

SUMMARIES OF THE PAPERS

INDIAN HISTORICAL RECORDS COMMISSION

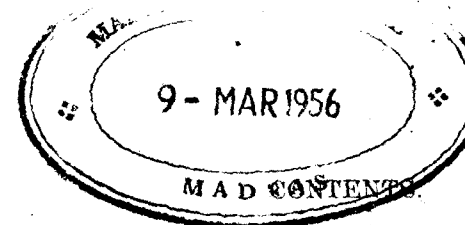
THIRTY-SECOND SESSION



PATNA

FEBRUARY 1956

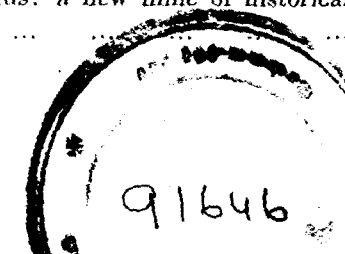
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(1)

DOCUMENT REGULATING SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE OF
LAHORE, NOVEMBER, 1840 by *Sita Ram Kohli, P.E.S. (Retd.),
Rohtak.*

This paper deals with a rare document which was drawn up on 16 Maghar Sambat 1897, corresponding to 27 November, 1840, to settle the preliminaries connected with the question of succession to the Lahore throne. On the death of Prince Nau Nihal Singh, the son of late Kharak Singh, the senior line of Ranjit Singh's succession had become extinct. The throne was thereafter contested, on the one hand by Mai Chand Kaur, the mother of the late prince in the name of an expected child to one of the widows of the prince, and on the other hand by Prince Sher Singh, one of the spurious sons of Ranjit Singh. A number of make-shift arrangements were tried by which both Mai Chand Kaur and Prince Sher Singh were to remain associated with the government of the country, but there was so much of enmity on both sides that none of those arrangements could work successfully. Ultimately the Chiefs at the Court decided that Sher Singh was to be excluded from the government for another six to eight months when the expectant widow of Prince Nau Nihal Singh may give birth to a child. The ministers also decided that other administrative arrangements were to be kept unchanged and Mai Chand Kaur was to continue to act as the Regent. This decision forms the text of the above document.

(2)

NEW LIGHT ON THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN THE NORTH-
EAST FRONTIER (1829—31) by *H. K. Barpujari, Professor of History,
Cotton College, Gauhati.*

This paper brings to light some valuable information relating to the part played by the Khasi Chiefs in the early phase of the Resistance Movement. The British came into contact with these Chiefs as early as 1824; but from the outset, with their innate love of freedom, these proud mountaineers looked with suspicion at British intervention in the affairs of the hills which was apparent from the fact, that in 1824, Scott, the Agent to the Governor-General, did not succeed in opening up a line of communication through these hills. In 1826, this project was however materialized through the help of Tirot Singh, the ruler of Nongkhlaw, whose cause Scott supported at the dispute over succession which took place after the death of the late ruler. Unfortunately, Scott's friendship with Tirot was also shortlived. Owing to certain misunderstanding, matters dragged to such an extent that Tirot soon became the inveterate enemy of the British. On

April 4, 1829 Tirot with a group of insurgents killed at Nongkhlaw two high officials, namely, Burlton and Bedingfield together with a company of about 50 men. This event commonly known as the 'Massacre of Nongkhlaw' is a memorable event; for it was the signal for similar uprisings with the avowed object of driving the British out of the hills. To achieve this, they attempted even to organise a confederacy of the people of the hills and the plains and in this connection, the part played by the old Ranee, the aunt of Tirot Singh, is an interesting one. This article clearly shows that the Khasis were in the vanguard of a movement which continued with occasional breaks till our own times.

(3)

INDIAN TRADE DELEGATION TO KATHMANDU, (1795), by G. N. Saletore, Keeper of Records, Central Records Office, Allahabad.

Towards the end of the 18th century the E. I. Company ascertained through the British Residents the possibilities of extending its commerce in certain parts of India and the neighbouring countries. An exception was made in the case of Nepal, where an Indian named Maulvi Abdul Qadir Khan was deputed unofficially by the Governor-General in 1795 to collect the necessary information.

Abdul Qadir Khan was instructed to negotiate with the Rajah of Nepal as a private merchant and not as government agent. All transactions by him required prior government approval. He had to find out the disposition of the Nepal Ministers towards the Company and obtain authentic data regarding the imports, exports and manufactures which could be profitably used in commerce between the Company's provinces and Nepal. He was also to convey to the Rajah the Governor-General's sentiments on the Morung—Purnea boundary and depredations of the Morung *faqirs*. His sojourn at Kathmandu was merely for cementing the friendship and promoting the commerce of the two states.

The Maulvi left Banaras about May 1795 with a retinue and equipment. But at Kathmandu his followers fell ill. The Maulvi himself remained unwell for 6 months at the end of which the Rajah allowed him to return to Banaras for a change of climate. He reached Banaras on 29th December, 1795, having collected interesting information on the trade, as well as the internal affairs of Nepal, Tibet and China. At Kathmandu, the Maulvi acted through the Naib Gaja Raja Misra. The Raja's indisposition prevented a personal interview. The Ministers were favourable to the Company. The other parts of his mission were also fulfilled.

There was much scope for developing the trans-Himalayan trade. The export from India were:—coloured broad cloth, coral, pearls, Mau cotton cloths, conch shells, raw silk, woollen carpets, looking glasses, cutlery, scales and weights, nutmegs, cardamoms, asafetida, sandal-wood,

Banaras *kinkhabs*, cotton, shields, tobacco, Banaras sugar, indigo, etc. Tibet exported to India gold, silver, *sohaga*, *chowries*, *hartal*, musk, shawl cloths, china silks, blankets, etc., while Nepal exported *manjeet*, wax, wood, etc. Indian traders were less industrious than the Nepalese, but the latter's products were not in general demand in Tibet. Nepalese traders derived great advantage from the Tibet trade, working as brokers between Tibetans and Indians. Failure of the Indians was due to the severe climate and food of Tibet. For fostering trade in Tibet, China and Nepal the Maulvi suggested the establishment of 5 factories with *gumashtaks* near Cooch-Bihar, Champaran, Bhutwal, Kumaun and Srinagar, the high altitude of which places would induce the foreign merchants to trade more frequently.

The Maulvi incidentally gives a short account of the Court affairs of Nepal. Bahadur Shah, the Rajah's uncle, had been dismissed from the Court. He was a friend of the Chinese Emperor and the E.I. Company, and the great men and ryots of Nepal also held him in esteem. The Chinese Emperor at this time proposed to the Rajah his uncle's restoration and certain other amenities to Chinese and Tibetan merchants. But the Rajah said that his uncle was dismissed for commencing hostilities with Tibet without orders and rejected the other proposals.

A young Emperor had recently been crowned in China. He had strengthened all passes, those bordering on Nepal having a greater portion of armed men and grain. He ordered the Rajah of Nepal to reinstate Bahadur Shah as *Naib*, and the Rajah of Jumla (whom the Nepalese ruler had dispossessed) to his Raj. The Rajah of Nepal had at this time sent his Minister Nar Singh on an Embassy to Peking. About May 1796, the Chinese Emperor informed the Ambassador that if the country of the Rajah of Jumla was not restored to him, this would be effected with the help of 80,000 troops.

(4)

BHOPAL SUCCESSION (1819-20) by Hira Lal Gupta, Professor of History, Saugar University.

The principality of Bhopal founded by Dost Muhammad Khan had assumed importance for the East India Company in its drive towards Central India and Malwa ever since the time of Warren Hastings. Its rulers Hayat Muhammad Khan and Ghaus Muhammad Khan maintained friendly relations with the Company. The Chief Minister Wazir Muhammad Khan usurped the throne and on his death in 1816 his second son Nasir Muhammad Khan was recognised as the Nawab of Bhopal by the Governor-General completely ignoring Ghaus Muhammad Khan. The new ruler did not enjoy a long span of life. He died towards the end of 1819 leaving behind a pregnant widow, Gauhar Begam, and an infant daughter, Sikandar Begam.

The question of succession again cropped up and agitated the minds of several aspirants to the throne in the state. Owing to the superior claims of the deposed Nawab Ghaus Muhammad Khan and of Amir Muhammad Khan, the elder brother of the late Nawab, it was clear that the succession would not go undisputed. The East India Company intervened in the affairs of the state on the plea of maintaining tranquillity in a dependent state and recognised Munir Muhammad Khan, the eldest son of Amir Muhammad Khan, as Nawab. A boy of 12 years, he was betrothed to Sikandar Begam and the widow Begam was appointed as Regent. This arrangement was not received joyfully either by the aspirants to the throne or by the widow Begam. However, in view of the superior British might peace could not be disturbed. After a few years the Regent showed disfavour to her son-in-law and fresh complications arose.

(5)

EARLY PENAL SYSTEM IN THE BENGAL PRESIDENCY by
G. N. Chandra, *Keeper of Records, Government of West Bengal.*

In this article an attempt has been made to trace the penal reforms introduced shortly after the assumption of the Dewani by the East India Company. English law was in force in the Presidency town and within 10 miles thereof and administration of criminal justice in other parts remained with the Nawab. The enquiries of the supervisors of 1769 revealed abuses of every sort and Controlling Councils were established at Murshidabad and Patna to superintend the administration of justice. Next year the Court of Directors appointed a Committee to draw up a plan for the more effective administration of justice. Under this plan the Supervisors were designated as Collectors and they were required to attend Faujdari Courts to see that the judgments were passed in an impartial manner according to the evidence produced and a *Sadar Nizamat Adawlat* was established in Calcutta under the control of the Chief and Council. The Regulating Act of 1777 empowered the Governor-General-in-Council to make rules and regulations for the good Government of Bengal. The removal of the *Nizamat Adawlat* to Murshidabad in 1775 owing to the Governor-General's inability to exercise sufficient control over its proceedings led to fresh abuses which the appointment of a Remembrancer of Criminal Courts could not check. The defects of Muhammadan Law according to which criminals were tried could not be removed owing to a provision in the Act of 1784 requiring the affairs of the East India Company to be regulated according to the manners and usages of the people. But there was no security of life and property and Lord Cornwallis was determined to put a stop to these abuses. The *Nizamat Adawlat* was accordingly removed to Calcutta in 1791, and placed under the Governor-General and Council. The Collectors were appointed to act as Magistrates for the arrest of offenders against public peace and trial of petty cases. Other cases were committed for trial by 4 Courts of

Circuit consisting of covenanted servants of the Company. Far-reaching amendments were made in the objectionable provisions of Muhammadan Law and the control of the police was taken out of the hands of the zamindars and given to the Magistrates. The gaols were placed under the supervision of Magistrates and better arrangements were made for the treatment of prisoners. The existing gaols were extended and repaired and many new jails were constructed.

(6)

SOUILLAC'S FRESH APPROACH TO FRANCO-MARATHA RELATIONS (1785) by V. G. Hatakhar, *Professor of French Literature, India College, Bombay.*

The French Governor-General Vicomte de Souillac arrived at Pondicherry in May 1785. He found that Bussy's policy must have created a very unfavourable and false impression about the French nation in the minds of the Indian Princes. He, therefore, wanted to give a new turn to French relations with the Indian Governments by explaining to them the real aims of the French in India and their means. Accordingly, he sent instructions to Montigny, the French Resident at Poona. Thus, after depriving the English of their possessions in America, the French would next aim at the total expulsion of their European rivals from India. The French Government had actually started putting this plan into operation. As regards French ambitions in India, these were confined only to establishments on the two Indian coasts. To the Maratha complaint about French preference to Haider Ali during the last war, it could be pointed out that that prince had not only tried to help the French during the siege of Pondicherry, but was the first to make overtures to them and had invaded the Carnatic where the English had seized all the French possessions. Finally, the Marathas were advised to make fresh proposals for a Franco-Maratha treaty.

When Montigny communicated to Nana Fadnavis the views expressed by Souillac, the Maratha Minister, while expressing general satisfaction with the French plans for the future, said that his government was much more interested in what the French did in India than what they achieved in America. Nana further pointed out that the French should not expect any territory on the west coast other than Bombay and Surat. Souillac's arguments about French co-operation with Haider Ali during the last war had not at all satisfied the Maratha Minister. The latter also made it perfectly clear that his government was not prepared to conclude any fresh arrangements with France until it had received a reply to its proposals made in 1782.

(7)

A FARMAN OF EMPEROR AURANGZEB by N. B. Roy, Professor of Islamic History, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan.

The *farman* of Emperor Aurangzeb, dated 17th July, 1681 A.D., is an important document. It outlines the main duties that were performed by the Qazis for which the manuals of Muslim jurisprudence like the *Hedayat-ul-Qawaid* has hitherto been our sole guide. It also refers to certain cesses that were banned by the Emperor.

(8)

THE MUTINY IN MANBHUM by Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, Professor of History, Ranchi College, Ranchi.

The repercussions of the great rising of 1857 against the British Government in India were felt even in the remote corners of Bengal and Bihar. An attempt has been made in this paper to study the nature of the Mutiny in Manbhumi with special reference to Nilmani Singh Deo of Pachete and the Santal rising near Tongbhoe. While such Zamindars as Nilmani Singh either rose in rebellion or passively played their role by refusing to assist the British, many landed magnates fought and actively aided the British with supply of men, money, munitions and transport against their own countrymen. The part played by the landed aristocracy in the different districts of Chotanagpur in this movement, either for or against the British government, is an instructive study pregnant with many lessons for the student of history.

(9)

RECORDS FROM A DESHMUKH FAMILY OF NALDURG by G. H. Khare, Curator, Bharata Itihasa Samshodhaka Mandala, Poona.

Naldurg is a taluqa town in the Usmanabad district of the Hyderabad state. A Deshmukh family of the place possesses heaps of old records. I acquired from that family 350 Persian, Marathi and bilingual documents for study. These range between 1564 and 1850 A.D. Among these there are 14 Adilshahi *farmans*, one Mughal *farman*, five *rajapatras* and the rest *parwanas*, letters, orders, etc. In these records, about 15 members of the Deshmukh family and more than 100 officers of the various regimes have been mentioned. Laying of the foundation of the Naldurg fort, its siege by some Adilshahi enemy, depredations committed by some rebels, movements of Shah Alam I and Kambakhsh in the war of succession and a host of other matters have been also referred to in these documents.

(10)

SOME LETTERS OF, AND RELATING TO, TIPU SULTAN by S. H. Askari, Professor of History, Patna College, Patna.

A Persian manuscript noticed in this paper, contains 69 letters many of which appear to have formed part of the collection of N. Mir Alam, a minister of the Nizam of Hyderabad. Of these letters one is by Faizi and

Abul Fazal commenting on vilifications against them, a note of Akbar to Prince Salim, then in revolt against him, a long letter giving an account of the campaign of Mirza Abdur Rahim against Muzaffar III of Gujrat in 991-2; two are farmans of Shahjahan to the rulers of Golconda and Bijapore, followed by a *Ta'ahhudnama* by Abdullah Qutbulmulk, one giving an account of the campaign in Iraq of Murad IV of Turkey against Shah Safi of Persia, whilst the rest are all concerned with the 18th century political affairs of the Deccan and Mysore. As many as 14 letters were written by, or addressed to, Mir Alam. In one of his long letters he refers to the Anglo-French struggles in India and tries to refute the charge of 'Perfidy Albion' against the English. The affairs of Kurnool and Carnatic, the repeated but futile efforts of Babuji Naik, the Marata-Nizam relations, and an account of the battle of Shakerkhedda form the subject of some of the letters. But it is the seven letters of Tipu Sultan and five more about him, including one concerning the events leading to his final fall and death which have been specially dealt with in this paper. Through them we are informed about the claims and dues of the Sultan from Runmast Khan and Alif Khan, Nawabs of Kurnool, the Sultan's campaign against the Nairs of Coorg, a temporary victory gained by him against Cornwallis at Moti Talab, a slightly different version of the battle of Sada Seer and Melvalli, and the reactions of the men of the opposite camp on the allied victory resulting in the fall of Seringapatam, the tragic death of Tipu Sultan and the capitulation of his eldest son, Fateh Haider, due to the deceitful assurances given by his officers and others. The letters throw much light on the character of the Sultan and on the treacherous part played by some of his chief officers, especially Mir Sadiq, Mir Nadim and Purneah.

(11)

THE AMERICANS IN EAST INDIA TRADE (1794-1819) by Hari Ranjan Ghosal, Assistant Professor of History, Bihar University, Muzaffarpur.

The paper seeks to bring out the important but hitherto unknown features of the Americans' trading activities in India and the Malay Archipelago on the basis of unpublished material found in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, and the West Bengal Secretariat Record Office in Calcutta. The period covered is from 1794 to 1819. American trade in the East during the Company's period has till now received but scant attention from scholars; and what little has been written on the subject is based primarily on published sources. It is, however, possible to write a big and interesting volume on the subject, if the available sources are properly utilized. It has been pointed out within the short space of the paper how after the conclusion of the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation between Britain and the United States in November, 1794, the Americans' trading activities in the East progressively increased, except for the temporary set-back which occurred in 1798-99, and for the virtual

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cessation of the trade during 1809—1814 under the pressure of political factors. It has also been shown that during the whole of the period nearly three-fourths of American exports to India consisted of treasure, because America then had little to offer in the shape of merchandise, whereas American imports from India included a variety of articles, of which cotton and silk piece-goods were the most important. The preferential treatment accorded to the Americans in British territories has also been noticed. And the spirit of rivalry which developed amongst the Company's servants in the East Indies owing to the increasing share of the Americans in the trade of the East-Indian islands has been noted too. Indeed the growing interest of the Americans in the trade at times alarmed the Company's officers, who suggested that steps should be taken to drive them out of the market. The importation of Turkish opium by American traders to the eastern markets after the Napoleonic War was a particular source of alarm.

(12)

AN OMICHAND EPISODE IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

by Sukumar Bhattacharya, University Grants Commission, New Delhi.

This article narrates an incident in the early eighteenth century following the establishment of the Mayor's Court in Calcutta. The farman granted to the English by the Emperor Furrukhsiyar in 1717 conferred on the East India Company the right of having delivered to them persons indebted or accountable to the Company. The establishment of the Mayor's Court in 1727 by a royal charter from England marked the beginning of the judicial power of the East India Company in Calcutta. But it soon led to a conflict of jurisdiction as between the Nawab of Bengal and the East India Company.

The English were not at the beginning directly involved in the case. It arose out of a dispute between the famous merchant Amichand or Omichand, who was under the protection of the English, and Goorbux, an inhabitant of Murshidabad, with whom the former had business transactions. Goorbux was persuaded by the English to come to Calcutta to settle the dispute, but was later put under arrest by the Mayor's Court on the complaint of Omichand. Goorbux by a stratagem confined Omichand at his house. But Omichand was released by force by the English. Six men on Goorbux's side were killed by the English soldiers and Goorbux was put in chains. Shuja-ud-Din Khan, the Subahdar of Bengal, took strong exception to the conduct of the English. Relations between the Nawab and the English were almost on the breaking point. Fatehchand Jagat-Seth, Haji Ahmed and other powerful noblemen of Bengal had to intervene, and the matter even attracted the notice of the imperial court at Delhi. The escape of Rasiklal, the wakil of the English who was being

brought from Murshidabad to Calcutta under military escort, and of Goorbux from the custody of the English in Calcutta, lend dramatic touches to the episode, which for a time seriously estranged the relations between the English and the Nawab of Bengal.

(13)

AN EARLY CASE OF CONSTITUTIONAL AGITATION IN BIHAR

(1892—97) by Qeyamuddin Ahmad, Research Fellow, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna.

The case on which the present paper is based relates to an anti-Government agitation launched by the Shias of Bihar for the restoration of their religious rights which had been interfered with by the Government. The case has been studied specially with a view to bringing out the salient features of constitutional importance involved in it.

The campaign was characterised throughout by a sober constitutional approach. Public meetings were held all over the Province and suitable resolutions passed. Memoranda and petitions quoting precedents and judicial decisions were submitted both to the Government of Bengal and the Government of India. Questions were raised on the floors of the Provincial Council, Bengal, and the Imperial Legislative Council. Although the campaign was a long and protracted one, stretching over five years, never on a single occasion were the bonds of constitutional propriety overstepped. Considering all these factors and specially the fact that the agitation took place at a comparatively early period (1892—97) it may well be remarked that this is one of the earliest cases on record of sustained and successful constitutional agitation in Bihar.

(14)

THE PATNA CONSPIRACY OF 1857 *by Jata Shankar Jha, Research Fellow, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna.*

In the Central Record Office, Calcutta, there are quite a large number of papers on the Patna Conspiracy of 1857. This conspiracy made its first manifestation in the form of a furious rising in Patna on the 3rd July 1857. Earlier one Waris Ali, a Police Jemadar at Muzaffarpur, had been arrested with some treasonable letters. The search that followed the rising of the 3rd July brought into the possession of the Government quite a few private letters, arms and weapons from the house of Peer Ali, a leading conspirator of Patna. These letters and statements of some arrested persons proved the wide extent of the conspiracy. Mr. W. Taylor, the Commissioner of Patna, who had strong suspicion of the existence of such a combination from before and had already adopted certain very repressive measures, now let loose a reign of terror. Thousands were thrown into prison on mere suspicion while hundreds were hanged without regular trial. This policy

was, however, highly disapproved of by the Lt. Governor, and Mr. Taylor was removed from the Commissionership on the 4th August, 1857.

(15)

THE TRAGEDY OF AMARCHAND BANTHIA by V. P. Pandit, *Office of the Chief Inspector of Offices & Records, Madhya Bharat.*

The part played by the State Treasurer Amarchand Banthia during the historic days of the Mutiny at Gwalior (1858) forms one of the interesting though minor episodes of those memorable times. This unfortunate official was tried and sentenced to death for his treacherous and disloyal act of assisting the mutineers with State funds. He was hanged on a neem tree in the Sarafa Bazar, the main market of Gwalior. The tree is still standing as an awful reminder of that tragic incident.

(16)

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPLES IN ORISSA by Upendra Nath Sarkar, *Archivist, National Archives of India.*

The copy of the translation of the historical account of the temples of Jagannath, Bhubaneswar, Konarak, etc., in Orissa, based mainly on the temple archives of Jagannath by the celebrated scholar H. T. Colebrooke, found in the Journal of the Surveyor-General Col. R. H. Colebrooke in Oudh, 1807, illustrates the value of historical investigation in the rich field of Survey of India records. The events and the dates narrated in the document under the Keshari and the Ganga kings, which is the theme of the article, can be corroborated or otherwise from the narratives of such eminent scholars as Stirling, Hunter, Banerji, etc., who have properly utilized these palm-leaf records in the temple of Jagannath in their valuable works on Orissa. So no effort has been made to make any comments on the incidents narrated in the document. This document only indicates how topics of such interest are likely to be found among sources least expected and the usefulness of such study in the different groups of archives. Those interested in the works of the great Sanskrit scholar H. T. Colebrooke will be, perhaps, delighted to find the trace of this translation among the Survey of India records and the scholars in Orissa may get clue from the document to find out more information regarding Pandit Sambhu Chandra who compiled the account for the use of Colebrooke.

(17)

MACAULAY ON THE EXECUTIVE VIS-A-VIS THE LEGISLATURE UNDER THE CHARTER ACT OF 1833 by S. V. Desikachar, *Archivist, National Archives of India.*

The beginnings of Indian Legislature can be traced to the Charter Act of 1833 which provided for the appointment of a fourth member of the

Governor-General's Council for purposes of legislation. A controversy regarding the powers of the Legislative Council thus constituted, arose in 1834 at the very beginning of the implementation of the Act. Two minutes on the subject, one by Macaulay claiming for the Legislative Council all the powers and privileges of the British Parliament, and the other by Bentinck strongly opposing such claims, have been given in *extenso*.

(18)

HENRY AGUITON'S MEMORANDUM ON COCHIN CHINA (1800) by Shri Krishna Saxena, *Archivist, National Archives of India.*

During the last years of the eighteenth century when England and France were at war, an incident occurred which focussed the attention of the English East India Company on Cochin China. In the course of the inquiry into the incident, Henry Aguiton, one of the agents of His Majesty the King of Cochin China, submitted to the Governor-General Marquis Wellesley, a memorandum on Cochin China which gives the reader interesting details on the political and economic condition of that country prior to 1800. The memorandum is reproduced in the article.

(19)

LANGUAGE CONTROVERSY A CENTURY AGO by Dayal Dass, *Archivist, National Archives of India, Regional Office, Bhopal.*

In order to bring about economy in the administration of justice, the Court of Directors in June, 1835, asked for the sentiments of the Governor-General-of-India-in-Council on the necessity or expediency of continuing the use of Persian language in the Courts of Justice in Bengal Presidency. The Governor-General referred the matter to the Governments of Bengal and Agra, with instructions to consult the Sudder Courts of their respective Presidencies. The Judicial Officers under the Calcutta and the Allahabad Sudder Courts held divergent opinions on the subject. Some were in favour of retaining Persian as the language of record in the Courts, while others wanted that it should be replaced by "colloquial Hindostanee" or the "language of the people". Even the members of the Governor-General's Council expressed different views on the topic in separate minutes recorded by them. However, the controversy ended when it was communicated to the Court of Directors that no substantial saving would be achieved even by substituting "Hindostanee" or any other vernacular language in place of Persian as the language of judicial proceedings.

(20)

SHER SINGH AND THE FIRST WAR OF SUCCESSION FOR THE LAHORE THRONE, 1841 by M. L. Ahluwalia, Assistant Archivist, National Archives of India.

The records of the late Foreign and Political Department at the National Archives of India throw a good deal of light on the hitherto unknown facts relating to the war of succession which was fought between Mai Chand Kaur and Kanwar Sher Singh. Mai Chand Kaur was the widow of Maharaja Kharak Singh, who had died on 4 November 1840 followed on the next day by the death of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, the only son of the Maharaja. Kanwar Sher Singh was on the other hand one of the reputed brothers of Kharak Singh.

The contest for the throne between Mai Chand Kaur and Sher Singh was in fact a contest for power between the Sindhanwalas and the Dogras, the two rival families of Chiefs at the Lahore Durbar. At the death of Kharak Singh, Raja Dhyan Singh the Dogra Chief and the "wazir" attempted to place Sher Singh on the throne and in order to counteract his designs, the Sindhanwala Sardars Attar Singh and Ajit Singh prompted Mai Chand Kaur to put forward her own claim to the throne.

In the first instance the Sindhanwalas were successful in so far as on 2 December 1840, Mai Chand Kaur was declared as the Queen of the Punjab and on 8 December they had even forced Kanwar Sher Singh to leave Lahore and to return to his home town of Battala. But within a month and a half of the Kanwar's departure from Lahore, the circumstances became most favourable for his return to the capital and for making an armed attempt to capture power. The rule of the Queen was most unpopular. Most of the army was already in a state of open revolt against her. The civil administration had practically collapsed. Raja Dhyan Singh whom she was forced to keep as the "wazir" had become so much disappointed with her behaviour that on 4 January 1841, he had also left for his native town of Jammu leaving the Mai to rule with the help of Sindhanwalas and her other adherents.

Sher Singh availed of this opportunity and returned to Lahore on 14 January 1841 where a number of battalions at once joined him. On the midnight of 15 January, the Kanwar was in a position to capture the city without even firing a single shot. On 18 January the garrison within the Fort submitted after two days of tough opposition. On 20 January Sher Singh entered the Fort and formally occupied the throne and on 27 January the coronation ceremony of the new Maharaja was solemnised. The most interesting phase of the above episode was the secret attempt made by the Queen and her adherents to secure British help against Sher Singh. These

efforts had no doubt proved fruitless at that time but they had started an unending chain of secret intrigues which ultimately resulted in September 1843 in a series of ghastly murders in which Maharaja Sher Singh, his son Prince Partap Singh and his "wazir" Raja Dhyan Singh, all fell at the hands of the Sindhanwala Chiefs.

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THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL'S RECORDS: A NEW MINE OF HISTORICAL DATA by B. A. Saletore, Director of Archives, Government of India, New Delhi.

Events leading to the transfer of the records of the Surveyor-General to the National Archives. Three broad categories of records transferred to the National Archives of India: one comprising maps over 18,000; the second, consisting of Historical Survey of India Folios over 190; and the third, Historical Memoirs. Importance of maps and Historical Folios for historical research. The third category totalling over 340 described. The chronological division of historical memoirs from 1781 till 1880. The categories of memoirs described: about 13 kinds of memoirs mentioned, each being illustrated with two or three examples with dates and authors wherever possible. The importance of historical memoirs.

41 Edu.—800—4-2-56—PP.

