mymensingh district of Bengal joining the Garo Hills is inhabited by thousands of Garo.

The Garo are a people with a matriarchal system like the Khasi. The tribal system of the Garo is highly democratic and the whole village with the Nokma as the head or chairman takes part in the council if any matter is in dispute. The district as a whole is pretty backward with only about five literates in a hundred and lacking in communications. Christian missions have been active and there has been a certain amount of conversion but on the whole the Garo even while being able to produce a fair number of intelligent and literate people have yet to come up to the degree of the Khasi or the Lushai. Franchise at present is restricted to the Nokma but is unlikely that there will be any great difficulty in working a franchise system based on adult franchise than in most other areas.

In the Garo Hills also the sole occupation is agriculture and though garden crops are grown round the huts sometimes, the method is largely that of *jhuming*. The people weave their own clothes but there is no important cottage industry. The area is however much more in contact with the plains on either side of it than areas like the Lushai Hills or the Naga Hills.

The Garo are keenly desirous of uniting all the villages inhabited by Garo whether in the plains of Assam or in the Mymensingh district of Bengal under a common administration. The Bengal district of Mymensingh seems to be the home of about 43,000 Garo most of whom are on the fringe of the Garo Hills, and the question of rectification of the boundary to include this area in the Garo Hills district of Assam definitely deserves consideration. A similar examination is necessary in respect of other Garo villages in the Kamrup and Goalpara districts of Assam.

9. THE MIKIR HILLS.—The partially excluded area of the Mikir Hills with an area of about 4,400 square miles and a population of about 150,000 persons is split up between two districts namely Nowgong and Sibsagar. The Mikir Hills form an area rather irregular in shape into which there projects an enclave of the Assam Valley. The western extremity of the partially excluded area actually reaches a point in the Khasi Hills and eastwards, it extends to a point not far from Dimapur while to the north it approaches Golaghat. It is clear that the irregular shape of this area makes the administration from centres outside the area rather inconvenient which apparently is the reason why the district has had to be split up between two plains districts. Being a rather sparsely populated* area with rather less than 50 persons to the square mile and containing no communications other than the railway passing through it, it has apparently not been considered suitable for treatment as a separate district. The Provincial Government has at present under consideration a proposal for the making of the whole of the Mikir Hills area into a separate sub-division, perhaps on the analogy of the North Cachar Hills Sub-division. Divided between two districts as it is and consisting of inhospitable territory in which *jhuming* is the only

*It may be noted however that the Lushai Hills are also sparsely populated and there is no railway running through it.

method of cultivation practised while malaria takes its toll, it has been sadly neglected in many ways and special steps are necessary for its development. Very obviously the present state of affairs where it is divided between two districts cannot continue if the area is to be developed and it should be made either a district or a subdivision with its headquarters somewhere in the middle of the bend so that it is accessible from both extremities. The area includes certain mouzas Barpathar and Sarupathar inhabited very largely by non-tribals which even at the time of the constitution of the partially excluded areas were considered doubtful areas for exclusion, and the Provincial Government have since taken a decision that the areas should be added to regularly administered portions as soon as possible.

The Mikir are probably the most backward of all the tribes of the Assam Hills though this backwardness is probably not their own fault. There are pockets of Mikir in the North Cachar and the Khasi Hills. Like the Garo and Khasi the Mikir desire the consolidation of their own tribesmen under a single administration. Unlike the Lushai or the Khasi Hills, Christianity has made little progress here.

While the special customs of the Mikir, their addiction to *jhuming* cultivation etc. necessitate that an arrangement must be made by which they are able to maintain their own system, the Mikir Hills at present find representation in the provincial legislature although through the restricted franchise of the headmen, and opinion generally is that there is no objection to the extension of adult franchise in the area. The sparse population may give rise to certain practical difficulties in organising elections there but it would appear that these are not insurmountable.

The Mikir Hills are inhabited to some extent by Cachari (about 2,000) Rengma Naga and a few Kuki, but on the whole, the population may be regarded as uniform.

In view of the comparatively backward state of the Mikir and the fact that there are no self-governing institutions of a statutory type locally, it is necessary in introducing institutions of this kind to arrange for a period of supervision and guidance in other words, any local council set up in the hills should at first be subject to the control of the local District or Sub-divisional officer.

(Sd.) G. N. BARDOLOI (*Chairman*).

„ J. J. M. NICHOLS ROY.

„ RUP NATH BRAHMA.

„ A. V. THAKKAR.

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ASSAM
SUB-COMMITTEE.**

District Councils should be set up in the Hill Districts (see Section B of Appendix A) with powers of legislation over occupation or use of land other than land comprising reserved forest under the Assam Forest Regulation of 1891 or other law applicable. This is subject to the proviso that no payment would be required for the occupation of vacant land by the Provincial Government for public purposes and private land required for public purposes by the Provincial Government will be acquired for it on payment of compensation. (Paragraph 9 Section C(1) Appendix A).

2. Reserved forests will be managed by the Provincial Government. In questions of actual management including the appointment of forest staff and the granting of contracts and leases, the susceptibilities and the legitimate desires and needs of the Hill People should be taken into account. (Para. 10).

3. On account of its disastrous effects upon the forest, rainfall and other climatic features, *jhuming* should be discouraged and stopped wherever possible but the initiative for this should come from the tribes themselves and the control of *jhuming* should be left to the local councils. (Para. 11 and Section C Appendix A).

4. All social law and custom is left to be controlled or regulated by the tribes [Para. 12 and Section C (2) of Appendix A]. All criminal offences except those punishable with death, transportation or imprisonment for five years and upwards should be left to be dealt with in accordance with local practice and the Code of Criminal Procedure will not apply to such cases. As regards the serious offences punishable with imprisonment of five years or more they should be tried henceforth regularly under the Criminal Procedure Code. To try such cases, powers should be conferred by the Provincial Government wherever suitable upon tribal councils or courts set up by the district councils themselves.

All ordinary civil suits should be disposed of by tribal courts and local councils may have full powers to deal with them including appeal and revision.

Where non-tribals are involved, civil or criminal cases should be tried under the regular law and the Provincial Government should make suitable arrangements for the expeditious disposal of such cases by employing circuit magistrates or judges. (Para. 12 Section D & F of Appendix A).

5. The District Councils should have powers of management over primary schools, dispensaries and other institutions which normally come under the scope of local self-governing institutions in the plains. They should have full control over primary education. As regards secondary school education, there should be some integration with the general system of the province and it is left open to the Provincial Government to entrust local councils with responsibility for secondary schools wherever they find this suitable. (Paragraph 13 and Section E of Appendix A).

For the Mikir and North Cachar Hills the District or Sub Divisional Officer, as the case may be, should be ex-officio President of the local council with powers, subject to the control of the Government of Assam, to modify or annual resolutions or decisions of the local councils and to issue such instructions as may be necessary. [Paragraph 13 and Section B(5) of Appendix A].

3. Certain taxes and financial powers should be allocated to the councils. They should have all the powers which local bodies in regulation districts enjoy and in addition they should have powers to impose house tax or poll tax, and revenue and levies arising out of the powers of management of village forest. [Section H of Appendix A and Para. 14(a)].

Statutory provision for a fixed proportion of provincial funds to be spent on the hill districts is not considered practicable. A separate financial statement for each hill district showing the revenue derived from the district and the expenditure proposed on it is recommended. The framing of a suitable programme of development should be enjoined either by statute or by Instrument of Instructions. [Section M of Appendix A and para. 14(b)].

It is quite clear that the urgent requirements of the hill districts by way of expenditure on development schemes are beyond the resources of the Provincial Government. The development of the hill districts should be as much the concern of the Federal Government as the Provincial Government. Financial assistance should be provided by the Federation to meet the deficit in the ordinary administration on the basis of the average deficit during the past three years and the cost of development schemes should also be borne by the Central Exchequer. [Section N of Appendix A and para. 14(c)].

The claim of the hill district councils for assistance from general provincial revenues to the extent that they are unable to raise the necessary finances within their own powers is recognised. [Paragraph 14(d)].

7. If local councils decide by a majority of three-fourths of their members to licence moneylenders or traders they should have powers to require moneylenders and professional dealers from outside to take out licences. (Paragraph 15 and Section J of Appendix A).

8. The management of mineral resources should be centralised in the hands of the Provincial Government but the right of the district councils to a fair share of the revenues is recognised. No licence or lease shall be given by the Provincial Government except in consultation with the local Council. If there is no agreement between the Provincial Government and the district council regarding the share of the revenue, the Governor will decide the matter in his discretion. (Paragraph 16 and Section 1 of Appendix A).

9. Provincial legislation which deals with the subjects in which the hill councils have legislative powers will not apply to the hill districts. Legislation prohibiting the consumption of non-distilled liquors like Zu will also not apply; the district council may however apply the legislation. (Paragraph 17 and Section L of Appendix A).

10 It is necessary to provide for the creation of regional councils for the different tribes inhabiting an autonomous district if they so desire. Regional councils have powers limited to their customary law and the management of lands and villages and courts. Regional councils may delegate their powers to the district councils. [Para. 18 and Section B(4) of Appendix A].

11. The Governor is empowered to set aside any act or resolution of the council if the safety of the country is prejudiced and to take such action as may be necessary including dissolution of the local councils subject to the approval of the legislature. The Governor is also given powers to dissolve the council if gross mismanagement is reported by a commission. (Paragraph 19 and Section Q and R of Appendix A).

12. The Central Government should continue to administer the Frontier Tracts and Tribal Area with the Government of Assam as its agent until administration has been satisfactorily established over a sufficiently wide area. Areas over which administration has been satisfactorily established may be taken over by the Provincial Government with the approval of the Federal Government. [Section P of Appendix A and para. 20(a)].

The pace of extending administration should be greatly accelerated and separate officers appointed for the Lohit Valley, the Siang Valley and the Naga Tribal Area. [Para. 20a.]

The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract should be attached to the regular administration of the district. The case of the portion of the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract recently included in the Tirap Frontier Tract should be examined by the Provincial Government with a view to a decision whether it could immediately be brought under provincial administration. A similar examination of the position in the plains portions of the Sadiya Frontier Tract is recommended. The portion of the Balipara Frontier Tract around Charduar should also be subject to a similar examination. [Para. 20(b)].

Posa payment should be continued [Para. 20(c)].

13. The excluded areas other than the Frontier Tracts should be enfranchised immediately and restrictions on the franchise in the Garo and Mikir Hills should be removed and adult franchise introduced. [Para. 21(a) and Section B(1) of Appendix A].

Weightage is not considered necessary but the hill districts should be represented in the provincial legislature in proportion not less than what is due on their population even if this involves a certain weightage in rounding off. The total number of representatives for the hills thus arrived at [See para. 21(b)] should not be taken into account in determining the number of representatives to the provincial legislature from the rest of Assam. [Para. 21(b) and Section K of Appendix A].

The total population of the hill districts justifies a seat for the hill tribes in the Federal Legislature on the scale proposed in Section 18(c) of the Draft Union Constitution. [Para. 21(c)].

Joint electorate is recommended but constituencies are confined to the autonomous districts. Reservation of seats, in view of this restriction, is not necessary. [Para. 21(d) and Section K(8) of Appendix A].

Non-tribals should not be eligible for election from hill constituencies except in the constituency which includes the Municipality and Cantonment of Shillong. [Para. 21(e) and Section K(8) of Appendix A].

14. Representation for the hills in the Ministry should be guaranteed by statutory provision if possible or at least by a suitable instruction in the instrument of Instructions or corresponding provision. [Paragraph 22—See also Section O(3) of Appendix A].

15. Non-tribal officials should not be barred from serving in the hills but they should be selected with care if posted to the hills. The appointment of a due proportion of hill people in the services should be particularly kept in mind and provided for in rules or executive instructions of the Provincial Government. (Paragraph 23).

16. A commission may be appointed at any time or permanently to enable the Government to watch the progress of development plans or to examine any particular aspects of the administration. [Paragraph 24 and Section O(i) of Appendix A].

17. Plains tribals number 1.6 million. Their case for special representation and safeguards should be considered by the Minorities Sub-Committee. (Para. 25).

18. The question of altering boundaries so as to bring the people of the same tribe under a common administration should be considered by the Provincial Government. The Barpathar and Sarupathar Mouzas included in the Mikir Hills should be included in the regularly administered areas henceforth. (Paragraph 26).

19. Non-tribal residents may be provided with representation in the local councils if they are sufficiently numerous. For this purpose non-tribal constituencies may be formed if justified and if the population is not below 500. [Paragraph 27 and Section B(2) of Appendix A].

20. Provincial councils should be set up by the Governor of Assam after consulting such local organisations as exist. These provisional councils which will be for one year will have powers to frame their own constitution and rules for the future. (Paragraph 29 and Transitional Provisions of Appendix A also).