N

Mukti Gam states—

When the Lekong men went to Laimekuri and then looted the Assamese, they stopped at my ghat at Kemimukh on the Poba. Tapiem Gam was not with this party. He had gone to Laimekuri by Jonaimukh. He, however, returned *viâ* the Poba after the Assamese had been looted and after Parola Mishmi had been looted at Pobamukh. When going to Laimekuri I saw the party, but I was away when they returned. I received notice in January from Kirkong about the looting, and I sent word up to Oniyok Gam and Lekong. I remained in my house for two days after that. I then went down on the third day to Mirkong Selek to see Gormukh and Kirkong Kotokis. I remained there the fourth day and returned the fifth day, on which date I met some 20 Kebang men at Pobamukh. I asked them about the property, and they said that the property was with the Gams, of whom there were four behind. I came on that same day to Kemimukh where the Kebang Gams were. It was very late when I arrived, and I did not see them. Early next morning I asked them about the property and they said that the party whom I had met at Pobamukh had the property. I thought that the report about Komsing was false only the other day. I had heard from Kebang that the property had been taken by Komsing, and so I reported the matter. I never said to Muluna and Moniya in March on the Lali that if I was to tell the truth to you there would be trouble in my *duar*.

Read once and admitted correct.

The 13*th May* 1907.

NOEL WILLIAMSON,
Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya.

Mukti further states—

I have heard that Lomga Gam of Kebang had come to Lekong about some settlers there from Sikku. Lomga Gam did not want these men and so he broke down their houses and drove them back to their villages.

NOEL WILLIAMSON,
Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya.

The 13*th May* 1907.

O

Parola Digam Mishmi of Pobamukh states—

I was sold into slavery to the Chulikattas and then to a man of Damroh. I escaped from there, but was captured by Passis, who gave me back to Silluk village. I remained there a year and then ran away to Pobamukh. This was 20 years ago. One month ago or it may have been two months ago, as I cannot remember the proper time, I and my wife went one day to work. On my return I heard from Paling Miri, who lives next to me, that Abors of Lekong had visited my house and taken away property. They took a hen, the chickens of which, six in number, have in consequence died, also one bottle oil and one looking glass. These they took out of my house by breaking the door open which I had closed. The names of these Abors are Shingkar Gam of Lekong, Dutum of Lekong, Digum of Lekong. Paling Meri and the other villagers told me the names of these men. I did not see them myself. Paling told me that the Abors were annoyed because they did not find me in my house. I do not know why they should have looted me. I have not cut rubber or boats. Two years ago I was looted by Lekong, because I had cut rubber. I made no report to Mr. Needham, as I did not know how to work a boat to go to Sadiya in. I was then looted of cooking pots and clothing which have never been returned. The men that looted me then are the same that have done so lately. I have asked for the return of the property, but it has not been given back. No reason has been given to me for its having been taken. Three years ago I paid Kebang village Rs. 12, for which sum they gave me permission to cut rubber and boats. About 40 of them came down and demanded this money from me for cutting rubber at Jonaimukh. They said I was on their land, and that if I did not pay, I could not remain on their land. So I paid Rs. 12.

The reason I think why I have been looted now is because these Lekong men know I have no relations to defend me, and that there is no fear if they loot me.

All the Miris pay annual revenue to Kebang. I pay the same as they do. We pay according to what Kebang asks, it may be 2 annas, it may be 4 annas, it may be Re. 1. This year the tax was 8 annas, last year it was 4 annas, and the year before that Re. 1. Kebang takes the tax because they say all the other Passi villages are their children.

CAMP PASSIGHAT,
The 9*th March* 1907.

NOEL WILLIAMSON,
Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya.

On the 29th at Lekong I asked the villagers about the complaint of Parola against Shingkar Gam, Dutum and Digum. Shingkar and Digum I found, but "Dutum" no one seemed to have ever heard of. (By Dutum I think Tapiem Gam is meant). Parola's pronunciation of the name may have been incorrect. Shingkar and Digum both deny that they took the fowl, but that it had been given them by Parola's wife. I told them that Parola had reported that he and his wife were both absent in their field at the time. The Lekong men, however, stick to their denial.

The 1*st April* 1907.

NOEL WILLIAMSON,
Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya.

I also enquired about the former case of looting as reported by Parola against these same men. They deny this also, and say that it must have been some one else who did so. That 100 Mishmis came across the Poba some years ago to cut rubber and the Abors were annoyed at this. That some Abors in consequence may have looted Parola for this reason, as he is a Mishmi.

The 1st April 1907. NOEL WILLIAMSON,
Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya.

P

Paling Meri states—

I was in my field one day which is close to my village. I heard a noise in the village and Abors talking. I went to see what was the matter and found some 15 Abors of Lekong in front of Parola's home. Parola and his wife were both away in their fields at the time. Eight men entered his house. I do not know the names of all those eight. One I know, Tumyong. When I arrived these men had entered his house and some were coming out. Tumyong took the bottle of oil. I don't know the names of them who caught the hen. The hen was caught by giving it some rice. The chickens are left. I told these Abors not to take property while the owner was absent.

One of them replied: "you cut rubber, you cut trees, and because we don't take fowls from you, you talk." Shingkar of Lekong, on my saying that it was not right to take this property, replied that no property had been taken, that they had only taken a fowl and some oil to eat. Parola's wife was not present when this occurred.

CAMP POBAMUKH, NOEL WILLIAMSON,
The 3rd April 1907. *Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya.*

Paling Miri further states—

Yes, we give Kebang something each every year. I cannot remember what I gave this year. Three years ago I remember I gave them a "bate". They come down and ask for this. If they did not ask, we would not give. But they do not take by force.

The 3rd April 1907. NOEL WILLIAMSON,
Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya.

No. 27.

No. 87G., dated Sadiya, the 29th May 1907.

From—The Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya,

To—The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur.

I have the honour to send herewith a report connected with the following:—

(1) Tour in February with Deputy Conservator of Forests with a view to ascertaining the value of the forest between Sadiya and Nizamghat.

(2) Visits to the Padam villages of Padu and Membo in March.

(3) Visits to the Passi-Menyong villages of Remi and Lekong in March.

2. With reference to the request by Membo for a rest-house at Sadiya contained in paragraph 18 of my report, I would invite a reference to the estimate submitted with your letter No. 1092G., dated the 5th November 1884, to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam. Sanction to the estimate of which I send a copy was given in Secretariat letter No. 19T., dated the 16th November 1884.

3. I enclose herewith a statement of expenditure incurred by me. If this expenditure cannot be met from your district budget, I beg that Government may be asked to sanction the same.

4. During all my visits to Padam villages, I have been accompanied by Meme Miri Gam. This man has been of great assistance to me, and I shall be glad if Government will sanction my presenting him with a reward of Rs. 40 for his good work.

No. 28.

No. 394G., dated Dibrugarh, the 3rd June 1907.

Memo. by—The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur.

Copy, together with the report in original, forwarded to the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts for favour of perusal and order.

Estimate for an Abor Namghar proposed to be built at Sadiya.

Particulars.	Amount. Rs.	a.
10 posts, large, in Namghar, 75 feet × 30 feet, at Rs. 2 each	20	0
28 ditto, small, at Re. 1 each	28	0
5 beams, each 18 feet long, at Rs. 2 each	10	0
5 purlins, each 78 feet long, at Rs. 2 „	10	0
5 king posts, at annas 8 each	2	8
2 side purlins, each 78 feef long, at annas 8 each	1	0
5 king posts, at annas 2 each	0	10
6 rafters, 19½ feet long, at annas 4 each	1	8
240 bamboo rooas at 6 pies each	7	8
8,000 bundles thatching grass at Re. 1 per 100	80	0
Total	161	2

For Machan.	Rs.	a.
100 posts, each 3 feet 9 inches long, at anna 1-6 each	9	6
10 beams, each 75 feet long, at Re. 1 each	10	0
50 burgahs, each 30 feet long, at annas 2 each	6	4
300 small, ditto ditto, at 6 pies each	9	6
240 bamboos, at annas 2 each	30	0
12 bundles cane, at annas 4 each	3	0
20 coolies for 25 days, at annas 5 a day each	125	0
Total	193	0
Grand total	354	2

DIBRUGARH,
The 5th November 1884.

G. GODFREY,
Offg. Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur.

No. 29.

Statement of expenditure incurred by the Assistant Political Officer during visits to Padam Abor villages, etc., during the month of March 1907.

	Rs.
7th March 1907.—Pig presented to Padu villagers	10
9th ditto.—Messenger to Membo with Kotoki	1
9th ditto.—Leniong Gam to call in Kebang Gams	5
11th ditto.—Membo Gams for pigs for villagers	41
13th ditto.—Leniong Gam for calling in Lunga Gam	10
13th ditto.—Present to Lumga Gam of Kebang	10
18th ditto.—Silli Abor	2
27th ditto.—Girls at Lekong for dancing	6
Total	85

SADIYA,
The 29th May 1907.

N. WILLIAMSON,
Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya.

No. 30.

1. On the 19th February I went out to Bomjur with the Deputy Conservator of Forests. Mr. Cavendish came on tour with me to inspect the forest between Sadiya and Nizamghat. On the 21st we went to Ichangon and on the 22nd to Nizamghat. We halted at Nizamghat on the 23rd. While there we suffered from a plague of small flies. They were everywhere, in one's food, one's clothes and the tent was black with them. On the 24th, we came down by boat to Dutung. *En route* I visited the sites, old and new, of the village of Bomjur and made a sketch of the locality. We halted at Dutung on the 25th and 26th. On the 27th we dropped down by river in pouring rain to Kerimpani Mukh. In the afternoon I got news of a herd of buffalo. After a track through thick forest, I came up to about 10 yards of the bull and got a shot at him. There was a tremendous crash as the herd dashed through the forest towards the Kerimpani. As the bull crossed the Kerim I got a second shot at him which broke a hind leg. I had no elephant and so could not follow him across the stream. Next morning(28th) we followed him up and came on him dead within 20 yards of the stream. My first shot had hit him badly, and he must have died shortly after crossing the Kerim. We dropped down to the Dikrang river, and while waiting for our camp we fished at the junction of the Dikrang with the Dibong and had fair sport, Mr. Cavendish being the luckier. Before breakfast he got over 60lbs. to my 25. An Abor crone who was most importunate in her requests for a fish was promised one on condition she was photographed with us and t e c tch. She agreed and got her fish. On the 1st March I came through Sadiya and then on to Boiragi Chapori *en route* for the Dihong gorge and any Abors' villages I might be able to visit. At Sadiya Mr. Cavendish and I parted. He considers there is timber of value in the area visited by us. He is struck, however, with the absence of young growth. He has written to me on the subject of reserving the area between Nizamghat to the north and the Deopani (Dikrang) bridge to the south, between the Dikrang river to the east and the Dibong to the west. There is no objection to this reservation provided administrative control is extended to the area, which lies entirely outside the Inner Line. The question of extension of control is at present before Government for consideration, and I have therefore replied to the Deputy Conservator that until the orders of Government a e received regarding control beyond the Inner Line, I am not prepared to recommend his project.

2. I arrived at Boiragi Chapori between the mouths of the Dibong and Dihong on the evening of the 1st March. I halted there on the 2nd collecting small Meri boats and Meri boatmen. On the 3rd March I went up the Dihong and camped near the Abor settlement at Sibiya Mukh. On my way I inspected the guard at the Lali stockade. Orders had just been received, abolishing the guard there, as well as that at Sesseri. They neither of them fulfil any useful purpose. The site of the stockade at Lali would be an excellent one for a rest-house. With rest-houses at convenient places, one could tour in the rains when sand banks, one's ordinary camping grounds, are under water.

3. On the 4th I sent my camp on ahead up the Dihong and went up the Sibiya myself to catch fish. Got a 30-pounder, the largest I have caught in this stream which is a narrow one, full of snags with heavy forest to the water's edge. A big fish therefore requires careful handling to land him, and my task was not made easier by the assistance (?) rendered me by an Abor I had with me who in his excitement would keep rushing into the water and making grabs at the fish. This Abor had attached himself to me. He is the son of one of the Gams of Koomku, a small village near Padu. He shared my tiffin with me. It was quite a pleasure to be again amongst a people who have no caste prejudices. He required, however, to know what everything was.. Ham he refused as his particular sub-clan do not eat pig. He was a whale at mustard and before I could stop him, had cleaned out the mustard pot with two sweeps of his finger. His refusal to eat ham was due to his family being the blacksmi hs of the village and pork is not eaten by blacksmiths. I got to my camp on a sand bank opposite Membo ghat in the evening. Heard a gun fired on the Passi side of the river. Question; where do the gunpowder and caps come from? My *Kotokis* seemed to think that some *Saheb* had probably given the ammunition as a present.

4. On the 5th it rained hard until 11 o'clock, and we did not get away until midday. Halted at Passighat, as it was too late to get the boats over the Pakpuit Rapid.

5. On the 6th we had some trouble in getting the boats up the Pakpuit Rapid. The big cook boat gave us most trouble. But it was not so tough a job as I had expected. We got some of the tent ropes and hauled on them and had reached Padu ghat, which is just above the mouth of the Siku, by 11 o'clock. Here a deputation of people from Padu headed by the Gams were waiting for me as I had sent on a Kotoki the day before to say I wanted to see the Padu Gams. told them I should like to go up and see their village. The Gams kept eyeing one another, but no one would take on himself the responsibility of saying "Yes" to my request. None of them had any objection to my visiting their village, and I cut the matter short by saying I was going which seemed to relieve all concerned. If sickness or any other untoward incident were to occur after I had left no particular Gam could be accused of having giving his consent to my visit as all had agreed. I had several Tamlu "*Jhapas*" which I had brought with me from the Naga Hills. What few things were wanted I put into these and I was on the road to Padu by 2 o'clock, the Padu men carrying my loads. The path runs on the level to Padu, and I could have ridden the whole distance even into Padu itself which is only about 60 feet above the plains. In fact, it lies so low that the trees in the plains obstruct the view from the lower end of the village. The path from the Padu ghat to the village runs through old "*jhums*" which will be again utilized in two or three years. It took me going easy 1¼ hours to reach the village and the distance can be barely 4 miles. There were several archways across the paths of green boughs and grass to ward off evil spirits. I must have passed under at least six, so evidently the villagers were determined to spare no pains to protect their village. Close to the village, I suddenly came on a bow set in the ground with an arrow fixed in it pointing towards me. For an instant I thought I was once more on the war path and was preparing to jump to one side when I saw that both bow and arrow were toys which, with a lot of *panjus*, had been stuck in the ground by the village children. I passed the arrow under my armpit and assured the Gams that any evil spirit with me must have now been entirely defeated. The *Moshup* was given up to my servants and I pitched my tent alongside. My party consisted of three servants and a chaprasi, besides Meri *Kotokis*. The villagers assisted me in every way by cutting tent pegs, etc. In fact, I could have done with a little less attention as the crowd round my tent was pretty thick. During my tub I had to arm myself with a long stick with which I poked at the side of the tent as some inquisitive person was quietly raising it to get a peep at me. I was, however, not so pestered as I had been at Balek in October last.

6. I halted at Padu on 7th March. In the morning I sent off messengers to Silli to ask the Gams to come in and see me as I should have liked to have visited their village. I presented a pig to Padu with which to propitiate the village deity who might otherwise have felt annoyed at my presence in the village. In return I received presents of liquor, fowls, and eggs. I showed the people some photographs of groups of Mishmis, etc., and everybody promptly wanted to be "took." The weather was, however, vile. The village consists of about 60 houses. I find the pigsty, which is under the eaves of an Abor house, is used as a latrine. This I suspected at Dambuk from the awful stench that came from the one alongside where I was living. The epidemics of cholera and dysentery from which Abor villages suffer are due probably to insanitary conditions. I had some rifle shooting in the afternoon. The Gams had no questions to discuss. The people were very friendly and I was kept busily engaged rolling cigarettes for all, old and young. They nearly brought my tent down on my head in their struggles to get a front seat to see me writing which seemed to strike them as a marvellous accomplishment.

7. On the 8th March I got coolies and returned to Padu Ghat in pouring rain and from their to Siku Ghat which is only a few hundred yards down the Dihong. Before leaving the village, the messengers who had been sent the day before to call in the Silli Gams were reported to

have returned late the night before with a message from Silli to say that the Gams were unable, owing to sickness, to come in and see me. These messengers I had up before me and found that one of them had been at my tent the afternoon before. I remembered his face distinctly, but he swore that I was mistaken. Nevertheless I declined to give him anything, because I was certain he had never been to Silli as he could not have returned in the time. During my return to Padu Ghat, one of my Kotokis told me that the Gams had confided to him that the messengers had never really gone to Silli; that they had met Silli men on the road, who had told them to return, as the Saheb was not wanted at Silli. I do not believe the messengers ever met these Silli men at all. They probably sat for a few hours outside Padu village and then came back in the afternoon, but one was unfortunately recognised.

8. On arrival at Sikughat, I sent a *kotoki* off to call in the Membo Gams. I was also met by Leniong, Gam of Gina, and other Passi-Minyong Gams from Balek and Mongkee. These I had sent for on the 6th as I wanted to get hold of the Kebang Gams to find out how Komsing village had been concerned, as alleged, in the looting of an Assamese village near Messaki. I gave Leniong Rs. 5 to go to Kebang and promised him another Rs. 10 if he succeeded in getting the Gams to come in and see me. He did not seem very keen about the job, but the reward promised had the desired effect and he started off promising to be back in 5 days.

9. On the afternoon of the 8th March as the weather had cleared a little I got a small dug-out and went up the Dihong to visit Bordak as far as which boats were regularly used during the expedition of 1893-94. About a mile after leaving the river where it debouches on the plains, we encountered a rapid which my Miris assured me was impassable. It was of fairly recent formation having been caused by the heavy flood which came down the Dibong some eight years ago. The rapid did not look very difficult, so I urged the boatmen to make an attempt to get up it, the result being the boat was nearly dashed to pieces on the boulders at the side by the tremendous wash from the rapid. These boulders which are mostly three to four feet in diameter were brought down by the big flood. The boatmen could get no foothold from which to drag the boat up as the water between the boulders is from 4′ to 5′ deep. The whole of the Dihong contracts to this rapid of which I give a photograph. It looks nothing, but there can be no doubt as to its power. The boulders mentioned are on the opposite (left) bank. I made an attempt to get up by the right bank, but there is a strong backwater along it which rushes into the tail of the rapid and forms a wicked looking whirlpool. I had therefore to turn round and go back. I wish I had had apparatus with which to measure the volume of the Dihong at the point it enters the plains. I suppose there can be no doubt after the measurements made by Lieutenant Harman, R.E., in 1878 that the Sangpo and the Dihong are one. But it strikes one as extraordinary that a river of the length of the Sangpo should at such a distance from its source contract to some 50 yards in width in this rapid. Harman gives the discharge of the Dihong as 82,700 cubic feet. But this figure includes the discharge of the Dibong and Sesseri (27,200 cubic feet) which leaves 55,500 for the Dihong discharge. Of this a certain amount is the drainage of the country between the Sesseri and the Dihong, after the Dihong leaves the hills and possibly includes a portion of the Sesseri through an upper outlet. However, against any increase that the Dihong may receive after it leaves the hills, must be placed its discharge through the Lali river which does not appear to have been measured.

10. I halted at Liku ghat on the 9th March. During the morning the following Gams appeared from Membo :—

Luduk.
Rengken.
Ajong.

They assured me that it was impossible for me to visit their village then as all the villagers were away in the jungle catching birds and killing deer for their *Bihu* which would take place on the 11th and that consequently they could not supply me with coolies. I said I only wanted 10 coolies, and as my loads would be made very light women could carry them. After a long speech from each of the Gams I cut matters short by giving them presents of opium and advanced Rs. 10 for the 10 coolies. This had the desired effect and they went off saying they would do their best for me and return with coolies on the morrow. The camp here was a very stony one and my tents had to be tied down to stones, as no tent peg could be driven into the ground. The weather was vile, rain and wind.

11. On the 10th March at about 11 Ajong Gam returned with 10 coolies. I had collected all my loads together and they were ready for removal. By 11-30 A.M. we were on our way to Membo. We followed a dry channel of the Siku until 1 o'clock. It was tiring work over the boulders and I longed for a pair of India-rubber shoes in place of my hobnailed shooting ones. At 1 o'clock we struck the main right bank of the Siku and after that the going was good. The scenery on the Siku below Membo is really gorgeous. I got no pictures however, as I was footsore and hungry and intended taking pictures on my return. Alas! this was impossible, as we returned in pouring rain. At 2-40 P. M. I arrived at the cane bridge across the Siku below Membo where I had lunch. This bridge is one of the finest of cane suspension bridges I have seen. I paced it and found it just under 70 yards. The sides are very high rising to the level of one's head and curved inwards slightly towards the top which gives the bridge when viewed from the end a tubular appearance. There are 23 longitudinal canes on each side and lateral canes at every seven yards or so passing under the footway, which is about 1′ broad, and supported by the canes of the sides. From the Siku to Membo is a rise of 665 feet according to my aneroid, up a steep spur. On arrival I found my tent had been pitched alongside the *moshup* in which my servants were located

Besides *kotokis*, I had brought only 2 servants and a *chaprasi* in order to cut down my loads as much as possible. One or two of the Gams paid me hurried visits and excused themselves for leaving me on the grounds that they had to see to arrangements for their *Bihu*. Supplies were given me as I had arranged with the Gams that I was to bring as little as possible to save transport and that everything would be provided me in the village.

12. On the 11th March, I halted at Membo. There was a great deal of singing going on during the night, but I was left undisturbed. I had hoped from the absence of people the day before round my tent I was going to be left in peace. But not a bit of it. The quiet enjoyed on my arrival appears to have been due to most of the men having been away in the jungle and the women and children were a bit shy of the first white man who had visited them since the expedition of 1894. Early in the morning crowds began to collect round my tent and first one and then another came nearer until they swarmed all over it looking at this, asking what that was. It was no use attempting to clear the place. As one man was driven out, another came in. My *kotokis* who tried to keep the people back were abused and told: "The Saheb has come to look at us and our village, why should we not look at him and his belongings" This line of argument was not unnatural and I accepted it. The younger men were very keen about my firing my rifle which I did. The Gams however asked me not to do so again on that day as the *Bihu* was taking place and the goods might be annoyed at the sound of firing. Directly the Gams were out of sight, however, there were further requests from the young men for me to fire. I said I was not going to do anything to annoy the Gams who had brought me up to the village. This called forth a chorus of "who are the Gams. We don't care what the Gams say." I noticed however that whenever a Gam appeared on the scene the young men kept a respectful silence. As for the *Bihu*. I had pictured to myself fantastically decorated warriors prancing about the village after the manner of the Ao *moater* or the Angami Rice Pounding Festival. All that seemed to go on was singing at night at the houses of the principal men. In the day time they were simply doing *genna* which, like similar *gennas* amongst hill tribes, consisted in sitting about on the machans outside the houses dangling their legs. These Padams are curiously lacking in gala costumes. They appear to have no "fine feathers" for great occasions. I was asked by the Gams not to enter any houses or to wander about the village as the *Bihu* was on and the deities who were in the village just there might be offended at the presence of a stranger! I respected their wishes as all hill savages are singularly superstitious in matters of this kind. The displeasure of their deities is fraught, they think, with so many dangers—bad crops, sickness, fire or cattle-disease. In the afternoon Rengken Gam, an old man, asked me to go and have a talk with him at his house. He had made a small shelter outside his house of bamboo mats and we crept into this and sat down. He had got nothing to say except that he hoped we should all be great friends and we toasted one another in very beastly liquor. I went to the house of Obwil Gam, the head Gam of the village. I could have gone into it, but I saw that he would rather I did not, and so remained outside. On return to my tent, I found several of my things being handed round the crowd for inspection and the *kotokis* sitting on the remainder of my property to prevent anything more being taken out of my tent. The people however had handled everything very carefully and there was no damage done. It was simply a case of intense curiosity. Some Gams who were with me were angry about the matter, as they feared something might be broken or spoilt, and ordered the crowd to keep their hands off my goods. After that I had comparative peace. I next broached the subject of my departure on the next day. This everybody said was impossible. Owing to the *Bihu*, no discussion had taken place on many points the village wished to bring before me. The village also on account of the *Bihu* had not been able to do me any honour by presenting me with a pig. In fact I must stay the next day. I particularly did not want to be away from Passi ghat when Leniong with the Kebang people arrived and this I told the Gams. However, I gave Rs. 41 between them for pigs with which to propitiate the deities in case they were offended at my presence during the *Bihu* and also paid Rs. 10 for the coolies for next day. In the evening they came to me again and assured me I would have to stay. They could not let me go without killing a pig in my honour. I said they had given me fowls and rice and sufficient honour had already been done me. They went off however unconvinced by my argument.

13. On the 12th March I got up not knowing whether I should get away that day or not. I sent for Meme, my most trustworthy *kotoki*, and asked him what was to happen. He said he thought I should get coolies, but was not certain. At about 7 o'clock the Gams arrived on the scene. They said if I really wanted coolies, I could have them. The Rs. 10 at Re. 1 per coolie which I had given in advance the day before had worked the oracle. Fathers and husbands thought it an excellent opportunity to make a rupee out of their daughters and wives, respectively, and only women were supplied. Before getting the coolies I had to listen to long harangues from Obwil and Rengken Gams.

14. They said the Abor expedition had been brought on entirely by Rancoa and Mitum, Miri *kotokis*. That the Abors had never wished to fight us. As nothing much was to be gained by a discussion on these points, I told the Gams that the Abor expedition was past and over; that Government had every wish to remain on friendly terms with the Abors and as long as they did not interfere with Government there need be no fear of future trouble.

15. They then asked that in all cases in which their own villagers were concerned I would send for the Gams before deciding each case. This I readily agreed to do and explained that it had always been my custom when dealing with Naga villages to work through the headmen.

16. They next asked that the guard at Sesseri might be ordered to less roughly disarm Abors passing the guard. This is an old complaint. This guard is no longer to be maintained and I told the Gams so.

17. The next point for discussion was hunting rights on the Pekkar Pumi, a large *chapori* on the left bank of the Dihong between that river and the Sibiya stream.

The complaints were—

(1) the Abor settlers at Sibiyamukh hunted game on the Pekkar Pumi.

(2) Many Europeans now-a-days visited the Pekkar Pumi for sporting purposes and were driving game away.

(3) The Domes fished up the Dihong.

To complaint (1) I replied that I would report their grievances. I do not think, however, that there is any reason to restrict the sport of the Sibiyamukh settlers. The *chapori* is in British territory and British subjects who live much closer to it than the Membo people, have just as much right, if not more so, to hunt in it as the Membo villagers.

As regards complaint (2), I aughingly asked if they objected to *my* visiting the Pekkar Pumi for sport to which they replied that I was their Saheb and of course they did not object to *my* doing so, but that the visits of other *Sahebs* unconnected with Sadiya reduced game and made animals wild. To a people who rely to some extent on deer, etc., on food and whose weapons consist of bows and arrows there is a good deal in what they say. European sportsmen have this year gone higher up the Dihong than has been customary in the past. As I visit localities which have seldom, if ever, been visited before by Europeans, so surely (and quite naturally) will sportsmen follow in my tracks. My attempts, therefore, to get into close contact with the Abors will result in their hunting grounds being disturbed. By this I do not for a moment mean to imply that the Abor has any right to the grounds in question, but I put the matter from the Abor point of view.

As for the complaint (3) I told them it was nonsense as no Domes came anywhere near them nowadays. Further discussion brought out the fact that the Domes referred to were those manning the boats of shooting and fishing parties.

18. The Gams then asked me to build them a Namghar at Sadiya. They said they hoped to come and see me frequently now that we had met, but although the Mishmis had one, the Abors had no place in which to put up while at Sadiya. I promised that I would apply for sanction to erect a a shelter for them. It seems formerly there were two *Namghars*, one for the Mishmis and one for the Abors, sanction for the Abor one being granted in Secretariat letter No. 19T., dated the 16th November 1884, to the Deputy Commissioner, at a cost of Rs. 354-2. Both these were destroyed when the river cut away a portion of the bank at Sadiya about 1894. A new one was erected for the Mishmis, but nothing for the Abors.

19. By this time I was getting hungry, and wanted my *chota hazri* and so suggested the interview should end. Obwil Gam however, said he wished to make a complaint against a man called Bazir, a runaway Abor slave from Dambuk who has been settled for many years at the Ditang Miri village near Sadiya. Bazir was helping to work one of my boats and being a lusty fellow he had been told off to carry up my tiffin box on the 10th. Bazir was sent for and Obwil then informed me that Bazir had been seen the day before talking to one of Obwil's slave women, and he (Obwil) suspected that Bazir had been arranging for the escape of this woman and therefore brought the matter to my notice. It seems this woman had formerly cohabited with a slave living at Padu who has moved with his master to Sibjyamukh. Obwil was afraid that Bazir was communicating the whereabouts of the woman's lover to her. I could see Obwil's complaint was genuine and was very annoyed that after all my trouble to make friends the action of one of my own following should have caused any of the Gams annoyance. I abused Bazir which seemed to satisfy Obwil. Unfortunately Bazir said it was a lie. This was too much for Obwil and he struck Bazir who was standing next to him. Bazir again started arguing and before I could prevent it, Obwil struck him again. I stepped between them and ordered Bazir then and there to leave the village and return to my camp at Sikughat. I then turned round to Obwil and told him that he had struck one of my people and I was very annoyed with him. This view of the matter quite bowled him over and it was really pitiful to see his genuine dismay. He said "Migom (Abor king, rajah) why are you annoyed? You are like that tree there and Bazir like this blade of grass. What does it matter to a great man like yourself if a slave like Bazir be struck? Do not be annoyed."

20. A pig which had been brought up to my tent while the palaver had been going on was then presented to me and promptly cut up and distributed. I then told the Gams I would feed and start as soon as the coolies were ready. They went off to collect them, but Obwil took on himself to remain behind to keep the crowd off while I was eating. When I had nearly finished he went up to his house. The coolies arrived and we were soon ready for a start. It had been arranged that a couple of *deka* Gams should accompany the coolies. However, just as we were starting Obwil turned up and announced his intention of coming with me. He was evidently very much worried at my having taken exception to his action in striking Bazir. "Its an ill wind," etc., and I found several Gams now intended to come down to my camp. It meant a four hours' tramp there and four hours back over a bad path and rain already beginning to come down.

21. The principal Gams at Membo are—
1. Obwil of the Perteu khel.
2. Rengken of the Mégu khel.
3. Lüdük of the Leggo khel.
4. Aduk of the Permey khel.
5. Ajong of the Permey khel.
6. Muling of the Perteu khel.

Of these Obwil, Aduk, Ajong and Muling besides lesser luminaries came down with me. It poured most of the way. Obwil and Aduk kept referring *en route* to the great necessity for an Abor rest-house at Sadiya. They impressed on me the necessity for placing it some distance from the Mishmi rest-house. Mishmis they said were thieves and scoundrels generally and of dirty habits. I believed the Abors are as afraid of the Mishmis as the Mishmis are said to be of the Abors.

22. I left Membo at 9-30 a.m., and arrived at Sikughat at 1-15 p.m. It pelted hard with rain most of the way. My loads were carried entirely by girls, the daughters and wives of free men. No slaves were sent, as owners jealously conceal from their slaves as far as possible the paths leading down into British territory so as to prevent opportunities for escape. On arrival in camp I distributed medicines to the Gams and coolies and made up various doses for others who asked me to send medicine back to them by the coolies. Both at Membo and Padu I found the most general complaints to be goitre and sore eyes. The Gams and coolies went off as soon as they had got their medicine, Obwil giving me a parting shot not to be annoyed with him. Bazir, I found out through my *kotokis*, confessed to having spoken to the slave woman. I turned him out of camp with orders not to come near me again. My trip to Membo has taught me little about these savages and their customs. The Gams were not in a communicative mood, owing to the *Bihu*, and I could get little or nothing out of them. At all events, I have found out who the principal men of the village really are and now know with whom to discuss matters which may arise.

23. As there were no signs of Leniong and the Kebang headmen I crossed over to Passighat on the 13th, shooting the Pakpuit rapid *en route*, an exciting experience.

In the afternoon Leniong turned up with Lomga Gam of Kebang. The (Lomga) told me how the property of the Assamese had been found at Komsing. His statement has gone in with the papers of the case. I have found since then that it is a pack of lies. He was a very decent old soul and had brought with him his son and a nephew, both nice boys. The son in place of a loin cloth was wearing a dried grass apron and a tail of the same material. I gave Leniong his promised reward of Rs. 10 and also gave Lomga Gam the same amount for his trouble in coming down. To the son and nephew I gave some salt and then gave all a handful of Burmah cheroots and a pocket knife each. I tried to get Lomga Gam to take me up to his village, but he said the crops were in the ground and strangers could not be allowed up in consequence—the old superstition, fear of the displeasure of the deities and a consequent bad crop!

24. As I could not visit Silluk owing to cholera, I dropped down the Dihong and camped at the mouth of the Lali on the 14th On the way I heard that my brother had arrived and had gone up the Lali to shoot. On the 15th I moved camp to Bahmen Showit, half-way up the Lali, where I found him. He had sent me an urgent telegram on the 6th to say he was coming. His message had been mislaid at Sadiya and was not found until the 12th, the day after he had arrived. He had however made all his own arrangements as my movements were uncertain.

25. From the 16th to 20th March I halted at Bahmin Showit. On the 16th I visited the Sissi Saw Mills Depôt on the Lali. None of the men had passes. They said they were with the manager at Sissi. Permit-holders should always have their permits with them for production when necessary On the 18th a man from Silli arrived with a tiger skin for which he asked the reward. This I declined to give him as it had not been killed in British territory. I asked him why the Silli Gams had refused to let me visit their village from Padu and told him what the Padu messengers had reported to me on the 8th March. He said it was all a lie and that the Gams had never heard I wanted to visit them at all. I told him I should like to visit the village next cold weather and gave him Rs. 2 and a clasp knife as a present.

Malong Gam of Monku also came in to see me on the 18th. He is much travelled though still quite a youth. He gave me a good deal of information about the Dihong which makes the map, accompanying the report on the Abu expendition, faulty as regards the positions of villages on the Dihong near Kebang. Beresford's map appears to be the better of the two.

On the 19th I had a visit from some men of Gina in connection with a case, My brother got a good mithan head this day. On the 20th I made enquiries about the blackmail said to have been paid to Gina, Balek, etc., by my predecessor for permission to cut timber just after he handed over charge to me. It seems Mr. Needham gave Rs. 50 to Balek and Romkang thinking he had settled with the Dihong gorge Passi-Minyong group. But the Gams of Munku and Gina then came down on Mr. Morris, Mr. Needham's partner, and demanded a further sum, as they said Mr. Needham had not paid the right Gams. Mr. Morris then had to pay a further Rs. 100. Mr. Harrison of the Mecklanadi Saw Mills has since told me that until the end of 1905 he had refused to pay Abors anything on the grounds that, as Mr. Needham did not pay, he (Mr. Harrison) did not see why he should have to pay. Last year the Abors knocked the bottom out of Mr. Harrison's argument by telling him that Mr. Needham had paid up. Mr. Harrison therefore had to do the same.

26. On the 21st we moved camp to Puina near the head of Lali.

27. Halted at Puina on the 22nd, 23rd, 24th. On the 22nd Tombong Gam from the Passi settlements at the head of the Lali came to see me.

On the 23rd Leniong Gam and Panis from Balek and Gina paid me a visit. Rengken Gam with 5 men from Membo arrived late. He had been on his way into Sadiya to see me when he heard I was at Puina. The old man was very tired. I gave him and his party food, drink and smokes; also some bedding. They took a great interest in our dinner and decided that prunes were the nicest food we had. A couple of them slept in my tent and the others in a small office tent. Next morning I chaffed them about my allowing them inside my tent but their not having let me enter their houses, when I was at Membo. Old Rengken got quite distressed and said it was entirely due to the *Bihu*. "Why should you not enter our house? We can eat with you and you can eat with us. Next time you come, don't bring a single thing. We will give you food, a bed and bedding."

On the 24th the Assamese from whom property had been taken by certain Abors arrived. I took down their statements.

28. On the 25th we left Puina and moved camp to Pobamukh where my brother left me as his leave was nearly up. The water of the Poba, or rather the Sillee to give it its right name, is very shallow and I had great difficulty in getting a moderate sized boat up the mouth. I heard beforehand of this difficulty and had sent on to have small dugouts collected, eight of which I found at Pobamukh on arrival. I halted about half a mile up the Poba opposite the Poba village. My object in going up the Poba was to try and find out the position of Kemi, Lekong and Ledum which no map accurately gives.

29. On the 26th March I left my larger boats at Pobamukh and started up the Poba in small dugouts. This river in addition to being shallow is a mass of snags. At Kemimukh where I arrived after 2½ hours' poling I found a Miri hamlet of 7 houses. I got a photograph of the grave of a girl who had lately died. She had been buried under the mound of sand shown, with her *chudder* spread over it, and her petticoat and breast cloth were fastened round a bamboo frame dummy with her *Jhapi* on the top. Her pillow, basket, drinking vessel and cooking pot were placed on a bamboo platform. It took me another 3½ hours to reach Tamen's village which is the last Miri village in this direction. There was a school here until a year ago. The school was reported to be doing well. The villagers complained to me last May that it had been closed by order. I referred the matter to the Deputy Commissioner, as I had heard nothing about these orders. He informed me that the school had been closed by his orders as he did not approve of schools across the Inner line.

30. On the 27th I started for Lekong up the Poba. About 4 miles up stream I came to a small hamlet of 5 houses, ¼ mile up a stream called the Remi running into the Poba from the east. Dikot is the Gam's name and the people had migrated from Kemi about 5 years ago. It must be a very unhealthy site, but the people did not look much the worse for their surroundings. After leaving the Remi I was met by a deputation of females of all ages from Lekong, each of whom presented me with an egg. About a couple of miles further up I came to Lower Lekong consisting of 8 houses with Tumyong as Gam. Another mile brought me to Upper Lekong where I found my tents had been pitched. On arrival I sent off Meri kotokis to call in the Gams of Ledum and Kemi. I had hoped to have got up to Ledum, but required coolies to do, so as the Poba above Lekong was too shallow even for my small dugouts. We had some shooting in the afternoon and the ladies of the village entertained me at night to a dance in my honour. It consists of moving round and round in a circle, one girl singing and the others joining in a chorus, all beating tune with their feet. I made them a present of Rs. 6 for the entertainment. The Gams of Upper Lekong are Tatem and Tapiyam, the latter a first-class ruffian to look at.

31. On the 28th I halted at Lekong. This village is an offshoot of Ledum and consists of 21 houses. It is very prettily situated on the right bank of the Poba. It must be ten miles from the foot of the hills and a long way inside British territory. In addition to Remi and Lower Lekong there are Kemi and Yagrung between the Poba and the Dihong, all in the plains. The Gams of Kemi and Yagrung are Tabong and Majjir, respectively. They came in to me. In the afternoon Matpuiom, the chief Gam of Ledum, arrived with a wild looking following who were mostly wearing helmets with bear skin decorations. Their wildness was added to by the curious rain proof covers they had over their baskets on their backs. These covers consist of the long fibre of some bark dyed black. This fibre is cut in layers and fixed to the basket like the slates on a house. The top layer is carried up to the neck to which it is shaped and the fibre which is very stiff sticks out over the shoulders like epaulettes. The general appearance is that of a bear skin cape. I asked Matpuiom if he would give me coolies to go on to Ledum on the following day. He said it was impossible as there was sickness there. I, however, made such a point of going that he said he would go away for a few minutes and consult his villagers with him. He returned after a time and said it was impossible, but that if there was no sickness next cold weather I could visit Ledum then. I have since got a very strong suspicion that Matpuiom would have in the end consented but for the Meri Gam with me, Mukte by name. This man I believe advised Matpuiom not to let me up. His reasons being that he was afraid if anything happened at a future date to disturb the present peace, he would be accused by Ledum of guiding me up to Lekong. I asked Matpuiom about his demands for blackmail from the Sissi Saw Mills and the looting of a mohurer belonging to the same mills. He acknowledged that he had asked the Manager of the mills for a present which had

always been given annually. As for the looting of the mohurer he said he knew nothing about the matter. I have since come to the conclusion that Lekong men looted the mohurer, but it is not improbable that it was done at the instigation of Ledum. I have submitted reports on the above to the Deputy Commissioner. I made further enquiries about the reported guilt of Komsing in looting certain Assamese near Laimekuri. The Lekong Gams assured me that their village had had nothing to do with the case and that the Komsing men were at fault. This I have since found to be a lie, that my head Meri Gam, Mukte, has assisted Lekong as far as possible in trying to conceal Lekong's guilt in the matter from me.

I also enquired into a complaint by a Mishmi settled at Pobamukh to the effect that certain men of Lekong had entered his house in his absence and taken away a fowl and some oil. The men accused by the Mishmi were produced before me (I had already found out their names) but denied having taken the fowl and oil which they said had been given them by the Mishmi's wife when they asked her for food. This I have since found to be false as the wife was absent with her husband and their house was broken into. I have submitted a report on the subject to the Deputy Commissioner. I was asked by Tumyong, Gam of Lower Lekong, for a permit to purchase a little powder. In reply to my question what he wanted with powder as he had no gun, he replied that there were one or two guns at Ledum which could be borrowed. I declined to allow him the powder and recommended his getting it from the owners of the guns at Ledum. This suggestion did not seem to give him much satisfaction. I was very much amused at the peace offering each member of the village considered it necessary to present me with in the shape of an egg. The giver would walk up to my table, put an egg down in front of me and walk off again without saying a word. The children were very funny. They hung about in front of my tent holding their eggs. Suddenly after summoning up sufficient courage, they would rush up, put their eggs down in front of me and then dash away with a shriek to the arms of their fond parents who were standing looking on to see if their progeny acquitted themselves creditably. I distributed a lot of medicine to various sick people. These people suffer from a severe type of itch. The little sulphur ointment I had with me was soon used up. I had to acknowledge my ignorance when asked to draw teeth. I got out of it by strongly recommending painkiller, which I distributed with a lavish hand. Matpuiom, the Gam of Ledum, consulted me on the subject of his wife's health who, from all he told me of her symptoms, ought to have been dead months ago. I did not know what to send her but something had to be sent and after grave thought I decided on a mild laxative pill. It could do her no harm and might do her some good. This was duly handed over to Matpuiom with careful instructions.

32. Ledum I am told is a village of about 80 houses. The chief Gams are :—

Matpuiom.
Dutem.
Pongnim.

Ledum consists entirely of Minyongs as also does Upper Lekong and its inhabitants originally came from Romkang. Lower Lekong consists of both Minyongs and Passis. What the difference is between a Passi and a Minyong I have not been able yet to ascertain. The tatoo marks of the women appear to be the same as also their dress and ornaments.

The ladies of the place suggested that they should give me another exhitition of dancing. I, however, declined with many thanks.

33. On the 29th March I returned down the Poba to Kemimukh where I halted. After passing Lower Lekong the villagers with wild yells lined the bank and passed the stream with stones and clods of earth. This I suppose was to hasten the departure of any evil spirits belonging to my party which might be still hanging about in our rear. On the way down I came on a fine black leopard crossing the stream. It was a case of what one sees when one has no gun, as it had been raining hard when we started and I had put my rifle away in its case.

34. I halted at Kemimukh from the 29th March to 1st April and on the 2nd April I moved to Pobamukh.

35. On the 3rd I moved to Darkang where I halted until the 7th. I visited several Miri villages in this neighbourhood and made a careful enquiry into the requirements of the people as regards guns for the protection of their crops. This report I have submitted. I was also engaged in settling disputes, etc.

On the 6th April, I went to Panchidia to enquire into a complaint by the villagers to the effect that the Sissi Saw Mills Company had erected a godown in their fields. I found that the site selected was open to objection, and as little progress had been made in the work, I selected another site for the godown. I returned then to my camp at Darkang.

36. On the 8th I moved to Mesakimur which is close to the village of Messaki where the Assamese live who were looted by Lekong. I came here to enquire further into this case, as, after leaving Lekong, I received information that the story about Komsing is all a pack of lies. I halted at Messakimur during the 9th and 10th. Dragging the truth out of these Miris was very wearying and exasperating work. However, they saw I was determined to get to the bottom of the matter and so I got some evidence to make a start on and other witnesses were sent for. These Miris have never got over the murders of the four Miris in 1889 by men of Yemsing. They prefer being bullied by the Abors to making complaints against them which might annoy the Abors in any way. This may be all very well from the Miri point of view, but personally I strongly object to a lot of naked savages bullying the inhabitants of a tract which is in my charge. On the afternoon of the 10th we had a severe gale from across the Brahmaputra which blew

down one of my tents and would have blown down the other if I had not made use of a lot of litigants present in my camp to hold on to the tent ropes. The sand was blinding, coming up in great clouds. A table with my tea things was blown over and we afterwards had to dig the teapot, etc., out of the drift sand. A large raft of logs belonging to the Meklanadi Saw Mills parted from its moorings close to my camp and before long the wind and the waves had broken it to pieces. In the morning the logs were floating about in all directions.

37. On the 11th I went over to Laimekuri, where the Mecklanadi Saw Mills are situated. I halted there for the 12th and 13th continuing my enquiry into the Lekong case. Men from Lekong were in the local Kyah's shop about the day the looting took place. While at Laimekuri I had bitter complaints from the Miris (and also from Mr. Harrison) as to the damage done to their crops by buffaloes belonging to Nepalese. The Nepalese settler is a curse to the countryside and the Nepalese buffalo keeper even more so. There is no doubt that as their buffaloes increase, the Miris, the indigenous inhabitants, will be driven out of the place. I therefore directed the Nepalese to move in a month, as they have no cultivation and a month, is quite sufficient time in which to make other arrangements. Every day the longer they stop, the greater the damage. The settlers who have cultivation I ordered to leave after they had got in their crops in about November or December next. The buffalo keepers have appealed against my orders. Always in frontier districts where the foreigner is a nuisance to the indigenous dweller inland it is the custom to clear the foreigner out at once. I hold no brief for the Miri, as I think him very lazy. But he is a far more useful member of society than the Nepalese buffalo keeper. I trust that no legal technicality may be allowed to interfere with the exercise of proper control over foreigners and undesirable characters on this frontier. I find two settlements between Laimekuri and the hills which pay no revenue. One Dikari, half Abor, half Miri, and the other Depi, an Abor settlement. The latter is used as a halting stage for all Abors coming down to Laimekuri from Ledum.

I don't like expelling Nepalese buffalo keepers from the frontier tract altogether. I have asked Major Woods whether some arrangement could not be made for preventing them from establishing their *mohameties* within a certain distance from Miri settlements or cultivation.

11-6-07. F. J. MONAHAN.

38. On the 14th April I went to Dibrugarh. The Deputy Commissioner was out in camp and did not return until the 21st. I halted at Dibrugarh until 22nd. I had a lot of old records to look up in the office, and correspondence to attend to.

On the 17th I had a meeting with Mr. Sim, the Manager, and Mr. Moran, the Director of the Sissi Saw Mills. It appears that 1906-1907 is the first year in which the Manager has refused to pay blackmail. For years past this blackmail has been regularly paid and its sudden cessation has not unnaturally been resented by the Abors, the more so as only in December 1905 Mr. Needham had given into their demands. Mr. Sim informed me he had refused to make further payments under the impression that he was acting in accordance with the wishes of the Deputy Commissioner. Personally I think his decision to resist demands a very wise one, but whether it coincides with the existing instructions of Government on the subject is for opinion. As a result of the resentment felt by the Abors at not receiving payment they looted the mohurer belonging to the Sissi Mills as already mentioned. I asked Mr. Sim to let me see this mohurer, but up to the time of my departure from Dibrugarh he had not appeared before me. Since then I have seen him at Sadiya. He cannot say who robbed him. I, however, strongly suspect Lekong, but have obtained as yet no reliable evidence against that village. A report on the subject has been submitted to the Deputy Commissioner. I have lately received from Mr. Sim copies of the agreements made formerly with the various Abor Gams at the time of payment. One of these copies I send for perusal. If the Gam in question understood the wording of the agreement, I am not surprised at his thinking himself lord of the soil. While at Dibrugarh I had two very interesting interviews with they Rev. O. Hanson of the Kachin Branch of the American Baptist Mission Union in Burma. He had been on a visit to Sadiya with the object of ascertaining the difference, if any, between the Singpho language of the Dihing Valley and that spoken by the Kachins. Kachin is the Burmese term for Singphos (or Chinpaw as they call themselves). Mr. Hanson told me there was practically no difference. This is only natural as the Singpho race stretches continuously from Burma through the Hukong Valley to the Dehing and the Dehing Singphos are not a party of colonists isolated from their own kind.

On the 18th April certain Miri Gams appeared before me whom I had sent to find out where the party of Abors concerned in the looting of Assamese had slept after they had left Messaki. Up to that date I had got no positive proof to what village these Abors belonged. The Gams informed me that they had traced the Abors to Pamuwa. I directed them to appear before me at Sadiya with the Pamuwa witnesses. On the 22nd I had an interview with the Deputy Commissioner and discussed matters connected with the frontier. On the 23rd I left Dibrugarh and arrived at Sadiya late that evening.

I, the undersigned, Datem Abor Gam of Ledum Abor, do hereby acknowledge to have received in cash Rs. 50 (fifty only) and a bag of salt and a bag of rice from the General Manager, Sissi Saw Mills Trading Company, Limited, and in return of these presents I, the undersigned, Datem Abor Gam, affirmly promise to keep peace amongst Miris and other contractors cutting timber for the Sissi Saw Mills in my district between Dekhari depôt, Galli and Pobang under permit from the Mill Manager and to avoid all and every kind of friction between the Abors and timber-cutting contractors and to settle all and every kind of rows between them for one year from the date 22nd July 1904.

(Sd.) শ্রীহুতেম

ব: শ্রীমাত সিং

The Gam's district (sic) is B. territory along the Brahmaputra.

N. W.—25th May 1907.

No. 31.

No. 91G., dated Sadiya, the 30th May 1907.

From—The Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya,

To—The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur.

In continuation of my memorandum forwarding the statements regarding villagers of Lekong having looted certain Assamese, I have to report that the Miris sent up by me on the 14th instant returned here on the 24th instant. They report to the following effect :—

"We have visited the villages of Lekong, Ledum, and Kemi. We had a meeting of the Gams at each village and warned them about molesting Miris working in British territory. This warning the Gams explained to their respective villagers and the Gams informed us that they would hold themselves responsible in future for the surrender of the culprits. The Gams, etc., appear to be afraid of your orders."

2. The spirit in which my warning has been accepted by these Passi-Menyongs is satisfactory and bears out my impression that these people will give us little trouble if dealt with firmly.

3. Instead of trusting to Miri agency I should have preferred to have called in the Gams to speak to them myself. But in their present state of uncertainty as to whether action or otherwise will be taken to punish Lekong for its misdeeds, I was doubtful if my summons would be obeyed. I did not think myself justified in risking the chance of a refusal to attend before me however politely couched.

4. I shall be obliged if the memorandum forwarding the statements referred to may be returned to this office as I find that it has not received a number nor has any copy been kept of it.

No. 412G., dated Dibrugarh, the 5th June 1907.

Memo. by—The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur.

Copy forwarded to the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, in continuation of this office letter No. 314G., dated the 21st May 1907.

No. 32.

No. 3131J., dated Shillong, the 22nd July 1907.

From—The Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Judicial Department.

To—The Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts.

With reference to your letter, dated the 20th June 1907, I am directed to address you on the policy to be followed in dealing with Abors and Mishmis on the Sadiya frontier.

His Honour is of opinion that it is necessary to prevent the tribesmen from blackmailing British subjects and that British sovereignty over the plains lying between the Brahmaputra and the foot of the hills to the north of the district of Lakhimpur must be firmly asserted. To secure the recognition of our rights it will probably be expedient to demand a small tax from all hillpeople who have settled in or cultivate lands in British territory. The best way of enforcing this demand appears to be that the Political Officer should make a tour through the villages situated at or within reasonable distance of the foot of the hills and explain to each village in turn the intentions of Government and the amount of tax it will be required to pay. But before this suggestion can be carried into effect, it seems advisable to obtain the orders of the Government of India, and for the present Mr. Williamson should confine himself to informing the Abors that they will not be permitted to extort blackmail from British subjects.

2. As regards the Mishmis, I am to say that the Lieutenant-Governor is not prepared as yet to recommend an expedition to Elapoin. The present blockade must be continued for another year, special exemption, under due percautions, being given to certain selected friendly villagers at the disrection of the local officers. As, however, there appears to be very little probability that the blockade will secure the surrender of Pongon, I am to request that you will consider whether the payment of a fine might not be accepted in place of the surrender of the murderer, and favour Government with an expression of your opinion on this point.

35 / 20 Judicial

(53)

42

JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT.

POLITICAL BRANCH.

No. 3923 J.

FROM

J. E. WEBSTER, ESQ., I.C.S.,

SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM,

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

Shillong, the 9th *September* 1907.

SIR,

I AM directed to address you regarding the policy to be pursued in dealing with the Abors and other tribes inhabiting the hills to the north of the Dibrugarh Frontier Tract.

2. This letter is concerned chiefly with the Abors, consisting of the Pasi-Minyong section of the tribe settled on the west of the Dihong river, and of the Bor Abors, or Padams, living between the Dihong and the Dibong. The same policy will be applied also to the relations of the British authorities with the Mishmis living in the hills east of the Dibong river.

An account of our dealings with these tribes down to the year 1884 is given in Chapters VI to VIII of Mackenzie's North-East Frontier of Bengal, and the story is brought up to date in the Gazetteer of the Lakhimpur district, pages 55 to 71, while an interesting and instructive review of the position in 1881 will be found in Captain Beresford's report on the North-East Frontier of Assam. It will, however, be convenient to give in this letter a brief resumé of the principal features of the history of this remote corner of the empire in so far as they have any direct bearing on the questions at issue.

3. The earliest accounts of North-Eastern Assam show that the hills on the west bank of the Dihong were inhabited by Pasi and Minyong Abors, and those on the right bank by Bor Abors, who claimed the right of hunting in the forests and fishing and gold washing in the rivers that lay at the foot of their hills, and also an absolute sovereignty over the Miris of the plains. These ideas necessarily brought them into conflict with British authority, and down to 1862 the history of our relations with the Abors is an unprofitable list of raids and depredations on their part and of expensive and ineffectual attempts at reprisal on ours. At length a number of Pasi-Minyong headmen met the Deputy Commissioner at Lalimukh and entered into an agreement (No. CXV of Aitchison's Treaties, Vol. I) whereby *inter alia* they acknowledged that the sovereignty of the British Government extended to the foot of the hills, and engaged to pay revenue for any lands they might occupy in British territory, and to allow free intercourse between hills and plains; while Government on its part undertook to give the Minyongs certain presents in kind (*posa*) to enable them to keep the terms of the agreement and preserve peace on the frontier.

Other villages, including some at least of the Bor Abors, subsequently entered into similar agreements. The authority of the persons who professed to represent these Abor villages has been doubted, and the Pasi-Minyongs are said to have shown their contempt for the treaty by eating it; but they came down fairly regularly to receive the *posa*, and in 1878 the payments in kind were commuted to money payments.

4. In the meantime the Inner Line Regulation (V of 1873) had been passed, and by Foreign Department Notification No. 2427P. of the 3rd September 1875 an Inner Line was laid down for the Lakhimpur district.

This line, as also the approximate position of the foot of the hills as delineated by Mr. Needham, is shown on the map enclosed with this letter.

It should, however, be understood that the map has no pretension to accuracy in detail, and His Honour is informed by Mr. Williamson that the line drawn by Mr. Needham is misleading, that between the Dihong and Dibong it does not show the foot of the hills even approximately, and that the red line marked on the map gives more correctly the position of the foot of the hills between these two rivers.

From the Chief Commissioner's letter No. 2600, dated the 27th July 1875, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, it appears that the line taken represented the limits of the Deputy Commissioner's ordinary as distinguished from his political, jurisdiction, and that beyond this line no revenue was collected.

From paragraph 13 of Captain Beresford's report, referred to above, it appears that in 1881 the tract between the Inner Line and the hills was practically uninhabited, the only village in this vast stretch of jungle and forest being the Abor settlement of Bomjur on the Dibong, all the Miris having withdrawn across the Inner Line for safety.

In 1881 our relations with all the tribes seem to have been satisfactory, and a temporary advance to Nizamghat at the foot of the hills in order to prevent the Abors from crossing into the country of the Mishmis, met with no opposition. Indeed, the frontier was so quiet that after 2 years the guard was withdrawn from Nizamghat to Bomjur.

5. Up to 1882 all intercourse between the Deputy Commissioner and the tribes to the north-east of Dibrugarh was conducted through the medium of a native officer, who had great personal influence; but in that year the Government of India sanctioned the creation of the post of Assistant Political Officer at Sadiya, and Mr. F. J. Needham of the Bengal Police was appointed to the charge and held it with distinction for 23 years. In the years 1884—1886 he visited several of the Abor villages and met with a generally friendly reception. Gradually, however, the Abors, as is usually the case when such savages begin to forget the power of their civilized neighbours, grew unruly, and in 1893 their conduct became so unbearable that an expedition was despatched to punish them. The troops visited all the villages along the foot of the hills from the Dibong to the Dihong, overcoming all resistance and inflicting severe punishment, and penetrated some way up the Yamne river in an attempt to reach Damroh, the head village of the Bor Abors; but by the failure of supplies and the massacre of a detachment left behind at Bordak they were compelled to turn back. In spite of this disaster it appears that the lesson was effective, and the Abors had no desire to bring themselves again into conflict with the British arms. The expedition was followed by the stoppage of the Bor Abors' *posa*, and by a blockade in which the Pasi-Minyongs and the Mishmis were included. In 1896, the blockade of the Pasi-Minyongs was withdrawn, and a year later that of Mishmis, but the blockade against the Bor Abors was maintained until the year 1900.

6. In 1897 and 1898 the first record of Abor settlements in the plains, other than that at Bomjur, is met with. About that time Pasi-Minyongs came down to settle on the Lali, the Dihong, and the Poba, between the Inner Line and the foot of the hills. The Chief Commissioner considered these settlements undesirable and ordered the settlers to be turned out of British territory, excepting only a few Pasis on the Lali Chapori who were reported to have been there for some time and to have given no trouble. Subsequently these orders were revised and it was laid down that there was no objection to allowing immigrants such as the Pasis to settle in British territory beyond the Inner Line, provided they (1) settled on sites previously approved by Government, (2) paid poll-tax, and (3) behaved themselves.

The settlers on the Poba and Dihong refused these terms, alleging that they were forbidden to pay taxes by their headmen, who claimed the land as theirs, and it was reported that they had removed their villages. The Pasis on the Lali Chapori remained and have ever since paid poll-tax.

Some settlers from the Bor Abor village of Silluk were turned back in 1897 and their huts burned, as the blockade still subsisted, but in 1901 it was found that Padam Abors from Padu and Membo had settled at Sibiyamukh, and, as the blockade had been withdrawn and they agreed to pay poll-tax, they were allowed to remain.

More recently Mr. Williamson, who in 1905 succeeded Mr. Needham as Assistant Political Officer, discovered the existence of a colony of 18 houses from the Bor Abor village of Silluk at Kongkur between the Sisseri river and the Dihong, and induced them to consent to pay poll-tax. In the course of his tours he also ascertained that the following Pasi Minyong villages are situated below the foot of the hills in British territory :—

Village.	Offshoot of	Number of houses.
1. Lekong (Upper) ...	Ledum, Rumkang and various Pasi-Minyong villages.	21
2. Lekong (Lower) ...	Ditto ditto ...	8
3. Remi	Kemi	5
4. Kemi	Rumkong and various Pasi-Minyong villages.	10 approximate.
5. Yagrung	Ditto ditto ...	20 ,,
6. Depi	Ledum	10 ,,
7. Dikari	Dijmur	6 ,,

[The approximate positions of the above have been marked on the enclosed map. Dikari is a small settlement of Miris and Abors who for some reason have never paid revenue.]

He also found that not only do the Abors living in the hills cultivate (by *juming*) throughout a strip of plains country 3 to 9 miles wide, but they recognize an informal division among themselves of this portion of the country, Dambuk claiming the strip between the Dibong and the Sesseri rivers, Silluk from the Sesseri to the Sibiya, and Membo from the Sibiya to the Dihong.

The tract over which the Abors claim these rights lies below the foot of the hills and is by treaty British territory in which the Abors are bound to pay revenue for any lands they occupy.

7. In 1902 the question of the terms upon which Managers of saw mills should be allowed to obtain timber from beyond the Inner Line first came under discussion. From a report submitted by Mr. Needham it appears that managers had been in the habit of obtaining timber from Miris, who did not require passes, and that the latter used to pay a royalty to the Abors without protest. Mr. Needham gave the following list of tribes who claimed royalty in the tract in question :—

(*a*) The Dobangs (also called Galongs) right down to Dijmur.

(*b*) The Tadungs (probably an offshoot of the Dobangs) as far east as Dikheri (shown in the map as Dikari).

(*c*) The Pasi-Minyongs of Ledum and Yemsing, as far east as Diphimukh.

(*d*) The Pasi-Minyongs of Kemi as far east as Pobamukh.

As time went on and the *simul* timber nearest to the rivers became exhausted the managers began to employ contractors, and the latter employed Miris to fell trees and used to send elephants to drag the logs, often sending mahuts and servants across the Inner Line without passes. Sir Bampfylde Fuller at that time, while laying down that the whole strip of country from the Brahmaputra to the hills was British territory, and that the tribesmen should not be permitted to ignore this fact, held that until effective possession was taken of the tract by removing the police posts to the foot of the hills, it was useless to interfere in matters of detail. He also said that, as matters stood, there was no reason why managers of saw mills should not pay the hill tribes some commission or royalty on timber extracted from this area if they found it convenient to do so.

Recently the big firms have been trying to work the timber business more directly through their own servants, and have been tempted owing to want of timber elsewhere to extend their operations near the hills. They have thus been brought into immediate contact with the Abors, to whom they have been compelled to pay blackmail to secure their employés from molestation.

8. When Sir Lancelot Hare visited Sadiya in November last, complaints were made to him by the managers of the local mills of the inadequacy of the protection received by them from Government, and a memorial, of which a copy is enclosed, was presented to him on behalf of the Sissi Saw Mills and Trading Company, and the Meklanuddi Saw Mills Company.

It appeared to His Honour inconsistent with the dignity and responsibilities of Government that it should permit savages to extort money from British subjects in British territory, and he was strongly impressed with the necessity for a

firmer assertion by Government of its rights of supervision and control up to the further frontier both for the protection of the existing trade and for the purpose of preserving the valuable stock of *simul* timber in the forests north of the Brahmaputra from being ruined by ignorant and improvident felling. The need for forming reserves of *simul* timber, which is in great request for making tea boxes, has been represented by the Conservator of Forests, and though Sir Lancelot is not, as at present advised, in favour of allowing to the officers of the Forest Department any authority outside the Inner Line, he is inclined to think that some simple rules for the working of selected forest areas might be drawn up for the guidance of the Assistant Political Officer. But the enforcement of such rules must entail more interference in the administration of these areas than has hitherto been customary, and the nature of the measures practicable depends to a great extent on the acceptance or non-acceptance of the proposals for the tightening of control put forward in the following paragraphs.

9. The Lieutenant-Governor has recently taken advantage of the presence in Shillong of several officers of frontier experience to consult them on the policy to be adopted for the future in dealing with the tribes on the Sadiya border. It is the unanimous opinion of all the officers consulted that Government should no longer tolerate the claims of the Abors and should prohibit and, if necessary, prevent by force the extortion of blackmail from timber-cutters or traders in the British territory below the hills.

In this opinion His Honour entirely concurs. It might be possible to ignore petty and quasi-voluntary payments by Miris, but it is intolerable that the Abors should be allowed to bully and threaten British subjects and interfere with the development of trade. It is the more necessary to put a stop to these abuses as they appear to be based upon claims to territorial rights, in spite of the formal acknowledgment made more than 40 years ago of British sovereignty.

The Lieutenant-Governor does not anticipate any difficulty in enforcing the prohibition in the case of employés of the saw-mills and Assamese, though it is not improbable that some extortion from the Miris will go on *sub rosa*. The Abors have not forgotten their easy defeat in 1893, and when taxed with the levy of blackmail have shown themselves more inclined to shift the responsibility on to another village than boldly to stand upon their rights.

10. Simultaneously with the prohibition of the levy of exactions from British subjects, His Honour considers that steps should be taken to realise a tax from all Abors settled in the plains. Whether this tax should take the form of a poll-tax or of a house-tax, and at what rate it should be levied, are matters which will be considered hereafter if the general scheme is approved. It seems sufficient for the present to lay down that the tax must in the first instance be very light and should take whatever form is likely to prove least obnoxious.

The cultivation of land within the borders of British territory by residents of hill villages offers a more difficult problem. In a part of the district which can only be visited at rare intervals it is impossible to ascertain to what particular person each piece of cultivated land belongs, or even to find out which members of a village have been cultivating in our territory. There should, however, be no difficulty in ascertaining approximately the extent of land in the plains cultivated by each village, and it is the general opinion of the local officers that the constitution of the villages will permit of a tax being imposed on the village as a whole, and this is the course which commends itself to the Lieutenant-Governor. The amount of the tax would be fixed in each case on a consideration of the resources of the village and the area of the land cultivated in British territory.

11. It would obviously be inexpedient to impose any tax on persons, on houses, or on villages, unless its collection could be guaranteed. Mr. Williamson is of opinion that an advance of the posts to the foot of the hills would not be of much use, but that the most effective method of controlling the tribes would be the occupation of one or two strong posts in the hills dominating the villages. His Honour hesitates, however, to recommend such a course until the alternatives have been tried and failed, and he believes that it will be sufficient if the Assistant Political Officer visits the principal villages with a strong escort and informs them of the orders and intentions of Government. He is advised that there is no likelihood of Mr. Williamson's meeting with any but a friendly reception, and if he takes for his first tour an escort of 150 Military Police, that will amply suffice to overcome any opposition, so that there is no chance of a subsequent punitive expedition being necessary. If the Government of India approve, Mr. Williamson would visit first the Pasi-Minyong country, going as far up as Kebang, which is looked up to as the head

village of the group, and for which Kemi, mentioned by Mr. Needham as claiming royalty as far east as Pobamukh, probably acted as agent. Afterwards he could visit Padu, Membo, Silluk, and Dambuk. During his tour the details of the assessment could be settled and the villagers would be warned that failure to pay would be visited with the destruction of their crops or their villages.

12. In this connection it seems necessary to settle finally the question of *posa*. As the Government of India are aware, *posa* (*pacha*) means properly the contribution which the Bhuteas, Daphlas, Miris, and other hillsmen used to levy from the villages of the plains; and in most cases the *posa* now paid represents an estimate of the value of the collections thus previously made. But the *posa* given to the Abors is of a wholly different nature, and was in fact a subsidy given to secure peace on the frontier. By their exactions from the Miris, their obstruction of the survey, and their assertion of territorial rights, the Abors have undoubtedly forfeited all claim to such a subsidy; but while sanction was given in paragraph 6 of Mr. Cunningham's letter No. 1509E., dated the 31st August 1894, to the cessation of all further payment of *posa* to the Bor Abor villages, the stopping of the payments to Kebang and the other Pasi-Minyong villages appears to have been due to an oversight. Payments naturally ceased when these villages were blockaded after the Abor expedition, and they were not resumed on the raising of the blockade.

Sir Lancelot Hare is strongly opposed to such subsidising of savage tribes, as, whatever may be the ostensible reason for the payment, it is certain to be looked upon as tribute; indeed, the Abor *posa* has actually been referred to in official correspondence as tribute. If any justification be required for the cessation of the payment, I am to submit that there is ample in the broken pledges and the insolent claims of these tribes. In stead of giving a fixed *posa* the Lieutenant-Governor proposes to place a more or less equivalent sum at the disposal of the Assistant Political Officer for the provision of presents to those headmen who behave well and for the purchase of such information as he may require.

13. Regarding the Mishmis no such difficulties have been experienced, as they never had *posa* and have not yet taken to cultivation in the plains. Should they do so, the same policy would be applied, but at present the whole tribe, with a few exceptions, are blockaded on account of their failure to procure the surrender of the murderers of a Duania and his wife and child near the Dikrang guard in July 1905.

14. The line of action sketched in this letter diverges widely from the policy hitherto followed.

The treaties of 1863-66 contained stipulations for free trade and intercourse between hills and plains and a recognition of the possibility of the hillsmen cultivating land in British territory on payment of revenue, but these provisions appear to have remained a dead letter. It is true that for nearly 20 years the Abors continued to visit Sadiya to receive their *posa* and enjoy the festivities at the annual fair, but they never allowed plainsmen, other than Miris, access to their hills. On the part of Government the Abors were looked upon as intractable and dangerous savages, whose presence in our territory was undesirable, and their natural reluctance to admit strangers to their country received authoritative support in the passing of Regulation V of 1873 and the consequent prohibition against crossing the Inner Line. The visits of Mr. Needham to the Abor villages in the early days of his regime held promise of more friendly relations, but soon afterwards the troubles that culminated in the expedition of 1893 led to further estrangement, and since then the attitude has been one of mutual distrust and exclusion.

Sir Lancelot Hare is convinced that a policy of aloofness is foredoomed to failure. The savage mind is incapable of appreciating a friendliness which does not show itself in reciprocal visits and the exchange of presents, nor can it believe in a strength that displays itself in forbearance. The reluctance of the British authorities to enforce their rights has been construed as weakness, and the payment of *posa* as a tribute to the powers of the Abor braves. Their belief in the impregnability of their villages was rudely shaken by the expedition of 1893, but Mr. Williamson's recent tours show the hillmen to be as uncivilized, as ignorant, and as arrogant in their claims as ever. The Lieutenant-Governor considers that, apart from the urgent need of preventing interference with the development of trade, the fact that over half a century of proximity to civilisation has failed in any way to redeem the tribes on our border from their native savagery is in itself a condemnation of the policy of non-interference. For there is no reason to believe the Abor to be the hopelessly intractable savage that he once was imagined to be. He is less bloodthirsty than the Naga, has more aptitude for concerted action, and is probably no less amenable to civilising influences.

His Honour would not propose to put back the Inner Line or to relax the restrictions on crossing it, for it is necessary to protect the hillmen from exploitation by undesirable persons and to prevent the inconsiderate destruction of the game on which they largely depend. But he considers it necessary to promote free intercourse, encouraging the tribesmen to visit Sadiya and to settle in British territory, and requiring them to receive in their villages the Assistant Political Officer and any other officers of Government who may have dealings with them. They must be made to understand that when they enter British territory they must obey the law and conduct themselves as subjects of the British Crown, and before long the Lieutenant-Governor hopes that schools will be opened for Abor children, probably under the management of one of the Missions who have been successful among the Khasis and other Hill tribes.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. E. WEBSTER,

Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

Memorial from the Sissi Saw Mills and Trading Company, Limited, and the Meckla Nuddee Saw Mills Company, Limited.

To—The Hon'ble L. HARE, C.S.I., C.I.E., Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

The memorial of the Sissi Saw Mills and Trading Company, Limited, and the Meckla Nuddee Saw Mills Company, Limited.

SHEWETH—

1. The memorializing Companies wish to draw His Honour's serious attention to the grave difficulties which they labour under in procuring an adequate supply of *simul* timber from Government forests, in consequence of the inelastic manner in which the Inner Line Regulations are being worked in the district of Lakhimpur, and have the honour to place the following few facts before him, and to ask for his sympathetic consideration with a view to giving them the required relief.

2. For some years past the available *simul* timber grown within working reach of the rivers has become less and less, and the position now is that practically the whole of the supply has to be obtained from the Government forests beyond the Inner Line on the north and east of the Brahmaputra.—a tract which Government has notified is British territory. These difficulties came to a head in 1904, when Sir Bampfylde Fuller was approached on the subject, and the orders issued by him to the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur, *vide* his Secretary's letter No. 646For.—292P., dated the 23rd January 1904, in which executive officers were directed that it was so and that they were to do nothing that would permit the hillmen to ignore this fact, *viz.*, that it is British territory, no action shall be taken by the officers of Government which is inconsistent with it, but as Sir Bampfylde Fuller was not in a position at that time to take effective possession of the tract by moving the police outposts to the foot of the hills, he considered it useless to interfere in matters of detail, and that as matters stood he saw no reason why Managers of Saw Mills should not pay hill tribes some commission or royalty on timber extracted from that area, if they found it convenient to do so, and the Deputy Commissioner was directed to communicate the contents of this letter to managers informing them that Government does not expect to be troubled with the settlement of disputes which may arise with their dealings with the hillmen. Sir Bampfylde Fuller on the several occasions that he has been approached has always expressed himself as being in sympathy with the saw mills, and was prepared to help them in every way. In this view on the last occasion he was prepared to allot a tract of country in the upper waters of the Poba and Lallu for a *simul* reserve, and have the outposts pushed back to the foot of the hills, and suggested sanctioning Rs. 5,000 per annum towards the scheme, the Conservator and Deputy Conservator of Forests being fully in accord with the scheme.

3. It has never been contended there are any political objections to the exploitation of these tracts, so far as the local tribes are concerned, and consequent on the quoted letter, the mills have been obliged to pay blackmail to the tribesmen for timber the property of Government and upon the produce of which Government have all along in the Forest Department claimed, and been paid for royalty, only payable on timber cut in Government forests. These exactions have as a matter of fact increased and must go on increasing. The tribes in question have no central Government, consequently each village who comes to know of a timber camp anywhere in their vicinity claims to be paid, and there is no finality to the toll we have to pay.

4. The effect on the tribesmen is naturally exactly contrary to the expressed orders formulated by Sir Bampfylde Fuller, and hillmen have learned to ignore the fact that this is British territory and claim it with greater insistance as their own. It is submitted that if Government took a stand and notified the tribesmen that these practices be discontinued, no serious trouble would arise, and that in any case, a moving back of the outposts to the foot of the hills would overcome the difficulty.

5. In consequence of these difficulties many native contractors have ceased to work, and had the Mills not replaced them by Europeans and centralized these operations, the existence of the Mills was threatened; with the withdrawal of the powers from the District Officer to grant passes to Europeans, a further serious difficulty has been involved, owing to the delay, even if granted, of obtaining the passes, while as regards the camp labour force, it is found practically impossible, the force being a shifting one, to supply the many details required for native workmen which is practically their family history. Unless the rules can be made sufficiently elastic to meet the requirements of trade, it is practically impossible to carry on the industry, which involves many lakhs of rupees and which naturally affects the tea industry. These local mills have to compete with Norwegian and Japanese boxes which come into the country free of all duty, and are sold at as cheap a rate as we can afford under the present conditions.

6. Your memorialists therefore pray that Your Honour will be good enough to give protection to those employed in the timber-cutting industry in the tract to the north and east of the Brahmaputra which has been clearly defined as British territory until such time as the Inner Line has been removed to the foot of the hills, and they further pray that Your Honour will move the Government of India for the necessary sanction to move the outposts to the foot of the hills on the Poba, Lallu, Dihong, Dibong, Sissiree, and Brahmakhund rivers so as to take effective possession of this valuable forest country which Government has notified is British territory, and that pending such removalthat such orders as may be considered expedient and necessary to grant us the relief prayed for be passed.

No. 646For.—292P., dated Shillong, the 23rd January 1904.

From—The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

To—The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur.

In reply to your letter No. 1419G., dated the 19th November 1903, on the subject of royalty taken by hill tribes from persons cutting timber beyond the Inner Line, I am directed to say that the

strip of country between the Brahmaputra and the hills is British territory, and the tribesmen should not be permitted to ignore this fact. No action should be taken by the officers of Government which is inconsistent with it. Until, however, effective possession of this tract is formally taken by moving our police posts to the foot of the hills, it is useless to interfere in matters of detail. There seems no erason why, as matters stand, the managers of saw mills should not pay the hill tribes some commission or royalty on timber extracted from this area if they find it convenient to do so. I am to add that it would be well to communicate the contents of this letter to the managers, informing them that Government does not expect to be troubled with the settlement of disputes which may arise out of their dealings with the hill men.

No. 1779-83G., dated Lakhimpur, the 1st February 1904.

Memo. by—The Deputy Commissioner ,Lakhimpur.

Copy forwarded to the Manager of Sissi Saw Mills for information.

E. B. & A. S. P. O. (Judl.) No. 527—150+15—3-9-1907.

No. 36.

No. 4408G., dated Gauhati, the 9th September 1907.

From—F. J. MONAHAN, Esq., I.C.S., Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts,

To—The Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam in the Judicial and General Department.

With reference to your letter No. 3131J., dated the 22nd July 1907, on the policy to be followed in dealing with Abors and Mishmis on the Sadiya frontier, I have the honour to submit copy of a letter, No. 807G., dated the 23rd August 1907, and enclosure, from the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur. I agree with Major Woods and Mr. Williamson in thinking that it would be better not to demand payment of a fine as compensation for the Dikrang outrage of 1905, in lieu of the surrender of the murderer, as such an abatement of our demand might be regarded as a sign of weakness by the Mishmis, and it is likely that the fine would ultimately be paid by persons who had no connection with the outrage. I would suggest that the blockade against the Mishmis should be maintained, special exemption being granted to selected friendly tribesmen, until Mr. Williamson has acquired further information regarding the tribes beyond the Sadiya frontier. The history of our past dealings with these tribes shows that much of the trouble which we have had with them has resulted from mistakes arising from imperfect information. By his intercourse with Mishmis exempted from the blockade, Mr. Williamson should have opportunities of improving his information. He should also learn the Mishmi language.

No. 37.

No. 807G., dated Dibrugarh, the 23rd August 1907.

From—Major ALBERT E. WOODS, I.A., Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur,

To—The Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts.

With reference to your memorandum No. 3708G., dated the 26th July 1907, I have the honour to state that Mr. Williamson being away at Dehra Dun, I was unable to consult him personally, but I enclose a copy of a letter which he has submitted.

In my opinion I think it would be better to raise the blockade altogether or even to allow it to remain on ineffective as it is, than to impose a fine, unless we are prepared in the case of non-payment to realise the fine by sending a small force into the country. In my experience, there is nothing that lowers one's prestige in the eyes of a savage more than to give an order and not to be able to enforce it. Should it be decided to levy a fine, I really don't think it matters much whether it is imposed on Pongon or the tribe in general, as in either case should it be paid, the money is certain to be raised from amongst the people, if Pongon is the influential man he is said to be.

There is just a chance that a fine might be paid up without an expedition, but I doubt even if an expedition would bring about the surrender of the murderers.

No. 38.

Dated the 15th August 1907.

From—The Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya,

To—The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur.

Your memorandum No. 707G., dated the 30th July 1907, forwarding copy of Secretariat letter No. 3131J., dated the 22nd July 1907, to the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts.

2. With reference to the final portion of Mr. Webster's letter, the payment of a fine would spare the necessity for a visit to Elapoin and would enable Government to raise the blockade. The fine to be commensurate with the extraordinary gravity of the offence should be a heavy one, say Rs. 1,000. Considering Pongon's past disrespectful attitude towards Government and his general ignorance of our power, he would not make the best attempt to pay such fine unless threatened with individual punishment, and the fine would consequently be paid by others of the tribe in order to rid themselves of the inconveniences attaching to the blockade. The acceptance

of a fine from the tribe generally would doubtless maintain our prestige, but at the expense of the unoffending members of the tribe and not at the expense of the real culprits who would go scot-free. I am therefore averse to accepting a fine in place of the surrender of the murderers.

3. I should like to raise the blockade now and order Pongon to pay a fine of Rs. 1,000 or such other sum as is considered adequate by Government, warning him at the same time that his village will be destroyed if he fails to comply with this order before April 1908. We must, however, be prepared to visit Elapoin during November 1908, in case Pongon proves disobedient. (Of course I should like to pay this visit during the coming cold weather, but His Honour does not approve of this.) If Government are not prepared to do this, in my opinion it would be better to raise the blockade without making further demand. The present blockade has not achieved the result aimed at and is not likely to do so. Its maintenance only irritates a friendly people with whom we have no quarrel, tends to alienate them from us, and prevents my becoming acquainted with a large portion of the tribe.

No. 39.

No. 4147J., dated Shillong, the 25th September 1907.

From—The Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Judicial Department,

To—The Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts.

With reference to your letter No. 4408G., dated the 9th September 1907, and enclosures, I am directed to say that the Lieutenant-Governor accepts your recommendations that no fine should be demanded as compensation for the Dikrang outrage of 1905 and that the blockade against the Mishmis should be allowed to continue, subject to a further report this time next year. As regards the exemption of friendly Chulikatta Mishmis, I am to say that His Honour will be prepared to consider any recommendations which Mr. Williamson may wish to make in case occasion should arise for their exemption.

No. 40.

No. 4498J., dated Shillong, the 25th October 1907.

From—The Under-Secretary to the Government of Easterm Bengal and Assam, Judicial Department,

To—The Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts.

1. Commissioner's Office Collection No. XVI [File No. 20 (Serial No. 2)].
2. Ditto ditto [File No. 32 (Serial No. 1)].
3. Ditto ditto [File No. 33 (Serial Nos. 1 and 2)].
4. Ditto ditto [File No. 35 (Serial No. 1)].
5. Deputy Commissioner, of Lakhimpur's memorandum No. 486G., dated the 15th June 1907, to the Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya.

I am directed to return the original papers received with your letter dated the 20th June 1907, on the subject of the policy to be followed in respect of various questions that have arisen on the Lakhimpur frontier.

2. An acknowledgment is requested.