

ASSAM-SOCIAL MAP

Scale of Map 24 Miles = 1 inch

Scale of rectangles 1sq inch = 500,000 Persons

For Key to Map see Appendix II to Chapter XII

REFERENCES

1. Muslims
2. Hindus other than 3, 4, & 5
3. Hindu exterior castes
4. Hindu tea garden cooly castes
5. Hindus still possessing a tribal organization
6. Tribal religions
7. Christians belonging to hill tribes
8. Others

HINDUS

GOALPARA

KAMRUP

BALIPARA FRONTIER TRACT

DARRANG

NOOWGONG

GARO HILLS

KHASI & JAINTIA HILLS

NORTH CACHAR HILLS

SYLHET

NAGA HILLS

MANIPUR

LUSHAI HILLS

SADIYA FRONTIER TRACT

LAKHIMPUR

SIBSAGAR



Census of India, 1931

VOLUME III

ASSAM

PART I.—REPORT

By

C. S. MULLAN, M.A., I.C.S.

SHILLONG

PRINTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT, ASSAM GOVERNMENT PRESS,
AND PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CENTRAL PUBLICATION BRANCH, CALCUTTA.

1932

Price Rs. 5-2-0.

CS 104
7.2.24
NSZ 2.2.24
80290

Government of India Publications are obtainable from the Government of India Central Publication Branch, 3, Government Place, West, Calcutta, and from the following Agents:—

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INTRODUCTION.

1. *Mega biblion* said a famous librarian of the ancient library of Alexandria *mega kakon*—a great book is a great evil. A Census Report, must, I fear, by its very nature always be a bulky tome but I can, at least, do one thing to diminish the extent of the evil and that is to make the introduction as short as possible.

There are, however, a few things which must be stated in the introduction to a volume of this nature. In the first place I wish to make it perfectly clear that although this report is a Government publication the views and the deductions therein are entirely my own and I alone am responsible for them; it is indeed quite probable my views on certain matters, *e.g.*, the unemployment question among the educated classes may be officially regarded as heterodox.

Some reference is also necessary in the introduction to the previous censuses of Assam, to the general procedure of enumeration and tabulation and to the cost of the census. Finally—and this is the most pleasing task—I will take the opportunity to acknowledge the services of the numerous officials and non-officials without whose help and co-operation this report could not have appeared.

2. The census which was taken on the night of the 26th February 1931 was the seventh census of Assam. The first was held in 1872 when Assam formed part of the old province of Bengal. In 1872 Assam was constituted a Chief Commissionership and remained such until 1905 when it became merged into the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. During this period three censuses were held—in 1881, 1891 and 1901—and separate census reports for Assam were published for all these censuses.

In 1911, when the next census was held, Assam still formed part of the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam but as it again became a separate unit in the following year a separate report for Assam was published. The next census was held on the 18th March 1921—a few months after Assam had become a Governor's province under the Reformed Constitution of 1921—and the present census, as already mentioned, was taken on the 26th February 1931.

3. A detailed account of the administrative measures taken to bring about the census and to tabulate and compile the results is contained in a separate report known as the Administrative Report on the Census of Assam 1931—a document which is intended primarily for the use of the next Provincial Superintendent of Census.

But it seems desirable, for the information of the general reader, to give a short account of how the census was conducted.

Briefly it was done in this fashion:—The whole province was divided up into blocks and for each block an enumerator—a local man—was appointed. In the plains districts and in those parts of the hills where a synchronous census could be taken each block contained on the average 40 houses. Over the enumerator was a supervisor who was in charge of a circle which was a compact group of from 10 to 15 blocks or from 400—600 houses and above the supervisor was a Charge Superintendent who was responsible for the census of his Charge which might contain from 10 to 30 circles.

Charges and circles generally corresponded to well-known administrative units: Thus a *thana* or a group of *mauzas* might form a charge and a *chaukidari circle* or a *mauza* might be a circle: everything depended on local conditions and local convenience.

In the remoter hill areas where a synchronous census could not be held, blocks were much larger and a slightly different procedure had to be observed full details of which will be found in the Administrative Report.

Having divided up a district into charges, circles, and blocks the next duty of the Deputy Commissioner and his Census Subdivisional Officers was to train the army of supervisors and enumerators (the total number of enumerators in Assam was 46,000) and to arrange for the numbering of all houses in every block. This house numbering began in October 1930 and was completed in November 1930. Meanwhile the training of the staff continued and the writing up of the preliminary enumeration began in January 1931. The entries at this preliminary enumeration were generally written by the enumerators on blank paper and it was not until they had been checked by a superior officer that the first rough entries were copied into the proper census schedules.

Thus by end of January 1931 most of the census entries had already been made. February was a month of intense census activity and officers and clerks of all departments were kept busy checking the enumerators' preliminary records. Finally on the night of the 26th February 1931 each enumerator in the synchronous areas of the province visited every house in his block, added the names of new arrivals and crossed out the names of those absent or dead.

Special arrangements had of course, to be made for the census of railways, steamers, boats, travellers by road, etc.

On the morning of the 27th February the enumerators of each block met their circle supervisors at some convenient place in the middle of the circle and abstracts giving the number of houses and the population of each circle by sex were prepared and despatched by the quickest route (often by elephant) to the Charge Superintendents who made summaries for the whole charge and then forwarded the summaries to district or subdivisional headquarters. Finally a district total was prepared and was telegraphed to me and to the Census Commissioner for India.

Each subdivision of a district also telegraphed its provisional total to me as soon as it was ready. To show the speed with which the provisional totals were prepared I may mention that by the 29th Feby. i.e., two days after the census—16 subdivisions out of a total of 81 had wired me their results and by the 5th of March the total provisional population of the province was known and published. The final total population of Assam differed from the provisional total by only 181 per cent.

Meanwhile Central Offices had been got ready at Gauhati and Sylhet and soon after the census was over masses of schedules and census records began to pour in from the districts. These were all checked and arranged and the first process—known as slip-copying began. This is a process by which the entries made against each individual in the census schedules are copied on to different coloured slips, the colour depending on the religion of the person whose particulars are being copied. After the slip-copying came the sorting stage during which the slips, which had been made up into convenient boxes, were sorted for the particulars required for the various census tables. Then came the final stage—that of compilation or the compiling of the results achieved at the sorting stage into the actual form of tables published in Part II of this Report. Full details of all these processes are given in the Administrative Report of the Census.

4. It is stated in the introduction to the 1921 Census Report that the total *extra cost to Government* for the census of 1921 was Rs. 1,12,835 or Rs. 14-1-11 per 1,000 of the population. In this sum, however, neither the salary of the Superintendent of Census nor the salaries of permanent Government officers deputed to census work were included, the idea being that as these officers would have drawn their salaries even if there had been no census their actual employment on census duties did not cost the Government anything extra. Hence it would be quite wrong to compare the cost of the 1931 census, which was a central subject and entirely paid for by the Central Government (who even paid the Travelling Allowance of census officers for journeys performed exclusively on census work), with the figure of Rs. 1,12,835 given in 1921 as the extra cost to Government.

The actual total expenditure on the census of 1931 cannot be given exactly as certain printing accounts have not yet been finally adjusted but it will work out roughly at Rs. 1,92,000. Receipts (excluding altogether receipts for the sale of the Census Volumes) will amount to between Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 3,000 so that we may take Rs. 1,90,000 as the actual cost of the census. This works out at Rs. 20-8-8 per thousand of the population. If the cost of the census per thousand of the population had been calculated in the same fashion in 1921 the cost per thousand of the population would have been about Rs. 28. The decreased cost at this census represents the result of a continuous struggle to observe economy—a struggle from which, I confess, it will take me several months' leave to recover.

5. Unfortunately the census of 1931 coincided with the Civil Disobedience movement and the Deputy Commissioners of most plains districts had little time to devote personally to census matters. They did their best, however, to ensure the success of the census by placing reliable and hard working officers in charge of the census in the Sadr and out-lying subdivisions and to these officers, who were generally Extra Assistant Commissioners or Sub-Deputy Collectors, I owe a debt of thanks for their untiring efforts, in the face of many difficulties, to make the census of 1931 as successful as its predecessors. Where all did so well it may seem invidious to single out any names for special notice but I feel that I must mention the names of the census officers who, subject to the general control of the Deputy Commissioners concerned, were responsible for the census of the Jorhat (Sadr) and Hailakandi subdivisions which, from a census point of view, were the two best subdivisions in Assam. They are Mr. G. O. Bardalai, Extra Assistant Commissioner (Jorhat) and Babu Biswanath Chaudhuri, Sub-Deputy Collector (Hailakandi).

In the hill districts and frontier tracts the Deputy Commissioners and Political Officers took a very keen personal interest in the work and I am much indebted to them for the efficient way in which they conducted the census of the areas under their charge. To Mr. J. P. Mills, I. C. S., Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, I am particularly indebted: not only did he conduct the census of his own district with marked efficiency but he has also contributed several valuable appendices to the report and his advice on all matters ethnological has been invaluable. Nor, must I forget to mention Babu Upendra K. Chakravarti, Land Revenue Officer, Manipur State, who, subject to control of the President of the Durbar, conducted the census of the Manipur Valley both in 1921 and in 1931 and was in charge of the slip-copying work in the State on both these occasions.

I have also to thank the numerous Indian gentlemen who so kindly acted as honorary correspondents. Among them I would specially mention Professor K. M. Gupta and Babu Dinesh Chandra Datta both of the Murarichand College, Sylhet.

The diagrams and the small inset maps in the report were prepared under the supervision of Mr. E. G. Hardinge, Superintendent, Survey of India, Officer in charge of the Assam Drawing Office, who was also responsible for the drawing of the rectangles in the social and linguistic maps. I am much obliged to him for the great personal interest he has taken in the work.

Acknowledgments are also due to the Bengal Government for allowing the great mass of our forms to be printed in the Alipore Jail Press and to Mr. R. A. Duncan, officiating Press and Forms Manager, Bengal, who turned out millions of forms for us in a most efficient manner. The ten million slips used for slip-copying were supplied by the Central Government Press, Calcutta, who did the work speedily and well.

For the actual production of the Census Report and Tables the Assam Government Press is responsible. My thanks are due to Mr. Chari, the Superintendent, for the keen interest he has taken in the matter. It was Mr. Chari's ambition to turn out the volumes in a style equal to that of the Madras Report of 1921, the best printed of all the provincial reports. That we cannot claim such a high standard is due not to the man but to the machine.

Finally I owe more than I can say to my two Deputy Superintendents, Babu Suresh Chandra Sen, Sub-Deputy Collector, and Maulvi Muhammad Mahmud, Sub-Deputy Collector, the former of whom was in charge of the Central Census Office at Gauhati and the latter at Sylhet. Both these officers managed their large temporary—and occasionally unruly—staffs with remarkable tact and success. I am glad to note that Babu Suresh Chandra Sen, who was also Deputy Superintendent of Census in 1921, has since obtained a well-merited promotion to the rank of Sub-Deputy Collector.

My head clerk, Babu Iswar Chandra Purkayastha, has been all that a head clerk should be and more.

My own knowledge of mathematics being confined to the addition (generally incorrectly) of a bridge score I have had to rely on him for the preparation of the subsidiary tables and for the detailed examination of much of the statistical material. He has discharged his duties throughout in a most satisfactory manner.

I cannot conclude without mentioning the unfailing help and friendly advice which I received from my chief, Dr. Hutton.

Shillong,

19th July 1932.

G. S. MULLAN,

Superintendent, Census Operation, Assam.

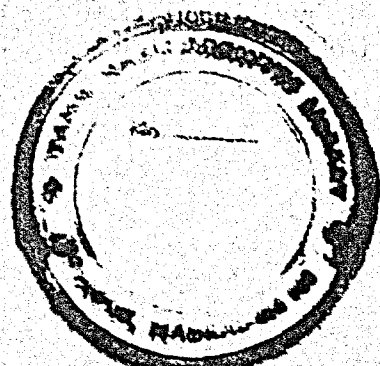


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REPORT

ON

THE CENSUS OF ASSAM, 1931.

CHAPTER I

DISTRIBUTION AND MOVEMENT OF THE POPULATION.

How many people, I wonder, are there in Assam who know what the device ^{The Province of} at the top of this page represents. Probably not half a dozen. Yet this is the Assam. lawful coat of arms of the Province of Assam granted in the year 1922 under the seal of the Garter Principal King of Arms.

Know ye—so runs the parchment grant—that I the said Garter Principal King of Arms do by these presents declare that the Armorial Ensigns following, that is to say:—OR, a RHINOCEROS SABLE, as the same in the margin hereof more plainly depicted, do of right belong and appertain unto THE PROVINCE OF ASSAM to be borne for the said Province on Seals, Shields, Banners, Flags or otherwise, according to the Laws of Arms.

This, say you, is a thing I never knew before and very interesting but what has it got to do with the Census. Nothing, I confess, except to be a bait to your interest and to introduce you to the subject of this report, which is Assam.

Now any ordinary atlas shows the boundaries of Assam and hence it is rather surprising to find that many residents in the province when speaking of Assam mean something quite different from the area marked Assam on the map. Thus a planter living in Sylhet does not ordinarily consider himself to be living in Assam at all but he would refer to a friend of his who lived in the Brahmaputra or Assam Valley as living in Assam. I have myself often heard a planter in the Surma Valley say that he was "going up to Assam". Even the Calcutta newspapers pay scant attention to our administrative unity and the "Assam Teas" whose prices they quote mean to them and to their readers teas from the Assam Valley only and not teas from Cachar or Sylhet.

But in this report Assam is the Assam of the maps and includes Sylhet and Cachar and all other British districts subject to the authority of the Government of Assam as well as the State of Manipur and the twenty-five petty States in the Khasi Hills which for the sake of convenience have been grouped together under the heading of the "Khasi States". Except for the incorporation within the province of some 900 square miles of sparsely populated and previously unadministered country

on the borders of the Naga Hills, the Lushai Hills and the Sadiya Frontier Tract, the area dealt with in this report is the same as that treated in the Census Report of 1921. The only difference that will be found is that the Khasi States have now for the first time been shown separately from the British portion of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills district. There have been few changes in the boundaries of districts during the decade and those that have taken place have been comparatively unimportant. The only two worthy of mention are the transfer of the Diger mauza from the Naga Hills to the North Cachar subdivision and the transfer of some Abor villages from Lakhimpur to the Sadiya Frontier Tract. No new districts or subdivisions have been created but the increase of population has necessitated the formation of several new Thanas, particularly in the immigrant areas of Goalpara and Nowgong. For all practical purposes, therefore, the Assam of this report is exactly the same as it was in 1921. It will be noticed, however, that the areas of the districts differ considerably from those given in previous reports and tables. This is due almost entirely to the fact that a large amount of topographical work has been done in the province by the Survey of India during the last ten years and that there are now up-to-date topographical maps of almost the whole of Assam from which the areas of the districts and subdivisions can be accurately calculated.

Natural
divisions.

2. The province falls naturally into three divisions—the Brahmaputra or Assam Valley, the Surma Valley and the Hills. These three divisions have been taken, as at previous censuses, as the basis of discussion of many of the census statistics and the subsidiary tables in this report are arranged according to these three natural divisions. In the volume of tables, however, the statistics have been shown for administrative convenience according to administrative divisions. The three natural divisions of Assam have been so well described in previous reports that it is unnecessary to repeat the information here. An excellent description will be found in Chapter I of the Assam Census Report of 1901. There is, however, one fact which previous census reports have not, I think, taken sufficiently into account. This is that in the middle of the Brahmaputra Valley there is a large isolated mountainous block, over 3,000 square miles in area, known as the Mikir Hills. This block of hills is separated from the main Assam Range by the valleys of the Dhansiri and Kopili rivers and is divided for administrative purposes between the districts of Nowgong and Sibsagar, the Nowgong portion being known as the Nowgong Mikir Hills and the Sibsagar portion as the Sibsagar Mikir Hills. This block of hills should logically form a separate subdivision and for census purposes should be included in the Hills natural division but this has never been done at any previous census and on account of various boundary difficulties I have not done so in this report. I have, however, shown separately in map No. 1 the whole of the notified "backward tract" area of the Nowgong and Sibsagar Mikir Hills in order to illustrate the small density of this area and the real density of the regularly administered portions of Sibsagar and Nowgong districts. A foot note has also been inserted to Subsidiary Table I appended to this chapter and certain statistics of the Mikir Hills have been given on the fly leaf of Provincial Table I.

The popu-
lation dealt
with.

3. The population dealt with in this report represents, in the greater part of the province, the population actually present within the area specified on the night of the 26th of February 1931. The population of a particular district, subdivision or town includes, therefore, not only the ordinary residents who were actually found in their homes on that particular night but also temporary visitors from elsewhere as well as vagrants, pilgrims, travellers and, in fact, everybody who was actually found within the particular area on the night of the census.

In most of the hill districts, however, a synchronous census was impossible and in the Naga Hills, the Manipur Hills, and in most of the Garo and Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the frontier tracts the population dealt with is the *de jure* population, that is to say, the persons ordinarily resident within these areas. These were enumerated at varying times from a few days to a few months before the final census day according to local possibilities. The total number of persons thus enumerated amounts to 781,000.

4. There is no direct way of ascertaining the degree of accuracy of the census. At the most, all one can do is to give an opinion. In the non-synchronous areas the degree of accuracy was, I am convinced, extremely high and the total population ascertained under the non-synchronous system would probably not differ by more than a few hundreds from the number that would have been ascertained had a synchronous census been held. The schedules in the non-synchronous areas and in the hill districts in which a synchronous census was held were most carefully written up and local officers took a keen interest in the work. In the plains, where the census was entirely synchronous, it should, theoretically, have been almost impossible—with our elaborate system of inspection and check—for many people to have escaped the census net. But it must be remembered that the enumerators got no pay for their work which many would certainly have avoided but for the fear of prosecution. Hence a certain amount of carelessness and inaccuracy must be expected.

Accuracy
of the
census.

Mr. Lloyd in 1921 considered that the population ascertained by the census of that year would not differ by more than a few persons in a million from the real total. I would not like to be so optimistic. All I can say is that the census of 1931 was, to the best of my belief, as accurate as any previous census but that I would be extremely satisfied if it could be proved that the error was not more than one per mille.

5. The statement in the margin shows the area in square miles, the population and the density of Assam and of its chief administrative divisions. The areas given for the Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tracts are the administered areas. Beyond these administered areas lie large tracts of wild and mountainous country the outer boundaries of which have never been defined and which are not administered at all. To give some idea of the enormous tracts of unadministered country lying beyond the limits of administration I may mention that the total area mapped by the Survey of India in the Sadiya Frontier Tract amounts to 18,473 square miles and in the Balipara Frontier Tract to 9,537 square miles. The administered area of Assam is thus roughly as large as England and Wales *plus* a third of Scotland, but has a population less than a quarter of England and Wales and a density equal to that of the Central Provinces but much less than that of most of the major Indian provinces. The only major provinces, in fact, which have a density less than that of Assam are Burma and the North-West Frontier Province.

Area,
population
and
density.

	Area.	Population.	Density.
ASSAM	67,334	9,247,857	137
Surma Valley and Hill Division (including Khasi States).	27,870	3,888,047	140
Assam Valley Division.	27,084	4,855,711	179
Frontier Tracts ...	3,760	58,493	16
Manipur State ...	8,820	445,606	52

Why Assam should be so thinly populated will be at once evident from the map at the beginning of this volume. The coloured rectangles on that map are drawn to the scale of 500,000 persons to the square inch. It will be seen at once that in all the hill districts the rectangles are very small indeed and that the hill districts occupy a large proportion of the total area of the province. In fact over half of Assam's total area of 67,000 square miles consists of hilly and mountainous country which never did and never will support a dense population. The map shows, also, that the plains districts of the Assam Valley are much less densely populated than the Surma Valley. The reasons for this are largely historical and can be found in Gait's History of Assam. Briefly, the civil wars and disturbances which marked the decay of the Ahom Kingdom and the subsequent invasion and capture of the Assam Valley by the Burmese—who massacred tens of thousands and are said to have carried off with them 30,000 slaves—ruined the country and reduced the surviving inhabitants to abject misery.

The following diagram compares the density of Assam and its natural divisions with that of some other Indian provinces and England and Wales :—

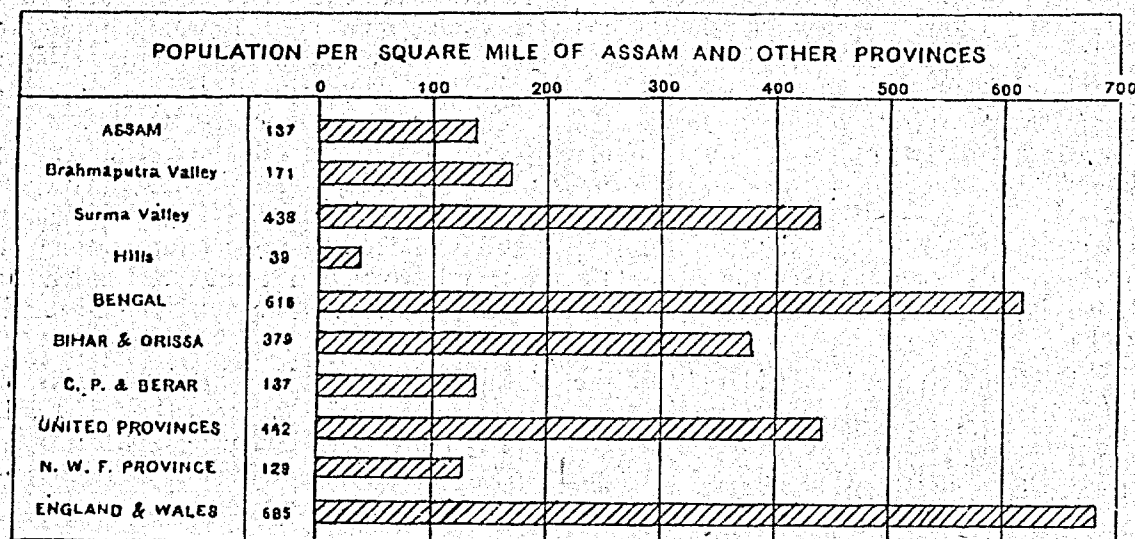
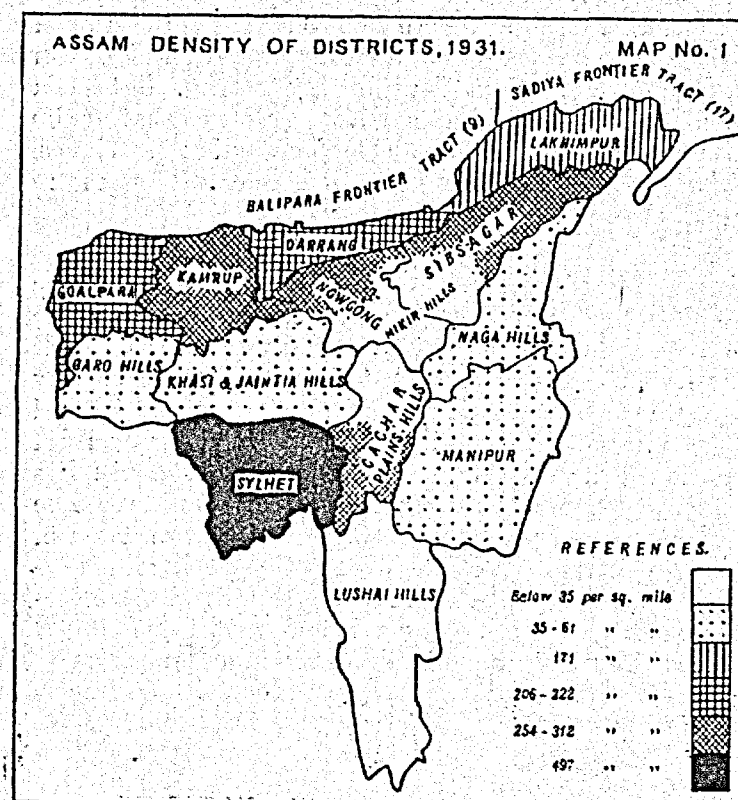


Diagram No. 1

The great difference between the densities of the three natural divisions—the Brahmaputra (or Assam) Valley, the Surma Valley and the Hills is very clear from this diagram and is further illustrated by the map on this page which shows the density of the individual districts of the province. The range of hills which divides the Surma Valley from the Assam Valley and the hills which form the barrier between Assam and Burma on the East can be picked out at once on this map—they are all white or white with a few dots—whereas the plains districts are all shaded and, as can be seen from the references on the map, are much more densely populated.

On the first page of this report I have reproduced the coat of arms of Assam.



more than seventeen and a half millions—a figure which on an assumed continuous decennial increase of 14 per cent. cannot be reached for another fifty years.

6. The figures in Imperial Table II which show the variations in the population for the last fifty years do not show the real growth of the population of the 67,000 square miles of country which we call Assam to-day. The absolute figures given in that table are, in fact, of little value unless we remember that considerable areas have been added to the province since 1872 and that no allowance for the population of these added areas has been made in the table. Further-more the 1872 census—the first held in Assam—was extremely inaccurate and that of 1881 was also defective. The census of 1891, which was taken with the greatest care, is really the first census of Assam on which we can confidently rely but even for that year we have no figures for Manipur State, as all the census papers were destroyed during the rebellion of that year.

In 1891, also, the Southern Lushai Hills formed part of Bengal and were not censused and the population of the North Lushai Hills for that year is merely an estimate. A cursory glance at the figures in Imperial Table II is apt, therefore, to give a totally wrong impression as they make no allowances for the inaccuracy of the old censuses or for the inclusion of new areas in the province since 1872. There are two ways in which we can examine the rate at which the province has grown. The first is to leave out all new territory added to the province during a particular decade and to see how much the previously censused area has increased. The other way is to endeavour to calculate the population which the area censused at the present census had at all previous censuses.

The following table shows the calculation based on the first of these methods :—

Period.	Real growth.	Increase shown by the census.
1	2	3
1872-1881	9.1 per cent.	23.6 per cent.
1881-1891	9.2 per cent.	6.8 per cent.
1891-1901	5.9 per cent.	11.3 per cent.
1901-1911	14.6 per cent.	15.2 per cent.
1911-1921	12.8 per cent.	13.2 per cent.
1921-1931	15.6 per cent.	15.7 per cent.

The reason why the percentage of real growth differs from that shown by the census is due to the fact that the first two censuses were inaccurate and allowance has been made in the table for the probable amount of inaccuracy and that from 1891 onwards (from which date the census figures are accurate) new territory has been incorporated in the province in each decade. Thus between 1901 and 1911 a large number of Sema and Eastern Angami villages with a total population of nearly 40,000 was added to the British District of the Naga Hills from previously unadministered country. What the population of these particular villages was in 1891 and earlier it is impossible even to guess. They may have increased or, on the other hand, they may have lost heavily as the result of continual tribal warfare or the outbreak of some epidemic. We simply do not know and there is no means of finding out. Hence in the calculation of the real growth of the population of the province any new additions made to the province during the particular decade mentioned have been excluded.

What was the actual population at previous censuses of the 67,000 square miles of country which constitutes the Assam of to-day it is impossible to tell with absolute accuracy. The table in the margin is an estimate and all I can say is that it cannot

	Year.	Population.
Population of Assam as it is to-day at previous censuses.	1891	5,844,000
	1901	6,200,000
	1911	7,098,000
	1921	8,005,000
	1931	9,247,857

incorporation.

The figures given above show that no matter how the calculation is made the worst decade ever experienced was that of 1891-1901 when *kala azar* wrought havoc in the central districts of the Assam Valley and wiped out a quarter of the entire population of the Nowgong district and that the period 1921-31 has given us a record increase in the population of the province.

The past decade, political events.

7. The past decade started badly with the non-co-operation and *khilafat* movements in full swing and ended badly in the midst of the agitation known as the civil disobedience movement. The non-co-operation movement was finally suppressed or rather driven underground by the middle of 1922 and the province enjoyed a period of political tranquillity until 1930 when the civil disobedience campaign was inaugurated by Congress. Except for these growing-pains of national consciousness the decade was politically an uneventful one. There were no external wars or insurrections in the hills (as in the previous decade) to disturb our domestic peace and the wild men in the unadministered areas beyond the frontier were generally well behaved and gave no trouble.

Climate and Crops, 1921-31.

8. It will be seen from Subsidiary Table I appended to this chapter that 70 per cent. of the cultivated area of Assam is under rice, a crop which depends upon an abundant and evenly distributed rainfall. During the decade the rainfall was generally normal and crops were, on the whole, satisfactory. In 1929, however, abnormal rainfall in the hills caused unprecedented floods in the Surma Valley and a very high flood in the Nowgong district. The damage done to crops and cattle by the Surma Valley flood of June 1929 was very great and the drain upon the Government purse proved very heavy. In 1930, also, there were severe floods in the Assam Valley which submerged all the riverain mauzas and did considerable damage to crops over a wide area. Except for these floods and for a severe earthquake in July 1930 which had its centre somewhere in the Goalpara district, Nature was kind during the decade and even the floods and the earthquake had no appreciable effect upon the growth or movement of the population.

Prices of agricultural produce were very high after the Great War and though they fell slightly in 1922 they remained high until 1928. This long run of high prices for agricultural foodstuffs proved beneficial to the cultivators but was a source of hardship to persons with small fixed incomes. A result of this can be seen in the general revision, during the earlier half of the decade, of the scale of pay of all Government servants in the province. In 1929-30 there were signs of a coming storm. In that year the price of paddy and jute fell heavily, trade was dull and everywhere there was a scarcity of ready money. This, however, proved to be only the prelude to the economic blizzard which blew throughout the world in 1930-1931 and which is still raging. The revenue year 1930-1931 was a period of unrelieved economic depression; prices of all agricultural produce were extremely low and cultivators were hard put to it to obtain sufficient ready cash to pay their dues. The tea industry—the main industry of the province—which had been in low water since 1929 was severely affected by the universal depression and this meant that little work was available on the gardens for those living outside, thus intensifying the general distress. The provincial finances, which had been left with only a small balance as the result of the disastrous Surma Valley floods of 1929, reeled before this new blow and the financial year 1930-1931 closed with a deficit of nearly 15 lakhs.

9. The tea industry is so vitally connected with the economic life of Upper Assam, Cachar, and a considerable part of Sylhet that its prosperity is a matter of the utmost concern to the province. Tea is the true economic barometer of Assam. During the decade this barometer has exhibited violent fluctuations; starting with "Stormy"; it pointed rapidly to "Fair" then to "Very fine", remained for some time at "Set Fair" and finally dropped rapidly to "Very Stormy". During the years of the Great War the industry had flourished but after the war there was a dislocation of trade, due largely to the closure of the Russian market and a serious depression set in. This depression continued in 1921 and was taken advantage of in certain districts by the leaders of the non-co-operation movement to unsettle the labour force on the tea gardens. At this time the rise in wages on the gardens had not been commensurate with the general rise of prices which took place during and after the war and the standard of living of the coolies had undoubtedly been lowered. The resulting economic discontent of the labour force combined with the efforts of political agitators resulted in a large exodus of coolies from the Karimganj Subdivision of Sylhet in May 1921 and to strikes and other labour disturbances in other tea districts. In the following year the condition of the industry showed signs of a strong recovery; political conditions had returned to normal, the market was good and the price of tea began to soar. Then followed the boom years of 1923 and 1924 and the industry flourished exceedingly and remained prosperous until 1927. In 1928, however, a drastic change took place. Due to over production and the growing competition of foreign grown teas the price of tea fell heavily in that year and the condition of the industry deteriorated still further in 1929 and 1930 culminating in the world-wide depression and general collapse of international trade which took place in 1931.

The following table gives the average Calcutta prices in annas and pice per lb. for Assam Valley and Surma Valley teas since 1920:—

	1920.	1921.	1922.	1923.	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.	1929.	1930.	1931.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Assam Valley	6-3	11-9	14-5	15-10	16-8	14-9	12-9	15-5	12-3	10-9	10-1	7-10
Surma Valley	8-7	8-3	12-0	13-11	14-9	11-8	11-5	13-4	9-11	8-2	7-7	4-9

In these figures can be read the whole economic condition of the industry for the last 12 years.

The effect of this sequence of depression, boom, depression on the acreage and population statistics of the industry is illustrated by the table below which shows how very moderate the expansion of the industry has been compared with the great expansion which took place between 1911 and 1921:—

	1911.	1921.	1931.	Percentage increase, 1911-21.	Percentage increase, 1921-31.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Area under tea in acres	360,000	420,000	434,000	16-7	3-3
Population censused on tea gardens	702,000	922,000	980,000	31-3	6-3

10. Apart from tea the only other industries of any importance in the province are oil and coal. The Assam Oil Company whose head-quarters are at Digboi in the Lakhimpur district have considerably extended their field of operations during the last ten years and 146 new oil wells were drilled during the period. Modern plant and equipment have been installed both in the field and the refinery and the output of crude oil which was just over 5 million gallons in 1921 amounted to 53-4 million gallons in

Other Industries.

1931. At Badarpur and Masimpur in the Cachar district there are oil fields managed by the Burma Oil Company. The output of crude oil from these fields is small compared with the outturn of the Digboi fields and amounted only to 2·8 million gallons in 1930 and to just short of 2 million gallons in 1931.

Lakhimpur district is also the centre of the coal industry of Assam which has expanded to some extent during the decade. There are now seven mines in the district and more than 300,000 tons of coal were extracted in 1930. The only other important coal mine in the province is at Borjan in the Naga Hills. The other industrial concerns in the province are hardly worth mentioning. There is a Swedish Match factory at Dhubri which employs about 300 workers and scattered over the province there are a few saw mills, rice mills, oil mills, engineering workshops and printing presses but they are small and of little importance. The position of cottage industries in the province was examined by the Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee in 1929-1930, in the course of their investigations into the credit facilities for small industries. The Committee arrived at the general conclusion that the cottage industries of Assam were not progressing. "In the light of the information we have received from witnesses and other sources," says the Report of the Committee, "we have no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that cottage industries are stagnant and indeed have taken a step backward".

Social prejudice, innate conservatism and failure to adopt improved methods as well as indolence are cited by the Committee as the reasons which have led to a decline in the cottage industries of the province.

11. The total settled area of the British portion of the province has increased from 14,444 square miles in 1921 to 15,733 square miles in 1931. By the settled area is meant all lands settled permanently, periodically, or annually as well as lands settled under special rules and waste land grants for tea cultivation. Such lands are almost entirely confined to the plains as in the hills house tax or poll-tax is generally paid instead of land revenue and practically all land in the hills which is not included in reserved forests is, at least technically, unsettled and unclassified State forest.

For this large increase of 1,289 square miles in the settled area the Assam Valley is almost entirely responsible, the increase in the settled area of the Surma Valley amounting to only 30 square miles. The taking up of waste lands by Eastern Bengal immigrants contributed largely to this great increase in the settled area of the Assam Valley. A vast horde of these land hungry people have swarmed into that valley during the last ten years—chiefly into the districts of Kamrup and Nowgong—and large areas of unsettled waste lands in those districts have been occupied by them. Extension of cultivation by the indigenous inhabitants and colonization by ex-tea garden coolies was, of course, also responsible for the expansion of the settled area.

12. The decade 1921-31 has probably been the best decade in the history of Assam from the point of view of public health and stands in remarkable contrast with that of 1911-21 which was notorious for the universal influenza epidemic of 1918-1919. The main feature of the present decade has been the successful campaign against *kala azar*. This dreadful disease first showed signs of recrudescence about 1917 and the subject of its control occupied almost the entire activities of the Public Health Department for most of the period. By 1925—thanks to the system of mass inoculation by *urea stibamine*—the disease was well under control and since then the number of cases has been steadily diminishing. The only other epidemic which affected the province at all severely during the decade was cholera. There were fairly serious outbreaks of this disease in 1924, 1926 and 1927, of which the 1924 outbreak was the most severe. The use of anti-cholera vaccine has become increasingly popular and it is remarkable that, as a result of the strenuous efforts of the public health authorities, no cholera outbreak followed in the wake of the great floods which devastated Cachar and Sylhet in 1929. The

vital statistics of the period are fully analysed in the appendix to Chapter IV. The statistics show that the birth rate has remained steady throughout the decade and that there has been a remarkable fall in the death rate since 1925. As a result, the rate of survival or the excess of births over deaths has been very high since that year.

13. A very great deal has been done since the last census towards improving provincial communications. Branches of the Assam-Bengal Railway have been opened between Katakhal and Lalaghat via Hailakandi; between Furkating Junction and Jorhat via Badlipar; between Simulguri Junction and Khowang via Sibsagar; between Karimganj and the Longai Valley; between Shaistaganj Junction and Habiganj and Balla and between Senchoa Junction (near Nowgong) and Mairabari. An extension line from Tangla to Rangapara in the Darrang district is at present under construction by the Eastern Bengal Railway.

Practically nothing was done during the first five years of the decade towards improving the road communications of the province though the ever increasing growth of motor traffic urgently called for a comprehensive and systematic policy of improvement. The policy for sometime in favour with the Local Government of handing over as many roads as possible to Local Boards for maintenance proved, however, to be most ill-advised and undoubtedly retarded for some years the development of decent motorable roads. Fortunately the whole policy came under review in 1926 and it was then found that, particularly in the case of metalled roads, the Local Boards had neither the staff nor the equipment for carrying out the work which had been entrusted to them and that many roads transferred to them had deteriorated badly. The previous policy of Government was then entirely reversed and a comprehensive programme of road improvement, to be financed principally from loans, was sanctioned. In accordance with this programme many new bridges have been erected, many stretches of road—previously almost impassable in the rains—have been metalled and, in short, an enormous improvement has been effected all over the province.

Unfortunately owing to the financial crisis which occurred at the end of the decade it has been found necessary to postpone most of the schemes in hand but the work of constructing a new road from Shillong to Sylhet—the most ambitious project in the Road Board's programme—is to proceed.

14. It is a pity that the closing years of the past decade should have been marred by the all pervading economic gloom for it is human to forget past benefits in the midst of present disappointments. And the decade 1921-31—badly though we may now think of it—was in many ways a much kindlier period than that of 1911-21. In the first place and above all we must render thanks for the fact that 1921-31 was, on the whole, a very healthy decade and that there was no dreadful epidemic like the influenza scourge of 1918-19. In the second place the decade was not without a fair measure of prosperity. The Tea Industry did very well indeed between 1922 and 1925 and made handsome profits. The ordinary cultivator benefited up to 1928 from the high price of agricultural produce though the benefit was neutralized to a considerable extent by the increased prices which he had to pay for his clothes and other manufactured articles. It is, of course, difficult to say with any certainty what the present economic position of the average cultivator is compared with what it was ten years ago. My own impression is that up to 1929 there was little real change. The sudden slump at the end of the decade has, however, hit him hard and his economic position at the time of the census was, I think, a good deal worse than it was in 1921. He is, however, alive and well, with sufficient food to eat and a house to live in, and that is more than can be said of many thousands in Europe and America at the present time. A disquieting feature about the decade was the growth in unemployment among the educated classes. This is dealt with at some length in Chapter VIII of the Report.

The whole economic position of the province was surveyed by the Assam Banking Enquiry Committee in 1929 and the following extract from their report (written before the recent slump) is of considerable interest.

"On the whole we are inclined to think that agricultural indebtedness in the plains districts is increasing. The majority of us believe that cultivators are less hard working now-a-days. The desire for social advancement, in so far as it means less manual labour, is a factor of some importance. Then there seems to be little doubt that cottage industries are on the decline. We were told, for example, that the rearing of the *muga* worm meant too much trouble. Necessaries have risen in price, but against this has to be set the increased price of agricultural produce. Paddy and mustard fetch about twice the price they did twenty years ago. In some districts in the Assam Valley, as well as in Sylhet, holdings are becoming too small to be economically profitable. Connected with this is the high price that has to be paid for additional land.....Cattle mortality is heavy even in normal times, apart from floods; the people do not look after their cattle which often get insufficient or unsuitable fodder, degenerate, become less capable of work, and die earlier; all this means an increased demand for plough cattle with the result that the cultivator has to pay an enhanced price for them. It is clear that expenditure on luxuries is on the increase, and the temptation to indulge in them is steadily growing. We have, in many places, a higher standard of living, and this means increased expenditure. The price of opium is much more than it was 20 years ago but, as against this, we have to set the fact that rations have been and will continue to be reduced. We have evidence, however, that the illicit sale of opium at a very high price is by no means uncommon. So far as we can see the exploitation of the cultivators by the village mahajans, such as Marwaris and Telis, and by village money lenders in both Valleys, is on the increase. This is particularly the case where advances are taken on promise of repayment of crop. The evidence as to whether more is being spent in ceremonies, such as marriage and *Sradha* is not conclusive. The price of the articles purchased for ceremonies is, at any rate, higher..... The root of the matter is that the average agriculturist has not learned the importance of saving. He has got no thought for the morrow and he trusts to Providence or *Kismet* to see that he and his family are provided for".

Growth of the population: 1911-21 and 1921-31 compared.

15. In the decade 1911-21 there were three main factors which added largely to the population and one which greatly decreased it. The plus factors were:—

- (i) The natural growth of the old population.
- (ii) The large expansion of the tea industry which imported 769,000 coolies into the province.
- (iii) The immigration of Eastern Bengal colonists and Nepalis.

Against these must be set off the terrible influenza epidemic of 1918-19 which was estimated to have carried off 200,000 persons.

The net result of the interaction of these factors was that the total population of Assam increased in 1911-21 by 13·2 per cent. or by 929,725 persons of whom 411,941 were gained by migration and 517,784 represented the increase in the natural population. Immigration, therefore, accounted for nearly half the total provincial increase in that decade.

In the decade just past conditions have been very different. The tea industry has been subject to violent fluctuations of fortune and judged by the acreage under tea and the number of persons censused on tea gardens it has expanded at a very moderate rate. As we shall see later the Industry lost a very large number of coolies as the result of the economic and political troubles at the beginning of the decade and the 422,000 coolies imported into the province during 1921-31—many of whom were short-term coolies who returned to their homes on the expiry of their agreements—were not enough to fill the gaps caused by death, desertion and discharge. This is the first great difference between the conditions of 1921-31 and the previous decade. The second is that there has been no violent epidemic and public health has been decidedly

good. Hence we find that the natural population of the province has grown at twice the rate it did in 1911-21. The only point of resemblance, in fact, between the two decades is that the third factor mentioned above—the immigration of Eastern Bengal colonists and Nepalis—has continued.

The total increase in the population of the province since the 1921 census is 1,257,611 of whom 15,711 were censused in areas which were added to the province during the decade. The percentage increase on the 1921 population is thus 15·7 per cent. The marginal table shows how this increase—the largest there has ever been in the census history of Assam—has been distributed and demonstrates the extra-ordinary difference between the two decades.

	Increase, Per cent. 1921-31.	Increase, Per cent. 1911-21.
Assam	1,257,611 15·7	929,725 13·2
Brahmaputra Valley excluding Frontier Tracts	853,737 22·4	723,226 23·4
Frontier Tracts	13,578 30·2	25,510 131·5
Surma Valley (Plains)	220,300 7·2	98,227 3·3
Hills	169,996 15·6	82,762 8·2

Looking at the figures it will be seen that the population of the Hills, where immigration is not a feature of much importance, has increased at nearly double the rate of the decade 1911-21 and that the Surma Valley—where the amount of immigration and emigration is small compared with the size of the population—by over double the rate, while the Brahmaputra Valley where immigration has always been a matter of very great importance, has increased very considerably but not at quite the same rate as in the previous decade. It thus appears *prima facie* that the large increase at the present census is due much more to the natural growth of the population than it was in the previous decade.

As we know the number of emigrants from Assam and immigrants into Assam it is possible to calculate the "natural population" of the province. This expression "natural population" is a common term used by statisticians to indicate the number of persons living at a particular time who were born in a particular area and is obtained by adding the number of emigrants to the total population enumerated in the area in question and then subtracting the number of immigrants. Unfortunately on this occasion, for reasons of economy, birth-place was not sorted for by districts but by provinces only. As a result I cannot give the figures for the natural population of any district or natural division in Assam but only for the province as a whole. This amounts to 7,911,948—an increase of 16·8 per cent. on the natural population of 1921. Let us now compare the figures of the increase in the natural population as disclosed at this census with the corresponding figures for the last two decades.

The following table shows the position:—

1901-1911.			1911-21.			1921-31.		
Total increase.	Gain by migration.	Increase of natural population.	Total increase.	Gain by migration.	Increase of natural population.	Total increase.	Gain by migration.	Increase of natural population.
933,776	77,739	855,777	929,725	411,941	517,784	1,257,611	121,649	1,135,963

The figures in this table show that in 1901-1911 the gain to the province by migration was comparatively small and the growth of the natural population was large whereas in 1911-21 the gain by migration was very large indeed and the variation of the natural population was not very great. In the decade 1921-31 the pendulum has swung back to the conditions of 1901-11 and we find that the gain by migration has been small and the variation in the natural population has been large. As the number of emigrants from Assam at each of these censuses has been almost exactly the same (roughly 75,000) the figures bring out clearly the great difference in the volume of migration into the province between the present decade and the previous one. It is interesting to observe how very similar 1921-31 has been to 1901-11 as regards the growth of the natural population. In 1901-11 the natural population of the province increased by 15·8 per cent. against a total provincial increase of 15·2 per cent. (or, if allowance be made for the large addition of new territory in that decade, by 15·1 per cent. against a provincial increase of 14·6 per cent.); in 1911-21 the natural increase was only 8·3 per cent. against a provincial increase of 13·2 per cent. and in

1921-31 the natural increase has been 16.8 per cent. against a total provincial increase of 15.7 per cent. The reason for the comparatively small increase in the natural population during 1911-21 was undoubtedly the great influenza epidemic of 1918-19, which was estimated to have carried off 200,000 people. Had there been no epidemic in that decade it is not unreasonable to assume that the natural population would have increased by at least 14 per cent. Had it done so there would have been 358,000 more people in Assam in 1921 than were actually enumerated. It seems, therefore, probable that the province lost a good deal more than 200,000 people from the influenza epidemic and that both the number of deaths from influenza and its effect on the birth rate were underestimated at the time.

Comparison with vital statistics.

16. We have seen that the natural population of the province has increased during 1921-31 at twice the rate of the preceding decade. It will, therefore, be of interest to examine the figures of vital statistics for the last ten years and to see what conclusions we can draw from them. In subsidiary table IV appended to this chapter the registered vital statistics of those districts where they are fully maintained are set out side by side with the increases in the population disclosed by the census. It is, of course, obvious that if the registration of vital statistics were accurate and if the amount of immigration and emigration were negligible the actual population of each district should be obtainable at any time by adding to the population figures of the previous census the figures of the excess of births over deaths.

Immigration, however, is such an important factor in the Assam Valley that, even if registration were accurate, the actual population would always be much higher—on account of the arrival of immigrants—than the population calculated by adding the excess of births over deaths to the old population. It might, however, be supposed that the increase shown by the vital statistics would correspond, at least approximately, with the figures for the natural population, i.e., the actual population minus immigrants plus emigrants. At the last census this was not so and there was a very great difference indeed between the two sets of figures. The matter was examined at length in Appendix A of the Census Report for 1921 and Mr. Lloyd came to the conclusion that the very great divergence between the census figures and the figures for vital statistics was due to two causes:—

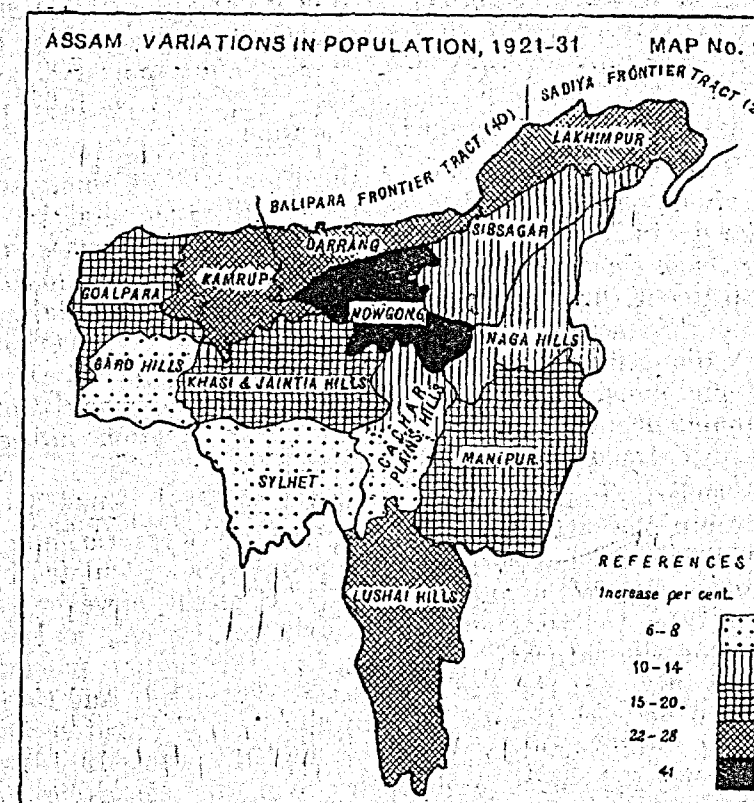
- (1) the deaths of outsiders who had come to the province in the intercensal period and
- (2) unequal inaccuracy in the vital record by the omission of births more often than deaths.

On this occasion I cannot give the natural population of individual districts or natural divisions and as vital statistics are not maintained fully in all parts of the province no comparison can be made between the increase in the natural population as disclosed by the census and the increase as given by the record of vital statistics. It is, however, interesting to observe that in the Surma Valley, where immigration and emigration have roughly been equal, the excess of births over deaths corresponds fairly closely with the census increase in population. On the other hand, the excess of births over deaths in the Assam Valley is only about a quarter of the increase in the population disclosed by the census. The divergence between the census increase and the excess of births over deaths is particularly noticeable in Kamrup and Nowgong districts, where we know that immigration of Eastern Bengal colonists has been very heavy. A comparison between subsidiary table IV and the corresponding table of the last census confirms my previous statement that the past decade has been a very healthy one. In 1911-21 the excess of births over deaths in the Surma Valley was only 42,000 against an increase in the actual population of 98,000 and in the Assam Valley the excess of births over deaths was only 18,000 against an increase in actual population of 723,000. In the whole area under registration the excess of births over deaths amounted, therefore, to only 60,000 in 1911-21 against a total increase in population of 821,000 whereas in 1921-31 the total excess of births over deaths is 451,000 against a total increase in population of 1,074,000. Assuming that the degree of accuracy or inaccuracy in the registration of vital statistics has remained constant these figures show clearly that during the past decade there has been an enormous excess of births over deaths compared with the excess shown in 1911-21.

and as all these births took place in Assam and were additions to the natural population it is clear that the natural population did increase at a much higher rate than in the previous decade.

17. I now proceed to examine more closely the variation in the population of

the three great natural divisions into which Assam falls—the Assam Valley, the Surma Valley and the Hills. But before doing so I invite the reader's attention to the map on this page which shows the percentage variations in the population of all the districts. It will be seen at a glance that the greatest increase has taken place in the Assam Valley particularly in the centre, that the increase in the Surma Valley (Sylhet and Cachar plains) has been moderate and that the various hill districts have increased at



very different rates: note, for example, the great difference in the rates of increase between the Garo and the Lushai Hills.

18. The Brahmaputra or, as it is generally styled, the Assam Valley consists of the districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Nowgong, Darrang, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, and the administered areas of the Balipara and Sadiya Frontier Tracts. The hilly portions of the Sadiya Frontier Tract, of the Nowgong and Sibsagar Mikir Hills, and of the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract are, however, not really parts of this natural division at all but the population of these areas is so small that the only figures which their inclusion affects are the figures for density. The total area of the Brahmaputra Valley including the Mikir Hills and the Sadiya, Balipara and Lakhimpur Frontier Tracts is 27,692 square miles with a total population of 4,723,293. Its density is thus 171 to the square mile. The density of the real valley is, however, a good deal higher than this and if the hilly portions of the Sadiya Frontier Tract, the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and the Mikir Hills backward tract be excluded as not really belonging to the Assam Valley natural division at all, the density of the valley proper would work out at about 230 persons to the square mile, which is only about half of the density of the Surma Valley natural division. The figures in subsidiary table III, would appear to show that the density of the valley is highest in the West—in Goalpara and Kamrup. But the foot note to that table explains that the density of Sibsagar and Nowgong districts are low merely because the sparsely populated Mikir Hills are included in those districts. This is further illustrated by the map at page 4 which shows that the density of the valley is greatest in the centre—in the regularly administered portions of Nowgong and Sibsagar and in Kamrup. But the figures for the density of all the Assam Valley districts must be accepted with caution as many districts contain large areas of reserved forests and grazing grounds.

In Goalpara district, for example, there is an enormous belt of reserved forest running along the northern boundary of the district and of the total district area of 3,935 square miles as much as 902 square miles consist of reserved forests. If the area of the reserved forests in Goalpara be deducted the density of that district works out at 286 instead of 222 as given in the subsidiary table. The whole tendency in the Assam Valley for many years has been for the density of the various districts to level up according as the waste lands in the thinly populated districts or subdivisions are filled up by settlers. This still continues and several examples of this will be found in the account of individual districts.

The population of the Assam Valley, excluding the Frontier Tracts, has increased altogether by 22·4 per cent.—which is one per cent. less than in the previous decade. Every district shows a substantial increase, the smallest rate of increase being in Sibsagar—13·4 per cent., and the largest in Nowgong 41·3 per cent. The population of Goalpara has increased by 15·8 per cent., Kamrup by 27·9 per cent., Darrang by 22·6 per cent., and Lakhimpur by 23·5 per cent. Nowgong and Kamrup which show the largest increases have attracted large number of Eastern Bengal immigrants who have also colonised parts of Darrang. Details of the increase in the number of colonists will be found in Chapter III—Birth-place and migration, but I may mention here that in Kamrup there are now 61,000 more persons born in Mymensingh than there were in 1921 and that in Nowgong the number of Mymensingh born people has increased by 56,000. Immigration from Eastern Bengal is thus obviously a factor of considerable importance in the increases shown in Kamrup and Nowgong. The other main source to which, in view of the previous history of immigration into Assam, we would naturally look for immigrants is the Tea Industry. During the decade 364,000 new coolies—men, women and children—were imported into the valley. This is a large number, though only about half of the number imported in 1911-21, and we would naturally suppose that the recruitment of all these coolies must have contributed largely to the increase in the population. The figure—364,000—is, however, illusory. A record is kept of all coolies imported into the province but there is no record of those who go out again and, as will be seen in Chapter III of the report, a large number of the coolies imported before 1921 must have left the valley during the decade as well as a considerable proportion of the short-term coolies who were recruited during the decade and who are included in the figure of 364,000 above. In fact the general conclusion arrived at in Chapter III is that the province has actually lost about 100,000 foreign born coolies since 1921 and that the number of new coolies imported during the decade would not have been sufficient to keep the machine of the Tea Industry going and to fill up the gaps caused by death, desertion and discharge had not extensive use been made of local labour. The increase in the population of the Assam Valley at this census must therefore be ascribed principally to immigration of Eastern Bengal colonists and to the natural growth of the old population.

Goalpara.

19. Starting from its western limits—where the valley merges into the plains of Bengal—the first district we meet is Goalpara.

Between 1911 and 1921 the population of Goalpara district increased by 26·9 per cent. of which three-fifths was due to immigration. On this occasion the increase has been a very modest 15·8 per cent. The Goalpara subdivision of the district has increased, as in 1921, at a much greater rate than that of the Sadr or Dhubri subdivision, the figures being Goalpara subdivision 24·1 per cent. against 31·1 in 1911-21, and Dhubri subdivision 12·6 per cent. against 24·4 in 1911-21. This falling off in the rate of increase is due to the fact that most of the suitable waste land in the district had already been occupied by the Eastern Bengal colonists who poured into the district between 1901 and 1921 and that the main stream of immigrants has now found a larger scope for their activities in Kamrup and Nowgong. The Deputy Commissioner reports that immigration has not been very noticeable in the last decade and that some of the settlers have actually migrated from the district to Kamrup. As in 1921 the density is highest in the south-west of the district adjoining Bengal (Manakchar thana 624, Dhubri thana 483, Golakganj thana 445). The density of Gossaingaon (143), of Kokrajhar (157) and of Bijni (120)—new thanas formed since the last

census, mainly out of the area known as the Eastern Duars—looks extremely low but it must be remembered that these thanas contain vast areas of reserved forests which extend along the northern boundary of the district. Except for the great earthquake in July 1930 the history of the district has been uneventful. This earthquake which was severe all over Assam affected Dhubri subdivision particularly badly and considerable damage was caused to houses and to lands, and many wells were silted up with sand. Except for sporadic outbreaks of cholera and small-pox public health was generally good and *kala azar* which, at one time, was very prevalent in the district was kept well under control. There is still room for expansion in the district but the great days of mass immigration by the Mymensinghians are over and only a moderate increase in population can be expected at the next census.

20. Kamrup is now the most populous district in the Assam Valley and with an increase of 213,175 in its population has forged ahead of Sibsagar which was the most populous district in 1921. This increase of 213,175 persons is the greatest actual increase given at this census by any district in the whole province and is the record actual increase in population in any district of the Assam Valley since the first census of Assam was held. The percentage increase in the population of the district works out at 27·9 against 14·2 in 1911-21. The cause of this sudden jump in the rate of increase becomes apparent when the percentage is distributed between the Gauhati subdivision, which shows a moderate increase of 14·6 per cent., and the Barpeta subdivision, which gives the enormous increase of 69 per cent. This unprecedented increase in Barpeta—which showed the very substantial increase of 34·1 per cent. in 1921—is due almost entirely to the immigration of Eastern Bengal settlers, chiefly from Mymensingh. An interesting diagram which gives a good idea of this increase will be found in Chapter III of this Report where the matter is discussed at some length.

Kamrup.

Provincial Table I shows that of the three thanas into which the Barpeta subdivision is divided Barpeta thana with an increase of 101·5 per cent. and Sorbhog thana with an increase of 84·5 per cent. are the two which are responsible for the enormous increase in the population of the subdivision. Patacharkuchi thana gives only a moderate increase of 14·5 per cent. which is largely due to the increase of 119·8 per cent. in one mauza—Hastinapur. The reason for this is evident: in 1921 the density of Patacharkuchi was 260 whereas that of Barpeta was 131 and that of Sorbhog only 112; the density of Patacharkuchi is now 297 while Barpeta and Sorbhog have a density of 263 and 207 respectively. In other words the immigrants have been pouring into the empty spaces of the subdivision. Looking at the district as a whole the most thickly populated area is in the centre, around Nalbari, where the density is as high as most part of Sylhet. The Upper Barbhag mauza, which has an area of 23 square miles, has a density—astonishing for Assam—of 1,085 persons to the square mile and two other mauzas—Bansjani and Khata have densities of 900 and over.

On the south bank of the Brahmaputra the increase in population has been moderate except in mauzas Pub and Paschim Chamaria which have increased by 142 and 168 per cent. The large increase in these mauzas is due to immigration by Eastern Bengal colonists. Public Health has been fairly good during the decade in spite of occasional outbreaks of cholera and small-pox; *kala azar* was prevalent before 1926 but has rapidly declined since that year. It is interesting to observe that the Mahapurushias—a religious sect whose centre is Barpeta—do not, nowadays, object so strongly to vaccination against small-pox. The subdivisional officer, however, makes the interesting comment that persons vaccinated in Barpeta town are still made to pay a fine of four annas each to the local *Kirtanghar*. The Barpeta subdivision and parts of Sadr suffered badly from the effects of the earthquake of July 1930 and from the flood of August of the same year. In spite of the large increase in the population of the district there is still considerable room for expansion and large areas are still waste. Further immigration of Mymensinghians is to be expected and another large increase of population may be looked for at the next census.

Darrang.

21. Except in 1921 and 1922 when there were outbreaks of cholera and small-pox the public health of Darrang has been good and the mortality from *kala azar* has been enormously reduced as a result of the new treatment. The district shows an increase of population of 22.6 per cent. against an increase of 27 per cent. in 1921. Tezpur or Sadr subdivision has increased by 20.7 per cent. against 38.5 per cent. in 1921 and Mangaldai subdivision by 25.3 per cent. against 11.6 per cent. in 1921. Five-sevenths of the large increase in 1911-21 was due to the arrival of new immigrants, mostly tea garden coolies and Eastern Bengal settlers. The statistics of birth-place show that the immigration of Eastern Bengal settlers has continued—there are now 18,000 more people in the district who were born in Mymensingh than there were in 1921—but in spite of the increase in the population censused on tea gardens—from 122,749 in 1921 to 132,496 in 1931—the statistics of birth-place show a slight decrease in the total number of persons born in the recruiting provinces. Nepalis are fairly numerous in Darrang which has large areas of reserved grazing grounds and the number of persons born in Nepal has increased by 5,000 since 1921 and now stands at 25,000. The increase in the population of the district is thus apparently due to two main sources only—the immigration of Eastern Bengal colonists who have settled in large numbers particularly in Mangaldai—and the natural growth of the old population. The greatest increase in population has been in the Dalgao mauza in Mangaldai which has increased by nearly 151 per cent. and which was constituted a separate thana some years ago. The thana with the least increase is Kalaigaon (5.4 per cent.). Small though it is, this increase is satisfactory as this thana had an ugly reputation for unhealthiness and showed a decrease of 9.9 per cent. in 1911-21 and 19.1 per cent. in 1901-11.

No part of the district is densely populated. Tezpur thana with 303 persons to the square mile is that most thickly populated thana followed by Mangaldai thana with 260. There is, as yet, no great pressure on the soil but the Deputy Commissioner reports that there is little room for expansion in the Tezpur subdivision as most of the Brahmaputra *char* lands are reserved for professional graziers.

A new branch line of the Eastern Bengal railway is at present under construction in the district. It will run from Tangla, which is the present terminus of the Rangia-Tangla line, to Rangapara *via* Belsiri and is expected to play an important part in the future development of this area. A further large increase in the population seems probable in future both by immigration and natural growth. There is still plenty of room for many more thousands of Eastern Bengal settlers—especially in Mangaldai—and there is no reason to think that they will not take full advantage of it.

Nowgong.

22. The population of Nowgong has increased by 41.3 per cent.—the largest percentage increase of any district in Assam. In 1911-21 the percentage increase was also very large being 31.9 per cent. and was found to be due mostly to the immigration of Eastern Bengal settlers. In the last decade this immigration has continued and there are now 56,000 more persons in the district who were born in Mymensingh than there were in 1921. The matter is discussed more fully in Chapter III—Migration. From Provincial Table I it will be seen that the greatest increases of population have been in mauzas Bokani (295 per cent.), Lahorighat (163 per cent.), Laokhowa (140.5 per cent.), Dbing (126 per cent.), Namati (108 per cent.), and Juria (101 per cent.). Those enormous increases are due almost entirely to the influx of new settlers—mainly from Mymensingh. There has also been a certain amount of immigration from Sylhet and Cachar and people from these districts have settled in considerable numbers in mauzas Namati, Jamunamukh and Rangkhong. A large portion of the district is occupied by the Nowgong Mikir Hills “Backward Tract.” This tract is mostly hilly and mountainous country in which the Mikirs dwell but several mauzas and parts of mauzas included in the Tract are plains area, e.g., Namati and parts of Rangkhong and Lumding. The density of the regularly administered portion of the district—311 persons to the square mile is high for the Assam Valley and some mauzas, e.g., Hatichang (652) and Laokhowa (648) are thickly populated. The density of the Mikir Hills mauzas is, however, very small and their inclusion brings down the density of the whole district to 144 persons per square mile.

Nowgong in the past suffered more than any other district from the scourge of *kala azar*. This dreadful disease carried away over a quarter of the whole indigenous population in 1891-1901. No cure was known for the disease in those days and the epidemic simply burnt itself out. About 1917 there were signs of a recrudescence of the disease which would undoubtedly have proved extremely serious had not modern research come to the rescue with a satisfactory cure. Since 1921 the number of reported deaths from *kala azar* in the district has decreased from nearly 1,500 to 132 and it is hoped that within a few years' time the last vestiges of this scourge will have been eradicated.

Cholera is another disease which is endemic in the district. During the decade sporadic outbreaks occurred every year, generally along the banks of the Kalang river; in 1922, 1925 and 1927, however, it was particularly bad and spread more or less throughout the district. Modern methods of inoculation have, however, effected a wonderful improvement and no outbreak followed in the wake of the two great floods of recent years—the Kopili flood of June 1929, which caused considerable damage in the southern part of the district, and the Brahmaputra flood of 1930 which inundated all the northern mauzas. Public Health was, therefore, good on the whole and this is borne out by the figures of vital statistics which, except in the first three years of the decade, show a large excess of births over deaths.

Nowgong is not an important tea district. The number of persons censused on the tea garden there is only 23,436 against 21,919 in 1921. The Deputy Commissioner reports that large areas of the district—especially in the Namati and Rangkhong mauzas—are still unoccupied and that enough land still lies open for the expansion of the indigenous population near their own villages; there is, however, not much room for further expansion in the tracts occupied by the immigrants along the Brahmaputra river.

The next census should disclose a further large increase in the population of this district but it will probably not be as great as the enormous increase in the past decade.

23. Sibsagar district has a population of 933,326, an increase of only 13.4 per cent. since 1921. It is now only the second largest district in point of population in the Assam Valley—Kamrup being the first—and has thus lost the headship of the valley—a position which it held from 1901 to 1921. In 1911-1921 the population of the district increased by 19.1 per cent. and it was stated in the 1921 Census Report that if tea continued to flourish and if—as seemed likely—the stream of cultivating immigrants from Eastern Bengal continued its eastward trend the population of Sibsagar might approach a million in 1931. Neither of these “ifs” has been fulfilled. Tea has not flourished greatly and there has been no immigration of Eastern Bengal colonists into the district. On the other hand we find that the district—which is one of the most important tea districts in Assam—has actually lost a considerable number of foreign-born persons in spite of the fact that the population censused on tea gardens has risen from 228,570 to 234,274. The reasons for the general decrease in the foreign-born coolie population of the province are given at some length in Chapter III.—Migration and birth-place. Sibsagar is however such a typical tea district that the figures for this district are worth analysis.

According to the annual reports on immigrant labour the tea garden labour force of Sibsagar has risen from 259,592 in June 1921 to 264,338 in June 1931. The increase—4,746—agrees therefore very closely with the increase of 5,704 shown by the census in the population censused on tea gardens. The difference of about 30,000 both in 1921 and in 1931 between the census figures of the population censused on tea gardens and the figures given in the Immigration reports is probably due to the fact that many coolies who are on the garden books as labourers actually live outside the garden boundaries and were therefore not censused on the garden. Also at the time the census is held—February-March—many Sardars are away recruiting.

The following statement which is based on the Annual Immigrant Labour Reports show the fluctuation in the labour force in thousands in each year of the decade.

Actuals.						
Year.	No. of coolies imported.	No. added locally.	No. lost by death.	Lost by discharge, desertion or other causes.	Gain or loss of labour force on previous year.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	
1921-22	...	5	14	6	20	-7
1922-23	...	4	15	6	19	-6
1923-24	...	10	17	5	20	+2
1924-25	...	9	18	5	24	-2
1925-26	...	7	19	5	23	-2
1926-27	...	8	19	5	19	+3
1927-28	...	7	20	5	19	+3
1928-29	...	13	22	6	19	+10
1929-30	...	10	20	6	19	+5
1930-31	...	10	22	6	27	-1

These figures show clearly that except for the increased use made of local labour the total garden labour force would have been less at the end of the decade than at the beginning in spite of the fact that the number of gardens in the district has increased from 185 to 198. Except for floods in 1927 and 1930, which did considerable damage in the riverine mauzas and in the Majuli, the past decade has been more or less uneventful in Sibsagar. Public health was generally good and the mortality from *kala-azar* has been reduced to a negligible quantity. The vital statistics of the district show that there has been a large excess of births over deaths—particularly from 1923 onwards.

Of the three subdivisions into which the district is divided the highest rate of increase has been recorded by Golaghat with 18.4 per cent.—exactly the same rate of increase as in 1911-21. Sibsagar subdivision shows an increase of 14.4 per cent. as against 20.5 in 1911-21 and Jorhat (the sadr subdivision) only 8.5 against 18.2 in 1911-21. An interesting feature about the increase in Jorhat subdivision is that the mauzas which show the greatest increases are generally the mauzas in which there are no tea gardens or very few. In fact, except for the increase in the riverine mauzas on the north of the Trunk Road, which are too lowlying for tea, and in the Majuli where there is not a single tea garden the increase in the population of the subdivision would have been very small indeed, as out of the total increase of 26,000 in the population of the subdivision 17,000 is due to increase in the riverine mauzas. The small increase in the population of the main tea-producing area of the district must, as far as I can see, be due to a considerable loss of foreign-born coolies since the last census.

Jorhat subdivision is very densely populated for an Assam Valley subdivision. Its actual density is 299 but, if we exclude the portion of the Majuli island which falls within the subdivision, the density of the rest of the subdivision comes to 360 and some mauzas, e.g., Charigaon (320) and Khangia (792) are very thickly populated.

Sibsagar subdivision has a density of 327—much the same as Jorhat—and like Jorhat shows considerable increase in the areas where there are few tea gardens. Sibsagar thana which contains very few tea gardens has increased by 17.6 per cent. whereas Nazira thana—in the centre of the tea industry of the district—has increased by only 7.2 per cent. and Amguri thana by only 5.9 per cent. Sonari Thana shows an increase

of 25.3 per cent. which is largely due to the opening up of the waste lands in Baruasali mauza. Golaghat has increased at exactly the same rate as in 1911-21 (18.4 per cent.). This is the only subdivision in the district in which waste land is still available in any quantity and the large increase (165 per cent.) in Barpathar—a vast mauza of 526 square miles—is particularly noticeable. This mauza is being rapidly colonized, principally by *ex-coolies*, and a Development Officer has recently been appointed to supervise the work of colonization. The density of Golaghat subdivision (91) is very low compared with that of Jorhat and Sibsagar. This is due to the fact that about half the total area of the subdivision consists of the Mikir Hills which are very thinly populated. The population of these hills (excluding Barpathar which, though technically a part of the Mikir Hills Backward Tract, is really an undeveloped plains mauza) has actually decreased by over a thousand since 1921. The decrease is particularly noticeable in the case of Duar Dikharu and Duar-disha mauzas. These low hills are unhealthy and full of wild animals and there has, I believe, been some emigration from them to the Naga Hills.

Sibsagar is one of the great tea districts of the Assam Valley and its future depends upon the state of that industry. Except in some mauzas in Golaghat there is little waste land available and in the interests of the indigenous inhabitants it has been found necessary to stop further settlement of land for tea cultivation except in some parts of Golaghat. There has been a certain amount of emigration from the district during the decade—particularly to North Lakhimpur and to some of the southern mauzas of Dibrugarh subdivision—and this is likely to continue. Golaghat subdivision should show another large increase at the next census but unless the tea industry has a moderately prosperous time during the next ten years the increases in Jorhat and Sibsagar subdivisions will probably not be large. If tea prospers the population of the district should be well over a million in 1941.

24. The population of Lakhimpur—the largest tea district in Assam—has increased by 23.5 per cent. against an increase of 30.4 per cent. in 1911-21. Dibrugarh (or the sadr) subdivision has increased by 23.1 per cent. against 32.2 per cent. in 1911-21 and North Lakhimpur by 25 per cent. against 28.7 per cent. in 1911-21. As the two subdivisions of the district are very dissimilar in character it is necessary to treat each as a separate unit.

Dibrugarh (or the sadr) subdivision, with the exception of the Dhemaji thana on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, is mainly a vast tea garden. In this subdivision, also, are situated the oil wells and coal mines of Digboi and Margherita. As might be expected the majority of the population of the subdivision are foreigners or of foreign descent. The increase in the population of the sadr subdivision has occurred principally in the southern and eastern portions. Dibrugarh and Doom Doom thanas which contain a large number of tea gardens give a very moderate increase of 4.7 and 9.9 per cent. respectively. On the other hand Digboi and Margherita thanas, in the eastern and south-eastern corner of the district, show an increase of 60.8 per cent. over their combined population of 1921. The large increase in these thanas is due largely to the great development of the oil and coal industries and to the opening up of new tea gardens in the Buridihing mauza. Moran thana gives a large increase of 41.1 per cent. and Jaipur thana an increase of 30.8 per cent. These thanas comprise the mauzas in the south of the subdivision mainly along the Sibsagar boundary. There has been a certain amount of immigration into some of these mauzas by Assamese from Sibsagar district as well as settlement by *ex-coolies*. *Ex-coolies* are particularly numerous in Moran and Tingkhong and Assamese in Khowang. Tinsukia thana in the heart of the subdivision has increased by 39.1 per cent. Tinsukia town is rapidly becoming the rival to Dibrugarh and situated as it is in the very heart of the subdivision and in the middle of the tea industry it has very great advantages over the headquarters town. Dhemaji thana on the north bank contains no tea gardens. The bulk of the Miri population of the subdivision live in this thana which has attracted few immigrants and the increase in its population—nearly 19 per cent.—must be almost entirely due to natural growth.

The density of the whole of the Dibrugarh subdivision is only 199. This figure is however deceptive as Dhemaji thana on the north bank has no point of resemblance to the rest of the subdivision and is much more akin to North Lakhimpur. Furthermore the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract—a backward tract, 394 square miles in area—is

included in the sadr subdivision. If this tract as well as Dhemañi thana be excluded from the calculation the density of the regularly administered area on the south bank works out at 230 persons to the square mile. There is still obviously plenty of room for further development. As might be expected in an area which might be called the garden of Assam the population is well distributed. Doom Dooma thana with 315 persons to the square mile is the most thickly populated thana but Tinsukia (273), Moran (266) and Dibrugarh (245) are not far behind.

Provincial Table I shows that in Jaipur thana the combined population of Jaipur-Phakial and Tipling-Phakial mauzas has decreased by over 70 per cent. since 1921 whereas in 1911-21 it increased by over 1,000 per cent. As far as I can see the 1921 population figure was an error and in that year part of the population of Jaipur mauza was probably included in the population of Jaipur-Phakial. My figures certainly agree much more closely with those of 1911 when the combined population of Tipling and Jaipur-Phakial mauzas was given as 920.

The North Lakhimpur subdivision has few tea gardens and no industrial concerns and is one of the most backward plains subdivisions in the whole of Assam. Its population has, however, been increasing steadily and at this census has increased at a greater rate than that of the sadr subdivision. Dhakuakhana and North Lakhimpur Thanas show practically the same rate of increase, 19 per cent., but Bihpuria thana has increased by 44 per cent., the increase being particularly noticeable in mauzas Dhalpur and Narayan Kerajkhat. The large increases in these mauzas are due largely to immigration. The immigrants, however, have not been foreigners but Assamese from other districts. I remember, when I was Settlement Officer in North Lakhimpur some years ago, that I was surprised to find whole families from Jorhat subdivision settled in these mauzas. The usual reason which they gave for their emigration was that their lands in Jorhat were not sufficient for their needs and that the close proximity of the tea gardens there was a great nuisance to them as their cattle were continually being impounded for straying into the gardens.

The present Settlement Officer Mr. O. R. Pawsey, I.C.S., confirms the truth of the impression I then received and has informed me that the large increases in Dhalpur and Kherajkhat mauzas are mostly due to new comers from Sibsagar. He also tells me that the increase in Laluk mauza is due to Sibsagar and Majuli colonists as well as to the arrival of a colony of few thousand Mymensinghians who settled in that mauza a few years ago. Settlers from Sibsagar have also appeared in Kadam mauza and have prospected in Bardaloni mauza but went back as the best land was in the forest reserve and they could not obtain any of it. There are still vast areas of waste land in the subdivision awaiting the plough of the colonist. In the Subansiri group alone which comprises the mauzas of Bardaloni, Nakari and Kadam the Settlement Officer has estimated that there are still 107 square miles of cultivable land awaiting settlement. North Lakhimpur is the natural outlet for the growing Assamese population of Sibsagar many of whom are now finding it difficult to obtain suitable lands in their own district.

The establishment of a Mymensinghia colony in Laluk mauza some years ago is, therefore, an event of more than local importance.

Lakhimpur district—as Imperial Table II shows—has developed more rapidly than any other district in Assam and its population has increased from 171,491 in 1881 to 724,582 in 1931. No matter what the state of the tea industry the North Lakhimpur subdivision of the district should show a further large increase at the next census. As regards the sadr subdivision—whose very life depends on the tea market—there will not, I think, be a large increase in population unless the next ten years prove more fortunate than the past decade. The large drop in the rate of increase in this subdivision—from 32.2 per cent. in 1911-21 to 23.1 per cent. in 1921-31—indicates how closely connected is the prosperity of the tea industry with the increase in the population of a tea district. The same thing is visible at this census in all the subdivisions of the Assam Valley which have numerous tea gardens and which have not been affected by the immigration of Eastern Bengal colonists or in any other way. Thus the percentage rate of increase in Jorhat has dropped from 18.2 to 8.5; in Sibsagar from 20.5 to 14.4 and in Tezpur from 38.5 to 20.7.

25. The administered area of the Balipara Frontier Tract may be described as a belt of reserved forest running along the base of the Assam Himalayas with a clearing in the centre. In the clearing are situated the headquarters of the Political Officer and of a detachment of Assam Rifles. The total population of the whole of the administered tract is only 5,148 and the density—owing to the large area of reserved forests—is only 9 persons to the square mile.

The population of the tract has increased by 1,482 persons since the last census. The Political Officer writing of the increase states—"The question of further increase in the population does not depend here on the availability of suitable land but is governed by political reasons. Immigration of Daffas to the plains from the hills has increased although such immigration is discouraged. Most of the settlers are runaway slaves—often with a woman they have stolen—the idea being to escape the retribution awaiting them in the hills. There has also been a tendency for Assamese and ex-garden coolies to come into Frontier Tract and settle here. They are anxious to open up new settlements and rice cultivation in the uninhabited areas. This, however, is not encouraged as adequate protection cannot always be guaranteed." The administered area of the Sadiya Frontier Tract—about 3,500 square miles—consists of two distinct divisions—the hills and the plains. In the hills live the various Abor, Mishmi and Naga tribes while the plains are inhabited by Khamtis, Singphos, Miris, Assamese, Nepalis and ex-garden coolies. The population of the Tract is only 53,345, an increase of 29.3 per cent. on the 1921 population. Most of the increase—7,195 out of 12,096—is, however, due to the incorporation into the administered area of villages which were previously unadministered and the population of the old area has only increased by 11.2 per cent. which is small in view of the fact that public health is reported to have been good and that there has been a certain amount of immigration into the plains portion of the district. The Political Officer reports that the Abor plains villages die out from tuberculosis. The country is very thinly populated, the density of the administered area of the Sadiya subdivision being 17 and that of Pasighat only 15. There is enormous scope for agricultural expansion in the plains area but the work of clearing the jungle, which is extremely dense, is a difficult task. The Sadiya Frontier Tract—like Balipara—has no defined outer boundaries. Beyond the administered (and censused) area lie vast ranges of forest-clad hills and snow-covered mountains stretching to the distant confines of China, Tibet and Burma.

26. The Surma Valley natural division consists of the district of Sylhet which has an area of 5,478 square miles and a population of 2,724,342 and the plains portion of the Cachar district which has an area of 1,972 square miles and a population of 537,687.

The density of this natural division is thus 483 persons to the square mile—far the most thickly populated part of Assam. The Valley is linguistically and socially a part of Bengal and its inhabitants have few points of contact with the dwellers in the Assam Valley.

The total population of the Surma Valley has increased by just over 200,000 persons or by 7.2 per cent. In 1911-21 the increase was only 3.3 per cent. but it was found that the Valley had lost slightly on the balance of migration and that the increase in the natural population was 4 per cent. It is not possible for me to calculate the natural population on this occasion but it is extremely probable that at this census also there has been a loss on the balance of migration and that the natural population has increased by more than 7.2 per cent.

The Surma Valley contains numerous tea gardens but the indigenous population of Sylhet is so large that the tea garden element forms only a small percentage of the population of that district. On the other hand, in the Cachar plains the tea garden population forms between a third and a fourth of the entire population. In Sylhet 181,000 persons were censused in tea gardens and in Cachar 148,000. In 1921 the corresponding figures were 169,000 and 138,000 so that there has been an increase of 7 per cent. in the garden population of the valley.

The statistics of birth-place, however, show that the number of persons censused in the valley who were born in the main coolly recruiting provinces has actually decreased by 57,000 since the last census so that the increase in the tea garden population cannot be due to increased immigration although, according to the Annual

Immigration Reports, a total of 57,591 new coolies were imported into the valley during the decade. This may seem peculiar but it must be remembered that a very large number of coolies left the gardens and returned to their homes in the troubled years of 1921 and 1922. The great exodus from the Chargola Valley of Sylhet took place in May 1921, i. e., after the 1921 census and in the year ending on the 30th June 1921 the Surma Valley garden labour force—according to the Annual Immigration Report—suffered an abrupt loss of 48,000 persons. In 1921-22 also there was a loss of over 26,000 so that in these two years alone the strength of the labour force in the Valley was reduced by over 74,000. The number of new coolies imported during the decade—an average of about 6,000 yearly—has been extremely poor compared with the recruitment in the previous decade when a yearly average of 20,000 new coolies was stated to be the normal requirements of the valley. It is thus apparent that the 57,000 new recruits obtained since 1921 have not been nearly enough to fill the gaps caused by death and by coolies leaving the gardens and that the increase in the labour force is not due to immigration. The matter is discussed further in Chapter III of this report and the explanation offered there is that the increase in the population censused on tea gardens is due to the greater employment of local and “home grown” labour. I need only mention here that the number of adult labourers on tea gardens who were born in the Surma Valley was reported by the Commissioner of the Surma Valley to have increased by over 60 per cent. between 1921 and 1926.

Except for the immigration of new coolies who, as explained above, have not made up for the loss of those who have died or left the district there has been little immigration into the valley. The Additional District Magistrate, Sylhet, reports that immigrants from the neighbouring Bengal districts of Mymensingh and Tippera have settled in considerable numbers in parts of the district and that emigrants from Sylhet have gone forth to seek new lands in the Assam Valley and in Tripura State “driven by their chronic indebtedness and in order to save themselves from the iron grip of the village Shylocks.” The statistics show that immigrants from Bengal to Sylhet have increased by about 7,000. Unfortunately I cannot tell how far the number of Sylhet born persons censused in the Assam Valley has increased but there is no doubt that there has been a certain amount of emigration to the Assam Valley—particularly to Nowgong district.

Probably ordinary immigrants into the valley and emigrants from the valley are about equal in numbers and as the valley has lost a large number of foreign-born people owing to the troubles on the tea gardens we are, I think, on safe ground in assuming that the natural growth of the valley has been higher than the actual census increase of 7·2 per cent.

It is difficult to assign any particular reason for this increase. Probably it is due to the absence of any violent epidemic more than to any other cause. Public health in the valley, except for sporadic outbreaks of cholera, was generally good and *kala azar* which was found to be very prevalent in Sylhet has been brought under control.

It is interesting to observe that the excess of births over deaths in the valley during the last decade has been 195,000 as against 42,000 in the previous decade. All indications, therefore, point to the fact that the valley has made a good natural recovery from the effects of the unhealthy decade of 1911-21. The rate of increase in the various parts of the valley has been very uniform. Taking the various subdivisions we find that South Sylhet leads with an increase of 8 per cent.; then come North Sylhet with 7·7, Silchar and Sunamganj with 7·6 each, Hailakandi with 7·1, Habiganj with 6·7 and Karimganj (which suffered badly from the coolie exodus of 1921) with 6·1. The density of the Cachar plains (273) is only about half as much as that of Sylhet. This does not, however, indicate that there is still plenty of elbow-room in Cachar but is merely due to the fact that the Sadr subdivision contains large areas of uncultivable land along the slopes of the hills which surround it on three sides and in the various spurs which run from the Lushai Hills across the district. In thanas where the proportion of cultivable land is high, e.g., Hailakandi and Silchar thanas, the density of the Silchar subdivision is as high as most places in Sylhet. The most crowded part of the valley is the Habiganj subdivision of Sylhet which has a density of 631 persons to the square mile; the Habiganj thana in this subdivision with a density of 928 is the most densely populated thana in the

whole of Assam. The past decade will be for ever memorable in the history of the Surma Valley on account of the great flood of June 1929, the highest within living memory. The Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, where the flood was particularly severe describes its effect as follows:—

“The flood told upon the material condition of the cultivating class a good deal. It destroyed the *Aus* and *Asra* crops of the district and drowned many cattle and the state of affairs was very serious. Trains and steamer services were interrupted and post and telegraph connections were also at a stand still. Many houses in the villages went under water and people had to get on the roofs and trees to save their lives. Boats were sent out all round the district to rescue people. The resultant distress amongst the people was for a time very great and it was found necessary to take very active steps to relieve it. Gratuitous relief and agricultural loans were freely given by Government and were supplemented by private charity.

All danger of starvation quickly passed. When the flood receded magnificent deposits of silt were left and the harvest reaped was the heaviest of recent years.”

Conditions for a wide-spread epidemic of cholera were very favourable all over the valley during and after the flood and special measures were taken to prevent an outbreak. They proved entirely successful and public health remained wonderfully good.

27. The population of Sylhet, by far the most populous district in the province, Sylhet, is now 2,724,342—an increase of 7·2 per cent. since 1921. In 1911-21 the increase was 27 per cent. and in 1901-11 10·3 per cent. A peculiar feature about the increase is that it is almost entirely confined to Muslims who have increased by 11·9 per cent. whereas Hindus have increased only by 1·2 per cent. The reasons for this are discussed in Chapter IX—Religion. I have already mentioned that the 5 subdivisions into which the district is divided have all increased at much the same rate. Karimganj with 6·1 per cent. increase has the lowest rate of growth: this is probably due to the fact that this subdivision suffered very heavily in the coolie exodus of 1921.

There are very considerable differences in the density of the various subdivisions and thanas. Thus Habiganj subdivision has a density of 631 persons to the square mile whereas Sunamganj has only 381; Biswanath thana has a density of 879 whereas the density of Jaintia is only 225 and that of Tahirpur 267. These differences are, however, merely due to facts of physical geography and do not imply that the pressure on the soil is very much less in one part of the district than another. Sunamganj, the most thinly populated part of the district, contains vast areas of low-lying land which become inland seas during the rains and Karimganj, where the density is also less than the district average, contains, by way of contrast, large areas of hill and forest.

Provincial Table I shows that out of the 33 thanas into which the district is divided there has been an increase in 31 thanas and slight decrease in two. In the North Sylhet or Sadr subdivision Gowainghat and Jaintia thanas show the greatest increases. In the Karimganj subdivision all thanas except Patharkandi, which has increased by about 2 per cent. only, show an almost equal increase. In South Sylhet all thanas show an increase, the greatest being in Kulaura—13 per cent.—and the smallest in Srimangal—2·9 per cent. It is remarkable that Srimangal and Patharkandi thanas had the greatest increases in their respective subdivisions in 1911-21. These thanas contain numerous tea gardens and the small increase at this census is probably due to loss of coolies. In Habiganj subdivision Chunarighat thana gives us the greatest increase—13·5 per cent. Baniyachung shows a slight decrease of 377 persons and Ajmiriganj a decrease of 603 persons.

Both these thanas are situated in the north-west of the subdivision in very low-lying country. The population of Ajmiriganj thana has only varied by a few hundreds at every census since 1911 so that it would appear to have reached the limit of expansion. In the Sunamganj subdivision the population of Tahirpur, Chatak and Sunamganj thanas have all increased by 10 per cent. or over. I am informed that this increase is due to some extent to the immigration of people from Mymensingh. All thanas in this subdivision show increases but Sulla has only 215 more people than it had in 1921 and 1,050 more than it had in 1911. Sulla thana

adjoins the Ajmiriganj thana of Habiganj and, like it, becomes one vast sea of water in the rains, the villages appearing above the surface like so many islands.

The economic position of the district was surveyed by the Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee in 1929. They came to the conclusion that in a normal season the cultivator could manage to pay his way but that the liability of the district to floods makes his position precarious and that in years of bad floods the average cultivator, except in the high lands in the south of the district, is hard hit.

"There is little cultivable waste land" says the Report "available in the permanently-settled areas. There are huge expanses of waste land, it is true, but these are unfit for cultivation. The result is that the pressure on the soil is becoming more intense with the growth of families. It seems to us that before long the people must seek a remedy in emigration, in growing more varieties of crops or in more intensive cultivation.....Emigration does take place, e. g., to Nowgong but not to a large extent."

It is unfortunate that I cannot on this occasion give figures showing the extent of emigration from Sylhet to the Assam Valley—particularly to Nowgong. Had such figures been available I think that they would have shown that emigration to those parts is increasing. Emigration is undoubtedly the easiest solution of the problem of the increasing pressure on the soil in Sylhet and hence it seems a pity that the Mymensinghians have got such long start over the Sylhetis in the race to the waste lands of the Assam Valley. Had the Sylhetis only got there first and established themselves in large numbers as the Mymensinghians have done it is possible that the intervalley jealousies and squabbles would have gradually disappeared in the recognition of the unity of a greater Assam. But although the density of Sylhet is very high compared with any plains districts in the Assam Valley and although the pressure on the soil is becoming more intense it is nothing in comparison with the neighbouring Bengal district of Tippera. The most densely populated thana in the whole of Sylhet is Habiganj thana with 928 persons to the square mile. We in Assam, who are used to plenty of room, think that Habiganj is most unpleasantly overcrowded. But compared with the density of Tippera—1,197 persons to the square mile over the whole district—Habiganj thana is thinly populated and Sylhet district as a whole with its density of 497 is almost a wilderness. Mymensingh, the other Bengal district adjoining Sylhet, has a density of 823.

Given favourable conditions of public health during the next ten years the percentage increase in Sylhet in 1941 should, I think, be much the same as at this census.

28. The population of the Silchar subdivision has increased by 7.6 per cent. against an increase of 6 per cent. in 1911-21 and the population of the Hailakandi subdivision by 7.1 per cent. against an increase of 6.2 per cent. in the previous decade. Both subdivisions are thus increasing at about the same rate. The other subdivision of Cachar—the North Cachar Hills—falls within the Hills natural division. It has a population of 32,844 only—an increase of 13.6 per cent. since 1921. It was found in 1921 that the district had lost fairly heavily on the balance of migration: immigrants had decreased and emigrants had increased. It is reported that during 1921-31 there has been little immigration and little emigration but it appears extremely probable that the district has lost a considerable number of foreign-born garden coolies and that, as in 1921, the natural population has increased at a higher rate than the actual rate disclosed by the census. All thanas in the plains area show a satisfactory increase except Barkhola, the population of which has decreased by 1.9 per cent. against an increase of 2.1 per cent. in 1921. There has, I understand, been some emigration from this thana. The thanas which show the highest rates of increase are Sonai and Katlicherra with 11.4 and 9.7 per cent. increases. These two thanas also gave the highest rates of increase in 1921. It was stated in the Census Report for 1921 that there was no great pressure on the soil in Cachar but owing to the large area of reserved forest there was not much land available for expansion and that, apart from the tea industry, only a moderate growth of population was to be expected in 1931. This prophecy has been fulfilled and it appears that the moderate growth which has occurred has been quite sufficient to make the pressure on the soil more noticeable.

Cachar
plains.

The rate of increase in the population of the Cachar plains will depend largely on the conditions of the tea industry during the decade. Unless the recruitment of tea garden coolies is much larger than it has been during the last ten years only a moderate increase can be expected in the population.

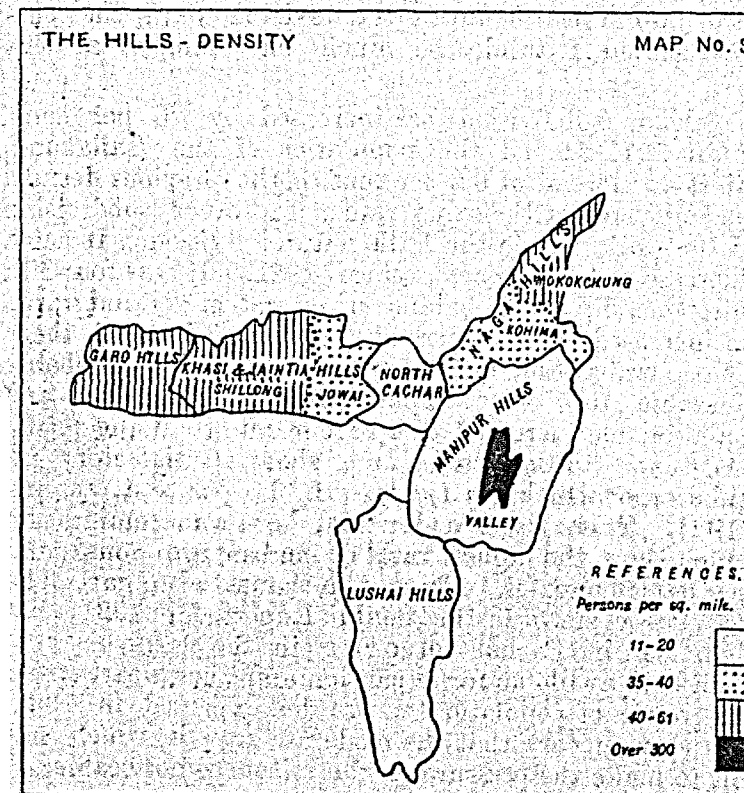
29. The total population of the hill districts and States excluding the Mikir Hills The Hills. which are divided between two plains districts, but including the North Cachar Hills is 1,262,535—an increase of 169,996 or 15.6 per cent. since 1921. In the decade 1911-21 the increase was only 82,762 or 8.2 per cent. of which about three-fourth was ascribed to natural growth and the rest to immigration. New additions of population made to the hill districts since 1921 by the incorporation of previously unadministered territory accounts for only 8,516 persons—almost the same as in the decade 1911-21—so that the large increase shown on this occasion must be due either to natural growth or to immigration or to a combination of the two. As will be seen later, immigration, except in the case of the Khasi Hills, is a factor of little importance in the hill districts of Assam and the only conclusion, therefore, that can be drawn is that the natural growth of the population of the hills has been decidedly good. This must be ascribed mainly to the absence of any serious epidemic in the hills during the last ten years. In 1911-21 the hill districts suffered badly from the influenza epidemic of 1918-19 and it was this epidemic which was responsible for the poor rate of natural increase.

The conditions of the past decade in the hills have been very similar to those of the decade 1901-11 which was described as a period of peace and uneventful progress. In that decade the population of the hills, excluding the large Naga population enumerated for the first time in 1911 and also making allowances for the large temporary population of coolies employed on the construction work of the Assam-Bengal Railway in the North Cachar Hills, increased by 15.8 per cent. or by almost exactly the same percentage as at the present census.

The density of the various hill districts differs considerably. The Garo Hills comes first with 61 persons to the square mile; then comes Manipur with 52, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills with 47 and the Naga Hills with 42; the North Cachar Hills with a density of 17 and the Lushai Hills with only 15 persons per square mile occupy the last places.

In considering these figures, however, it must be remembered that the Garo Hills contains a large plains area and that Manipur consists of a small but thickly populated

valley, in which the Manipuris dwell, surrounded on all sides by wild ranges of hills which are very thinly populated. The hill areas regarded from the point of view of density fall, therefore, into two types:—the first consists of the Garo, Khasi and Jaintia, and Naga Hills which have densities ranging from 42 to 61; the other consists of the North Cachar Hills, the Manipur Hills and the Lushai Hills all of which have a density of only 15 to 20 persons to the square mile. The Lungleh subdivision of the Lushai Hills with a density of only 11 persons to the square mile is the most thinly populated of all the hills subdivisions. The position is illustrated by the map in the margin,



Garó Hills.

30. The population of the Garó Hills has increased by only 11,771 or 6·6 per cent.—a poor performance compared with the 12·7 per cent. increase in 1911-21 and the 14·9 per cent. increase in 1901-11. Looking at Provincial Table I we see that the cause of the low rate of increase is due mainly to the fact that two mauzas—No. I (Hills) and No. V (Plains)—show decreases of 10·8 and 9·2 per cent. respectively. We also notice that the population of mauza IX (Goshgaon), which is in the plains, has nearly doubled itself. The Deputy Commissioner, Garó Hills, reports that the decrease in mauza No. I (Hills) is due to two causes:—(i) the migration of many of the inhabitants to Mymensingh and other neighbouring districts to escape the *kala azar* operations which made them liable, at one period, to be sent to Tura for treatment for a period of a month or over—a procedure which they found extremely irksome; (ii) many people from this mauza as well as from other hill mauzas migrated to the neighbouring plains mauzas mostly to mauza No. IX (Goshgaon) for more or less permanent plough cultivation. This explains the large increase in the population of that mauza.

The decrease in mauza V (Nibari) is explained by the Deputy Commissioner as being due to the migration of Rabhas who form the large majority of its inhabitants, to Goalpara and other neighbouring districts to evade the *kala azar* survey operations and treatment.

It is peculiar that the dread of the treatment should apparently be so much more marked in Hill mauza No. I than in Hill mauzas III and IV in which the Deputy Commissioner reports that *kala azar* was actually more prevalent. The Garos are, of course, a timid people and it is quite probable that rather than submit to the treatment and to the exactions of various subordinates, which I understand, were subsequently detected and punished they preferred to leave the district. The Deputy Commissioner's reasons appear to be borne out by the census statistics which show that the Garó speaking population of the Garó Hills which numbers 152,600 out of a total population of 191,000 has only increased by 6·8 per cent. against an increase of 11·4 per cent. in 1911-21, and the Rabhas, who number about 8,000 in the Garó Hills, have actually decreased. (According to the language statistics there has been a decrease of about 900 Rabha speakers while according to the caste statistics there has been a decrease of about 400). The poor rate of increase in the Garó Hills is thus mainly due to the fact that the increase among the indigenous hill men has only been about half as much as in 1911-21 and it seems extremely probable that a few thousand Garos left the district during the decade. This is further confirmed by the fact that the total number of Garos in the province has increased by over 11 per cent. and the Garos in Kamrup have increased by 31 per cent.

Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Khasi States.

31. The population of the whole of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, including the Khasi States, has increased by 46,663 or by 19·2 per cent. This is a very large increase compared with the 3·5 per cent. increase in 1911-21. The Shillong subdivision—which contains Shillong town and all the Khasi States—gives an increase of 22·4 per cent. and the Jowai subdivision, which showed a decrease of 6·7 per cent. in 1911-21, now shows a satisfactory increase of 11·7 per cent.

The poor progress of the previous decade was attributed to the influenza epidemic which was particularly virulent among the Syntengs in the Jowai subdivision. In the present decade a considerable part of the increase in the Sadr subdivision is due to immigration, particularly to immigration by Nepalis who have increased at an alarming rate. The number of Bengalis and other foreigners has also increased considerably. Altogether about a quarter of the total increase in the Shillong subdivision is due to immigration. The town of Shillong has expanded rapidly and, including its cantonment now contains a population of 26,536 souls—an increase of 54·3 per cent. since the last census. With the opening of the new road to Sylhet it is probable that the population of the town and of the district will expand at an even greater rate in future.

Apart from the increase due to immigration the indigenous hill people have increased at a satisfactory rate. The language statistics—which in these hills would be very accurate—give an increase of nearly 15 per cent. in the total number of Khasi-Synteng speakers in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and I should regard this as a good indication of the natural increase of the indigenous population.

On the whole the last decade has been a prosperous one for the Khasis and Syntengs. Public Health, except for short local outbreaks of cholera and small-pox, has been generally good, crops have been up to the average and the district has thus been able to shake off in a wonderfully short time the effects of the devastating influenza epidemic of 1918.

As might be expected the density of the Shillong subdivision—52 persons per square mile—is a good deal higher than that of Jowai which has a density of only 39. If Shillong town were excluded the density of the Sadr subdivision would be only 45.

The country is thus sparsely populated and can never be anything else. The lower hills are malarious and are avoided by the Khasis and the higher regions contain only a limited amount of land suitable for cultivation. Generally speaking the only increase of cultivation that can be brought about is by an extension of the wet-rice terrace system.

The Khasi States—twenty-five in all—comprise 90 per cent. of the total area of the Sadr subdivision of the district and contain 86 per cent. of its population. Only a little over a fifth of the Shillong Municipality itself is in British territory, the rest falling within the Khasi State of Myllem. Details of the population of the individual States, which vary from States like Myllem and Khyrim—each of which has a population of nearly half a lakh—to States whose population can be reckoned in hundreds will be found in Provincial Table I.

32. The population of the Naga Hills has increased by 20,043 or by 12·6 per cent. The figure, however, includes 6,820 persons censused for the first time in the Melomi-Primi* area and in certain villages east of Mokokchung. The real increase in the old population of the district is therefore 13,223 or 8·9 per cent. of which the Kohima subdivision accounts for 5,851 or 6·6 per cent. and the Mokokchung subdivision for 7,372 or 10·5 per cent. This seems a satisfactory increase compared with the increase—if areas censused for the first time are omitted—of only 1,963 persons in the old population between 1911 and 1921.

Except for immigration, however, the population of the district, which suffered heavily from the influenza epidemic, would have actually shown a slight decrease in 1921. Unfortunately it is not possible to give the figures for new immigrants into the district during the last decade. There is, however, no doubt that immigration has continued—there has been an influx of over a thousand Mikirs and the plains area around Dimapur has attracted other immigrants from outside the district—and it is probable that the indigenous population of the hills has not increased by more than five or six per cent. Still this is a good deal better than the decrease in the indigenous population during the previous decade and must be ascribed to the almost complete absence of epidemics during the last ten years and to the general normal course of events—"Crops and wages have been normal," reports the Deputy Commissioner, "and the earthquakes we have had have done no damage."

Nevertheless, Mr. J. P. Mills, I.C.S., the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, is not at all satisfied with the present condition of things and fears that increasing contact with a foreign culture is having a most harmful effect on the

* Mr. J. P. Mills, I.C.S., informs me that if I wish to be absolutely accurate I should call this area the 'Meluri-Akhegwo' area. I prefer, however, to use the name by which it has always been known in the Secretariat files.

primitive tribes of the Naga Hills. He has analysed the census figures by tribes and his conclusions are as follow :—

“Taking 3.76 as the average size of a household the increase in houses is remarkably small compared with that of the population.

Villages being concentrated and regularly counted for purposes of taxation the census figures for houses were easily checked and are probably very accurate. The Konyak tribe, the least touched and most lightly administered, is the only one that shows a normal proportionate increase of both houses and population. The Ao tribe, which shows the largest increase of all, has 3,377 additional members since 1921, but only 520 new houses, and in this tribe two families never occupy the same house. The Western Rengma figures are even more remarkable, the population having increased by 2,671, but the houses by 16 only. The Angami tribe, the biggest in the district, is almost at a stand still. The smaller villages are dying out, no fewer than 29 out of 103 villages of the tribe showing a decrease of population. Out of those that show an increase in population 26 show a decrease in the number of houses.

There can be no doubt that the increase is one of children rather than of established households, and in the conditions prevailing here such an increase must be regarded as a fluctuating and possibly temporary one, dependent on good general health and sufficiency of food. It is impossible to be satisfied with the state of things. Malaria there has always been, but the lassitude engendered by unbroken peace, the passing of old days and old ways, and the ceaseless assault on the tenets of a Faith which has satisfied the Naga from time immemorial has lessened his power of resistance. The lower villages are crumbling away now. The turn of the others may come later. The Lhotas of Sadr, with many villages near the plains, show a decrease of both population and households. The Lhotas of Mokokchung, who, on the whole, have healthier sites, have lost in households, but have gained in children who may or may not grow up. I have just visited the Naked Rengma village of Sahonyu which is on an unhealthy site. It held its own for years against enemies before we took it over. The population has fallen from 279 to 170 since the last census. The inhabitants are living scattered among empty house platforms, too listless to move to a better position.”

A note by Mr. Mills on the effect on the tribes of the Naga Hills of contacts with civilization is published as an appendix to this Report. I strongly advise every reader who has read so far to turn to it at once.

The density of the Naga Hills is 42 persons to the square mile. Although the Mokokchung subdivision has a higher density than that of the Kohima or Sadr subdivision (which includes the thinly populated Melomi-Primi area) the Angami country in the Sadr subdivision is the most thickly populated part of the district. The Angamis have developed a really wonderful system of terraced and irrigated rice cultivation by which they get an annual crop of rice from the same fields. In the rest of the district, where *jhum* is the main form of cultivation, the land has to be left fallow for a number of years and this means that larger areas are required to support the population. The Deputy Commissioner reports that the pressure on the land is very great in the Soma country where the hill sides have been *jhumed* out. “To remedy this state of affairs”, he writes, “two remedies have been applied. With the aid of an annual grant from Government irrigated terraces have been made where there is sufficient water. These not only give a crop every year, but relieve the pressure on the *jhum* land. Some villages have already been raised thereby from abject poverty to comparative opulence, and the area of the experiment will be extended. In addition to this colonies have been planted on the depopulated ranges near the plains. Heat and malaria are against them and they do not flourish. The whole of the cultivable land in the hills is fully occupied and I think it would be impossible to plant a single other village anywhere”.

33. The population of the Lushai Hills has increased from 98,406 to 124,408 ^{The Lushai Hills.} or by 26.4 per cent., the largest percentage increase of any hill district in Assam. In 1911-21 the percentage increase was only 7.9 of which only 2.7 per cent. was due to natural increase, the low rate of natural growth being due to the ravages of the influenza epidemic. About 2 per cent. of the increase at this census is due to the incorporation within the district of the Zongling area to the south of the Lungleh subdivision with a population of 1,696.

As for the balance of the increase it is difficult to assign any particular reason. All factors were favourable for progress. There was no epidemic disease during the decade and the annual vital statistics of the district show a steady increase of births over deaths. The condition of the people was prosperous, the rainfall was normal, and crops were generally good. The Deputy Commissioner reports that there was a certain amount of immigration from the adjoining Chin Hills of Burma but the statistics of birth-place do not disclose any marked change in the number of immigrants since 1911.

The Lushai Hills has the smallest density of any district in Assam—there being only 15 persons to every square mile: Aijal subdivision has 19 persons to the square mile and Lungleh only 11. The district is thus very thinly populated and could easily support a much larger number of people. Given favourable health conditions this district should show another large increase in 1941.

34. The North Cachar Hills—a subdivision of the Cachar district—are low and unhealthy and have a population of only 32,844—an increase of 13.6 per cent. since 1921. How much of this is due to natural increase and how much to immigration it is not possible to tell. A certain amount is certainly due to the importation of coolies by the Assam-Bengal Railway to work in the stone quarries which have been opened up near the railway line. The Subdivisional Officer reports that the only change which is apparent in the subdivision is that new *jhum* lands are becoming very scarce. *Kala azar* is endemic in the subdivision especially among the Kacharis who live in the lower foothills along the Diyung river but it is now well under control. ^{North Cachar Hills.}

35. The population of Manipur State has increased by 61,590 or by 16 per cent. ^{Manipur.} In 1911-21 the percentage increase was 10.9 and in 1901-11 it was 21.7. The fall in the rate of increase in 1911-21 was entirely confined to the Manipur Hills, which are inhabited by various Kuki and Naga tribes, and was explained in the 1921 report as being due to the havoc wrought by the influenza epidemic in the hills and to the unsettlement caused by the Kuki rebellion of 1917-19. Between 1911-21 the population of the hills increased by only one per cent. against an increase in the population of the Manipur Valley of 16.5 per cent. At this census the population of the hills has increased more rapidly than that of the valley, the increase in the hills amounting to 21.3 per cent. while the valley has increased only by 13.5 per cent. The increase in the hills must be principally due to the good public health of the decade and to the peaceful conditions which followed the suppression of the Kuki rebellion.

The rate of increase in the valley, which is inhabited by the Manipuris, is 13.5 per cent. against an increase of 16.7 per cent. in 1901-11 and 16.5 per cent. in 1911-21. This fall in the rate of increase is difficult to explain but it is probably due, to some extent, to the emigration of Manipuris from the overcrowded parts of the main valley to areas which are technically within the “hill section” of the State and which are suitable for rice cultivation. The Panah which shows the smallest increase is the Imphal Panah where the population is denser than in any other part. The Political Agent reports that the time is rapidly approaching when there will be no further room for agricultural expansion in the main valley and that settlements of Manipuris are, even now, competing with hillmen for land in the tributary valleys such as those of the Khuga and Chakpi rivers. Migration is of little account in the State.

"Immigration and emigration", says the Political Agent, "are negligible. There is a certain give and take in migration between the North Chin and Lushai Hills and the South Manipur Hills, but no decided trend in either direction. The customs of the stable and conservative Naga communities of the North-Western, Northern and North-East Hills do not encourage migration, which is practically non-existent on these borders. The administration by the Naga Hills and Upper Chindwin districts of the Somra Tract since the suppression of the Kuki Rebellion in 1919, has checked the tendency of the Thado tribes to migrate eastwards. In the valley, which is rapidly becoming unduly populated by the indigenous inhabitants, the Darbar discourage immigration, and the pressure of population is so far only sufficient to cause seasonal emigration during the cold weather into the plains of Assam and Burma, in search of trade and employment."

Houses and families

36. A "house" as viewed by a census official did not mean a particular structure or building: it was defined as the buildings, one or many, inhabited by one family who lived and ate together. In other words the census "house" in Assam corresponds with certain exceptions, to what we would call a "house-hold". The principal exceptions were jails and police lines where each ward, barrack or building was counted as a house and coolie lines where each doorway was given a separate number. The statistics of the number of houses in Assam have, therefore, no relation to the number of buildings and afford no indication of the sufficiency of house-room or overcrowding. They should, however, give us some idea of the average size of a family though in view of the large number of immigrants in Assam it would be unwise to place too much reliance on any deduction from the figures.

The actual number of "houses" in the census sense of the term is given for each district in Imperial Table I and for subdivisions and thanas in Provincial Table I. Subsidiary Table V appended to this chapter shows the average number of persons per house in every district since 1891. There has been little change in the average number of persons per house since the last census and, as I have already said, I doubt whether it would be wise to draw any deduction for the slight variations disclosed. But there are certainly no signs of any decrease in the average size of a household in Assam and the figures lend no support to the theory that the joint family system is in danger of rapid dissolution.

Yet there is a universal consensus of opinion that the process of disintegration—a process which have been commented upon in the last two census reports—is still continuing. The extracts which follow give the views of some of the gentlemen who were good enough to write to me on the subject.

Rai Bahadur P. C. Sen Gupta does not approve of the tendency of the times:—

"Both in urban and rural areas" he writes "the joint family system is breaking up. The reasons for this are:—

- (1) The growth of the individualistic spirit and loss of respect for elders—due mostly to the alien form of education, growth of selfishness and the irresponsible preaching of socialistic ideas from abroad.
- (2) Economic condition:—Inequality of earning or capacity among different members giving rise to quarrels; false ideas of comfort and ease; movement of earning members to towns and other distant places for employment or service.
- (3) The marriage of grown up girls who come with preconceived ideas of their own and cannot adapt themselves to the family, is the potent factor in the rapid disintegration.

The effects of this are:—The breaking up of an old healthy social institution; the loss of mutual help and unity; destruction of the traditional system of co-operative sickness and old age insurance; disintegration into isolated units; aiming at a higher standard of living and generally living beyond one's means; general poverty and a spirit of unreal formality."

Rai Bahadur Ananda Chandra Agarwalla of Tezpur thinks that there is at least one advantage in the break up of the system. The following is his opinion:—

"The joint family system is gradually, but surely, disintegrating. The Western philosophy of life invading the Indian mind has in practice affected the fundamentals of Indian life and the clash between the two philosophies has resulted in the gradual disruption of the Hindu joint family system. With the advancement of democracy the individual in a family like the individual in the State has learnt to assert himself. The direct effect is that members of society who under the ancient Hindu system would have looked up their natural superiors for initiative have begun to shake off their authority and started to look to themselves for guidance in life. Though this factor is at present creating much trouble yet any reasonable student of human achievements must recognize the ample compensation of

the nature of a greater amount of human enterprise. The present godless education and the reluctance of educated youngmen to follow their forefathers' professions might also be responsible to some extent in the breaking up of the joint family system."

The whole position is concisely summed up by Rai Bahadur Promode Chandra Datta, C.I.E., who writes:—

"Many causes have contributed to bring about the breaking up of the joint family system. Western education has its part, the tendency of the time is individualistic and submission to a common head because he happens to be the seniormost member of the family is considered an anomaly. But there is a lurking attachment for the joint family system in the mind of every Hindu and where the family is in possession of properties sufficient to meet the needs of the members, it ordinary continues joint. When, however, it is faced with economic difficulties disintegration begins. The earning member separates himself—the break up follows.

The joint family system has certain advantages. The deaf and the dumb, the blind, the disabled, have all their place in it and are as well cared for as the resources of the family would allow. In sickness the services of every member are available. The need for orphanages, work-houses and hospitals is greatly minimised. Its obvious defect is that members lack the incentive to earn.

On a balance of advantages and disadvantages it is difficult to say if society is much the better for the disintegration of the joint family system. Outlook on life is changing, self-reliance is coming to be the rule but sympathy between the members is gradually waning."

It is remarkable that although for the last twenty years the joint family system by an almost universal testimony has been slowly crumbling the census statistics show that there has been a tendency for the average number of persons per house-hold to increase. The only conclusions, I think, which we can safely draw is that the process of disintegration—and that there is such a process cannot be denied—is proceeding very very slowly.

37. We have now surveyed the general distribution and movement of the population during the last ten years and we have seen that the large increase recorded at the census of 1931 is principally due to the natural growth of the population. *Crescite, et multiplicamini, et replete terram* is a precept which is literally carried out by the people of Assam among whom any system of limitation of families is practically unknown. Except in a few places there is still little pressure of population on the soil which year after year brings forth abundant harvests with little toil. Disease is, in fact, at present the main check in Assam upon the growth of the population and of disease, God knows, we have enough. Fortunately the decade was singularly free from any great epidemic and to this fact is principally due the great increase of population recorded at this census. Add to this the fact that *kala azur* is now well under control and that cholera can be kept and is kept within reasonable bounds and the record increase of population is not a matter for surprise. To tea we owe nothing at this census, so far as the increase in population is concerned, but Eastern Bengal immigrants have added at least 200,000 to the population of the Assam Valley and Nepalis continue to find in Assam a land flowing with milk and honey.

So much for the increase of population. As regards other matters the chapters which follow, will, I hope, bring the salient facts to light. In them, most of the problems which touch the social life of the people will appear: some have already been the subject of political warfare, e.g., the Sarda Act; others, such as the immigration of foreigners, the unemployment problem among the educated classes, the spread of literacy, will form the basis of the provincial politics of the future. But a Census Superintendent must not look to the future—where all is uncertain—but to his statistics and the statistics of previous censuses. But this much I will say. Let not Assam on the eve of attaining political autonomy forget the great men who have, in the past, laboured so faithfully for her welfare. It seems almost incredible that it is barely a hundred years ago since David Scott introduced peace and order into the Assam Valley where the oppression and fiendish cruelties of the Burmese invaders had nearly exterminated the whole of the Assamese race; and that only fifty to sixty years have passed since the Lushais and Nagas were turbulent and dreaded warriors from the hills who carried back with them into their impenetrable fastnesses the severed heads of the victims of their raids.

In 1835 the population of the whole of the Assam Valley was estimated to be 800,000; to-day it is approaching five millions. In 1853 the population of Sylhet was calculated to be 1,393,309; to-day it is just double that figure.

Si monumentum requiris.—If you seek for a monument to British administration, read the history of Assam from 1800 to 1840, and then look about you.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

DENSITY, WATER-SUPPLY AND CROPS.

District and natural division.	Mean density per square mile in 1931.	Percentage of total area which is cultivated (net).	Normal rainfall.	Percentage of gross cultivated area which is under—					
				Rice.	Other food-grains (except rice).	Oil-seeds.	Jute.	Tea.	All other crops.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ASSAM	137	17	118.15	70	29	6	29	6.5	11.7
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	171	19	98.09	64.4	3.5	8.9	4.2	7.3	11.6
Goalpara	222	24	100.05	64.7	1.9	18.5	8.2	5	6.2
Kamrup	254	35	81.12	74.7	5.1	7	2.8	4	10
Darrang	206	25	84.45	58.6	3.3	8.8	3.8	12.7	13
Nowgong	144	15	68.39	52.3	7.5	13.1	12.3	2.6	12.1
Sibsagar	182	22	69.19	64.5	1.7	3.5	1	13.3	16.9
Lakhimpur	171	16	113.17	60.3	1.5	2.3	2	22.1	18.6
Sadiya	17	3	143.82	73.6	3.7	7.4	...	5.5	9.8
Balipara	9	3	99.54	85.9	...	8.7	2	2	5
SURMA VALLEY	438	36	128.30	80.6	6	1.6	9	6.3	10
*Cachar (Plains)	273	15	121.15	70.3	1.0	2.3	1	14	12.3
Sylhet	407	51	135.45	82.7	5	1.5	1.0	4.7	9.8
HILLS	39	3	129.07	62.2	11.4	2.1	1.3	...	22.9
Garo Hills	61	5	107.05	59.6	3.1	5.6	4.5	...	27.2
*Khasi and Jaintia Hills	47	6	229.23	46.2	10.3	1.4	...	...	42
North Cachar Hills	17	...	109.17	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naga Hills	43	4	56.90	70.4	17.3	...	...	...	12.3
Lushai Hills	15	2	108.03	70.9	15.4	7.8	...	...	11.9
Manipur	53	...	59.91	...	...	...	...	...	...

N.B.—In the calculation for the province as a whole and for natural divisions those areas for which figures are not available have been left out of account.

* The Agricultural statistics of Cachar include those of North Cachar, and those of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills are for British villages only.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO DENSITY.

District and natural division.	Thanas with a population per square mile of—													
	Under 150.		150–300.		300–450.		450–600.		600–750.		750–900.		Over 900.	
	Area in square miles.	Population (000's omitted).	Area.	Population (000's omitted).	Area.	Population (000's omitted).	Area.	Population (000's omitted).	Area.	Population (000's omitted).	Area.	Population (000's omitted).	Area.	Population (000's omitted).
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
ASSAM	46,320	2,257	11,857	2,654	4,579	1,666	2,623	1,319	1,281	855	475	385	99	92
	68.8	24.4	17.8	23.7	6.8	18.0	3.9	14.5	1.9	9.2	.7	4.2	.1	1.0
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	13,795	953	9,817	2,250	2,782	957	1,239	627	59	37	...	...	...	...
	49.8	20.1	35.5	45.5	10.0	20.3	4.5	13.3	.2	.8	...	...	...	...
Goalpara	1,232	160	1,770	350	735	255	163	81	50	37	...	...	...	...
	31.4	18.1	44.4	39.7	18.5	28.8	4.2	9.2	1.5	4.2	...	...	...	...
Kamrup	410	44	2,747	606	230	83	449	241	...	...	...	...	...	...
	10.9	4.5	71.5	62.1	6.0	8.8	11.6	24.6	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	453	53	2,909	413	378	114	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	16.0	9.8	70.7	70.6	13.3	19.6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nowgong	2,413	151	1,171	223	...	...	312	159	...	...	...	...	...	...
	61.9	26.8	30.1	45.0	...	...	5.0	28.2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sibsagar	2,157	245	693	155	1,070	393	311	147	...	...	...	...	...	...
	61.5	26.3	11.6	16.5	20.8	41.4	6.1	15.8	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lakhimpur	2,239	233	1,527	373	369	116	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	55.2	32.5	36.1	51.5	8.7	16.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sadiya	3,200	53	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	100.0	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Balipara	860	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	100.0	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
SURMA VALLEY	333	43	2,140	501	1,737	709	1,384	712	1,222	818	475	385	99	92
	4.5	1.3	23.7	15.5	24.1	21.7	18.0	21.8	10.4	25.1	6.4	11.8	1.3	2.8
Cachar Plains	333	43	1,189	269	262	118	185	109	...	...	...	...	...	...
	10.9	7.9	60.3	50.0	13.3	21.9	9.5	20.2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sylhet	...	...	851	235	1,535	501	1,106	603	1,222	813	475	385	99	92
	...	...	17.4	8.6	28.0	21.7	21.8	22.2	22.3	30.0	8.7	14.1	1.8	3.4
HILLS*	32,192	1,263	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	100.0	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

* In the hills the density everywhere is below 70 per square mile.

NOTE.—The figures in italics show the percentage which the area and population in each class bear to the total area and population of the district.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE III.

VARIATION IN RELATION TO DENSITY SINCE 1881.

District and natural division.	Percentage of variation: Increase (+) Decrease (-).					Net variation, 1881-1931.	Mean density per square mile.		
	1881 to 1931.	1891 to 1921.	1901 to 1911.	1891 to 1901.	1881 to 1901.		1881.	1921.	1931.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ASSAM	+15.7	+13.2	+15.2	+11.8	+6.8	+80.3	137	120	107
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY ...	+22.5	+24.1	+18.7	+5.8	+10.0	+109.8	171	141	114
Goalpara ...	+15.8	+26.9	+30.0	+2.0	+1.4	+97.6	222	191	151
Kamrup ...	+27.3	+14.2	+13.3	-7.1	-1.7	+51.3	254	199	174
Darrang ...	+22.6	+27.0	+11.9	+9.7	+12.7	+115.4	206	163	132
Nowgong* ...	+41.3	+31.9	+15.5	-24.8	+10.3	+79.1	144	103	77
Sibsagar* ...	+13.4	+19.1	+15.6	+24.4	+23.5	+137.6	182	160	135
Lakhimpur ...	+23.5	+30.4	+26.4	+46.5	+41.6	+522.5	171	130	106
Sadiya ...	+29.3	+122.5	...	...	...	...	17	14	6
Dalipara ...	+40.4	+324.8	...	...	...	...	9	7	2
SURMA VALLEY ...	+7.2	+3.3	+10.8	+5.3	+11.5	+44.1	428	408	395
Cachar Plains ...	+7.5	+6.4	+13.4	+12.9	+25.1	+83.1	273	254	233
Sylhet ...	+7.2	+2.7	+10.3	+4.0	+9.4	+35.3	497	464	452
HILLS ...	+15.6	+8.2	+18.5	+77.7	-22.1	+105.3	39	35	33
Garo Hills ...	+6.6	+12.7	+14.9	+13.7	+11.0	+74.3	61	57	50
Khasi and Jaintia Hills ...	+19.3	+3.5	+16.2	+2.3	+17.9	+72.8	57	40	39
North Cachar Hills ...	+13.6	-1.3	-33.1	+115.5	-5.9	+50.5	17	15	16
Naga Hills ...	+12.6	+6.6	+46.1	+6.0	+1.1	+53.7	42	41	41
Lushai Hills ...	+26.4	+7.9	+10.6	+88.9	...	...	15	13	11
Manipur ...	+16.0	+10.9	+21.7	...	...	+101.6	52	45	40

* The density of the "backward tract" area of the Nowgong Mikir Hills is 24 and of the regularly administered portion of the district 311. The density of the "backward tract" area of the Sibsaigar Mikir Hills is 27 and of the regularly administered portion of the district 234.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE IV.

COMPARISON WITH VITAL STATISTICS.

District and natural division.	In 1921-30 total number of		Number percent. of population of 1921 of		Excess (+) or deficiency (-) of births over deaths.	Increase (+) or decrease (-) of actual population of 1931 compared with 1921.
	Births.	Deaths.	Births.	Deaths.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ASSAM	2,079,593	1,628,739	30.3	23.8	+ 450,854	+ 1,074,037
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY ...	1,118,950	863,073	29.4	22.6	+ 255,872	+ 853,737
Goalpara ...	269,600	218,001	35.4	28.6	+ 51,599	+ 120,225
Kamrup ...	217,389	166,091	28.5	21.8	+ 51,298	+ 213,175
Darrang ...	141,468	120,350	29.6	25.2	+ 21,118	+ 107,629
Nowgong ...	109,196	84,140	27.4	21.1	+ 25,056	+ 164,574
Sibsagar ...	224,028	151,671	27.2	18.4	+ 72,357	+ 110,129
Lakhimpur ...	157,269	122,825	26.8	20.9	+ 34,444	+ 138,005
SURMA VALLEY ...	960,643	765,661	31.6	25.2	+ 194,982	+ 220,300
Cachar Plains ...	167,496	124,683	33.5	24.9	+ 42,813	+ 37,299
Sylhet ...	793,147	640,078	31.2	25.2	+152,169	+ 183,001

NOTE.—The statement is exclusive of the figures of the hill districts and frontier tracts as birth and death statistics are not recorded in them as a whole.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE V.

PERSONS PER HOUSE AND HOUSES PER SQUARE MILE.

District and natural division.	Average number of persons per house.					Average number of houses per square mile.				
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ASSAM	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.9	28	27	25	23	23
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.6	5.0	35	29	27	23	24
Goalpara	5.6	5.6	5.3	5.3	5.5	40	54	28	22	21
Kamrup	5.2	5.0	5.1	4.9	5.0	43	30	34	31	33
Darrang	4.6	4.9	4.3	4.2	4.8	45	28	26	23	19
Nowgong	5.4	5.1	4.9	4.7	5.2	27	21	16	14	20
Sibsagar	4.6	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.7	40	37	31	27	34
Lakhimpur	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.5	41	35	25	22	15
Sadiya	5.0	4.9	*	*	*	3	2	*	*	*
Balipara	5.1	5.3	*	*	*	2	1	*	*	*
SURMA VALLEY	4.9	4.8	4.5	4.8	4.9	91	85	88	74	68
Cachar Plains	4.7	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.5	68	61	55	46	33
Syibet	5.0	4.9	4.5	4.9	5.0	100	94	100	84	80
HILLS	4.7	4.6	4.9	4.6	4.6	8	8	7	8	5
Garo Hills	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	5.1	13	12	10	9	7
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	4.8	4.7	5.2	4.8	5.0	10	9	8	7	6
North Cachar Hills	4.3	4.4	3.8	4.2	5.0	4	4	4	5	2
Naga Hills	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.5	11	12	11	10	6
Lushai Hills	5.6	5.2	5.0	5.3	5.1	3	3	3	2	3
Manipur	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.7	*	10	9	8	7	*

* Not available.

CHAPTER II.

THE POPULATION OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES.

38. Imperial Table IV gives the population of the towns in Assam at each successive census since 1881; Imperial Table V shows the distributions of religions in towns and Imperial Tables I and III give the distribution of the urban and rural population of the province. The three subsidiary tables at the end of this Chapter show (1) the distribution of the population between towns and villages, (2) the number per mille of each of the principal religions who live in towns, and (3) groups of towns classified according to size, with percentage variations at previous censuses.

39. For Census purposes a town in Assam was defined as:—

1. Every municipality or "small town" constituted under the Assam Municipal Act.
2. The Shillong Cantonment (the only cantonment in the province).
3. Places situated in the hill districts and frontier tracts which had a local fund and some form of municipal administration and were of sufficient importance to be treated as towns.
4. Every continuous collection of houses inhabited by more than 5,000 persons which the Superintendent of Census considered should be treated as a town.

Reference to statistics.

Definition of town.

Under (1) are included 17 municipalities and 8 "small towns". "Small towns", I may explain, correspond to the old "Unions" of the Bengal Municipal Act V of 1876; they are towns which, though not of sufficient importance to be granted the full status of municipalities, have been given a considerable measure of local self-government. Under (3) and (4) only four places have been treated as towns. Of these Imphal is the capital of Manipur State, Kohima and Sadiya are district headquarters and Lumding is a railway centre. The places treated as towns at this census are, therefore, exactly the same as in 1921 with the exception that the Shillong Cantonment is now shown as a separate town instead of being treated, as in 1921, as part of Shillong town.

40. Assam is purely an agricultural province; its largest and most important industry, tea cultivation, is mainly agricultural and tea gardens — with their own local markets and resident traders — tend to prevent rather than assist the formation of urban communities.

Urban population compared with other provinces.

Nevertheless the total number of persons living in towns in Assam has increased from 258,148 to 315,917 and the urban population now forms 34 per mille of the total population of the province.

The figures in the margin show clearly how extremely small is the proportion of the urban population in Assam compared with other provinces in India and also how small is the proportion in other provinces in India compared with an industrial country like England and Wales. Insignificant as it is, the Assam figure of 34 per mille should be smaller still; it has been unduly swollen by the

inclusion of Imphal, the capital of Manipur State, which has a nominal urban population of nearly 86,000. Imphal is, however, not a town in the strict sense of the word but rather a collection of villages grouped around the palace of the ruler. If we exclude two-thirds of the population of Imphal as not being strictly urban in character — and it is at least that — the proportion of the total population of Assam which lives in towns falls to 28 per mille.

	Number per mille who live in towns.
England and Wales	800
India	110
Bombay	211
Madras	136
Bengal	73
United Provinces	112
Bihar and Orissa	40
Assam	34

Rural character of Assam Towns.

41. Many places in Assam which have been declared municipalities and "small towns" have few urban characteristics and are really nothing but large villages which have the distinction of being subdivisional headquarters; a stranger to the province who found himself, for example, in Maulvi Bazar; which is a full-fledged municipality, would certainly classify it in his mind as a large village. It is, in fact, only the larger towns in Assam -- towns of say 8,000 inhabitants and over -- which have any real urban characteristics and even they are largely rural in nature. As Mr. Lloyd stated in his Census Report for 1921:—

"Towns in Assam would hardly be recognized as such by dwellers in other parts of India -- paved street with rows of high buildings, electric trams and statues of great men are not to be seen". There is, however, a tendency for the larger towns to develop, with their increasing population, a more urban atmosphere and six of the nine towns which have a population of over 10,000 are now lighted by electricity.

Growth of Urban population.

42. Imperial Table IV shows clearly how towns in Assam are gradually increasing in size. In 1911 there were only 6 towns with a population of 10,000 and over; there are now nine such towns. At no previous census was there a town with a population of between 20,000 to 50,000; there are now three towns of this class. The average population of a town was 8,902 in 1921; in 1931 it stands at 10,531. It must not, of course, be forgotten that there have been numerous small extensions of municipal boundaries during the last decade but these are comparatively unimportant and the additional population added by this means would not amount to more than a few thousands.

The percentage increase in the urban population of the province during the last decade is 22.4 which is higher than the provincial increase of 15.7 per cent.; the increase is spread over all classes of towns but is most pronounced in the case of towns like Shillong, Gauhati, Sylhet, Silchar, Nowgong, Tezpur, Dhubri and Jorhat which are all district headquarters and favourably situated for the purposes of trade; we may safely infer that these towns will continue to expand at a steady rate and that the problems of their municipal water-supply, conservancy and health will become of increasing importance during the next decade. The only plains "county town" which has increased by less than 20 per cent. is Dibrugarh, the headquarters of the Lakhimpur district, which is now beginning to feel the competition of Tinsukia. Tinsukia, which is at present classed as a "small town", is rapidly developing and with its excellent situation at a railway junction in the very heart of the Tea Industry of the Sadr subdivision bids fair to become the principal trade centre of Lakhimpur.

Shillong with its cantonment is the largest town in the province having a total population of 26,533. It owes its importance to the fact that it is the headquarters of the Local Government who have, in fact, created the town. The rapidity of its growth may be judged from the fact that it has doubled its population in the last twenty years and that forty years ago its population was only just over 4,000. The large increase in the population of the cantonment since 1921 is due to the fact that an additional battalion of Gurkha Rifles has been posted there since the last census was taken.

A motor road from Shillong to Sylhet is now in course of construction and with its opening Shillong will be within a few hours run of the swarming population of the Surma Valley. This should lead to a further rapid expansion of Shillong in the next decade but its real charm, — the quiet peace of its pine covered hills — will have gone for ever. There are already signs that Shillong — instead of being a health resort — is becoming distinctly unhealthy and malaria is now a problem which will soon have to be tackled in earnest. The Shillong Municipality has the peculiar distinction of falling partly in British India and partly in the Khasi State of Myllem. Over three quarters of its population live, in fact, outside British India. The non-British portion has, however, been made a part of the municipality by means of a notification under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act which has extended to that portion the provisions of the Assam Municipal Act.

The only other towns which it is necessary to mention individually are Gauhati and Sylhet. Gauhati, the headquarters of the Kamrup district — the most populous district of the Assam Valley — with its excellent river and railway communications and educational facilities, is now the real capital of the Brahmaputra Valley; its steady expansion for the last twenty years encourages the hope that its former glories may yet return and that Pragjyotishpur or "the city of ancient glory" as it was called in olden times, may recover again some portion of its faded magnificence.

The population of Sylhet, another ancient town, which, like Gauhati, showed little signs of development from 1872 to 1911 has increased by 27 per cent. It is now, with its Murarichand College, the principal educational centre of the Surma Valley; in addition it will soon be the terminus of the new motor road to Shillong and with its existing railway connection with the main Assam-Bengal line will be most favourably placed for capturing the trade of the district. Sylhet should show a considerable growth in the next decade.

43. Excluding Imphal which, as already explained, has a habit of upsetting our urban statistics, there are only 593 females to every 1,000 males in the towns of Assam. In 1921 there were 633 and in 1911, 636. The fall in the proportion of females to males since 1921 is due to the immigration of males — principally foreigners — into some of the towns which have shown the greatest increases in population. Thus in 1921 there were 809 females per 1,000 males in Shillong; in 1931 there are only 699. Similarly in the case of Tinsukia the proportion of females per 1,000 males has fallen from 564 in 1921 to 414 at this census. Barpeta is the only town in the plains in which the sexes are practically equal. This peculiarity of Barpeta has been noticed in previous census reports. The correct explanation, I have no doubt, is that Barpeta, which is the religious centre of the Mahapurushia sect, is really a large village in the midst of a swamp; it offers no inducements to foreigners to reside there and its ambitious young men would naturally go elsewhere to seek their fortunes.

Subsidiary Table II shows that out of every thousand Hindus in the Brahmaputra Valley 31 reside in towns. Among Muslims the proportion is 32. On the other hand only 12 out of every thousand Muslims in the Surma Valley reside in towns while the proportion of Hindu town dwellers is 26 per mille. The difference in this respect between the two Valleys is due to the presence in the towns of the Brahmaputra Valley of a considerable number of Muslim shopkeepers and traders from Bengal and also to the fact that the descendants of the Muslim artisans who worked for the Ahom Rajas are mostly concentrated in the towns of Upper Assam. It is not necessary to dwell on the proportion of the various religions in the towns in the hills. Imphal is almost entirely Hindu and Shillong, as befits its position as the capital of the province, may best be described as cosmopolitan.

44. Of the total population of Assam 57 per cent. resides in villages and tea gardens. The total number of villages has increased by nearly 3,500 to 35,726. Except, however, in the hills, where villages are residential units and correspond generally to what would be called a village in any other part of the world, the villages of Assam are not true villages as ordinarily understood. For census purposes a village in the temporarily-settled districts of Cachar, Kamrup, Nowgong, Darrang, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur corresponds to the cadastral village — that is to say to the unit of the revenue survey. A cadastral village is locally a very well known unit; it has been surveyed and mapped and the ordinary villager understands it well. It is, however, by no means a village in the ordinary sense of the word; it merely happens to be the most convenient unit on which to base the framework of the census.

To give an example. In North Lakhimpur there is a place which is known generally as Bardaloni. In the cadastral survey this place falls within several cadastral sheets which are called by various names, e.g., Maralachuk, Bahkatika, etc. Each of these sheets was treated a separate census village. But the ordinary individual visiting the place would simply regard the whole collection of houses in that locality as one village and call it Bardaloni (a name which does not appear at all as a cadastral village). The cadastral village is thus a completely artificial unit of population, but it would be extremely difficult to find any better definition to take its

place. As Mr. Allen remarked in the Assam Census Report for 1901:—"The ordinary traveller through the plains of Assam would find himself not a little embarrassed to define a village or to point out where the boundaries of one ended and those of another began. In the cultivated tracts rice is grown in great *pathars* or plains, over which are dotted about groves of bamboos in which the homes of the cultivators are concealed, and it would, as a rule, be difficult to determine whether one or more of these clumps should form a village, whether a clump should or should not be subdivided, or to which particular main clump one of the minor clumps should be assigned".

In Sylhet and most of Goalpara where the land is permanently settled the cadastral village could not be adopted as the census village and we had to rely on a much more elastic definition. In these districts a village was defined as a "*gaon* or *gram* together with its adjacent *paras* and *tolas*". The trouble about this definition is that it is very difficult to determine whether a collection of houses is sufficiently important to be called a separate village or whether it should be included as a *para* of a larger adjoining collection of houses. This difficulty is illustrated by the figures showing the number of villages which vary from census to census in an extraordinary fashion. Thus though the population of Sylhet has increased by more than 7 per cent. since 1921 the number of villages has decreased by 276; this, however, proves nothing except that the 1931 figure for villages in Sylhet is probably more correct than that of 1921 when there was an extraordinary increase of 1,200 villages over the 1911 figure. Mr. Lloyd in his Census Report for 1921 stated that he could only account for this sudden increase as being due to the personal equation of the local officers in calling more hamlets villages than were so called in 1911. He was undoubtedly correct.

Any close analysis of the 'village' statistics in the plains districts is therefore useless. All that the figures tell is that there has been a large extension of cultivation in the Brahmaputra Valley which has led to the formation of over 3,000 new Survey and Settlement units.

As already explained villages in the hills are generally residential villages and our statistics show that with the increase of population in all hill districts the villages have also increased in number and that, except in the Naga Hills, the vast majority of hill men live in small villages of less than 500 inhabitants. In the Naga Hills, however, the villages are much larger and over half the population live in villages with from 500—2,000 inhabitants. Tea gardens have been included in our statistics as villages. They do not correspond to cadastral units but to places which are locally recognized as tea gardens. Such places have all got distinctive local names and are very definite units. They vary very much in size, some gardens having several thousand coolies, others a few hundred only.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION BETWEEN TOWNS AND VILLAGES.

District and natural division.	Average population per		Number per mille residing in		Number per mille of urban population residing in towns with a population of				Number per mille of rural population residing in villages with a population of			
	Town.	Village.	Towns.	Villages.	20,000 and over.	10,000 to 20,000.	5,000 to 10,000.	Under 5,000.	5,000 and over.	2,000 to 5,000.	500 to 2,000.	Under 500.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
ASSAM	10,531	250	34	868	476	210	207	107	2	37	389	572
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	7,442	297	30	970	154	378	294	178	3	50	401	542
Goalpara	7,147	270	24	976	...	...	1,000	...	6	52	294	643
Kamrup	13,000	342	40	960	528	353	...	89	...	58	423	521
Darrang	5,882	200	20	980	...	853	...	142	...	24	408	568
Nowgong	6,756	236	24	978	...	771	...	229	...	13	462	525
Sibsagar	5,704	309	25	975	...	...	647	353	...	44	520	430
Lakhimpur	6,070	279	30	961	...	671	185	144	11	100	329	500
Sadiya	4,370	131	82	918	...	...	...	1,000	...	...	174	826
Balipara	...	130	...	1,000	...	...	...	...	...	...	184	616
SURMA VALLEY	8,488	247	18	982	361	220	313	106	...	28	403	569
Cachar plains	7,536	412	28	972	...	867	...	133	...	...	683	337
Sylhet	8,369	229	16	984	483	...	420	97	...	34	352	613
HILLS	28,775	157	61	909	930	...	46	24	5	13	286	696
Caro Hills	...	88	...	1,000	...	...	...	...	...	12	39	940
North Cachar	...	97	...	1,000	...	...	...	...	...	...	50	950
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	13,208	108	92	908	803	...	197	...	...	...	110	890
Naga Hills	2,750	368	15	985	...	...	...	1,000	...	...	563	437
Lushai Hills	...	231	...	1,000	...	...	...	...	...	...	276	724
Manipur State	65,804	262	103	807	1,000	...	...	...	16	36	436	512

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II.

NUMBER PER MILLE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION AND OF EACH MAIN RELIGION WHO LIVE IN TOWNS.

District and natural division.	Number per mille who live in town.					
	Total popula- tion.	Hindu.	Muslim.	Christian.	Jain.	Tribal.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ASSAM	34	46	20	33	364	9
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	30	31	32	32	337	2
Goalpara	24	37	18	5	307	...
Kamrup	40	47	19	110	811	5
Darrang	20	20	39	8	170	1
Nowgong	24	29	20	91	187	...
Sibsagar	25	20	140	30	28	1
Lakhimpur	39	31	256	27	255	8
Sadiya	82	144	363	276	931	5
*Balipara	...	...	...	...	...	...
SURMA VALLEY	18	26	12	86	409	2
Cachar plains	28	34	17	77	846	1
Sylhet	16	23	11	93	363	4
HILLS	91	279	87	32	552	13
*Garó Hills	...	...	...	...	...	...
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	93	619	543	87	667	29
*North Cachar	...	...	...	...	...	...
Naga Hills	15	247	82	9	69	6
*Lushai Hills	...	...	...	...	...	...
Manipur	103	317	75	12	848	14

* No urban population.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE III.

TOWNS CLASSIFIED BY POPULATION.

Class of Towns.	Number of towns of each class in 1931.	Percentage of total urban population in each class.	Number of females per 1,000 males in towns as classed in 1931.	Increase per cent. in the population of the towns as classed at previous censuses.					Increase per cent. in urban population of each class from 1881 to 1931.	
				1921-1931.	1911-1921.	1901-1911.	1891-1901.	1881-1891.	(a) In towns as classed in 1881.	(b) In the total of each class in 1931 compared with the corresponding total of 1881.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
TOTAL	39	100	713	22.4	+12.5	+10.7	+14.1	+9.4	108.6*	243.2*
I.—100,000 and over	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
II.—50,000 to 100,000	1	27.2	1,137	7.3	+7.2	+3.3	...	...	...	...
III.—20,000 to 50,000	3	20.4	626	...	...	...	...	...	...	100.0
IV.—10,000 to 20,000	5	21.0	597	30.3	+18.9	+12.8	-1.0	-15.4	82.3	100.0
V.—5,000 to 10,000	10	20.7	573	31.3	+8.5	+13.3	+16.6	+11.9	87.2	220.5
VI.—Under 5,000	11	10.7	576	21.8	+24.4	+24.8	+16.4	+35.3	183.0	—9

* The percentages in columns 10 and 11 have been worked out on the basis of the adjusted figures shown in Imperial Table IV.

CHAPTER III.

BIRTHPLACE AND MIGRATION.

45. At this census—in order to save time and thereby money birthplace was not sorted for by districts but by provinces only and hence it is not possible to give statistics of the number of persons born in each district of Assam. As a result Imperial Table VI, which gives the statistics of birthplace contains less detail than the corresponding table of previous censuses. Appended to this chapter is a subsidiary table in three parts giving the statistics of migration between Assam and other parts of India.

Reference to Statistics.

46. It has been usual in past censuses to consider five main forms of migration, namely:—(i) *casual*, or the minor movements between neighbouring villages; these affect the returns only when the villages lie on opposite sides of the district boundary; (ii) *temporary*, due to business journeys or to a demand for labour on some new public work; (iii) *periodic*, due to seasonal demands for labour *e.g.*, Nunia coolies coming to Assam each cold weather for earthwork or Nagas coming down to the plains in the cold weather for jungle cutting. In this type of migration as well as in the semi-permanent type there is preponderance of men; (iv) *semi-permanent*, where the inhabitants of one place earn their living in another but maintain connection with their own homes and ultimately return there *e.g.*, the Marwari traders of the Assam Valley; (v) *permanent*, where overcrowding or pressure on the soil or some other reason causes the inhabitants of one place to settle permanently in another; *e.g.*, the Mymensinghia colonization of the Assam Valley.

Types of migration.

As the figures of birthplace by districts are not available on this occasion it is not possible to distinguish between all these forms of migration but the census figures combined with local knowledge furnish sufficient data to enable us to distinguish the main currents of immigration during the last ten years. Periodic migration often tends, of course, to become semi-permanent and semi-permanent migration to become permanent. Thus the immigration of Nepalis—where men largely predominate was originally mainly semi-permanent but has now become mainly permanent.

47. In 1931 out of a total provincial population of 9,247,857 there were 1,408,768 persons who were born outside the province while only 72,835 persons born within the province were enumerated elsewhere. The percentage of foreign-born persons in Assam is therefore 15.2 against 16.1 in 1921 and 12.5 in 1911.

Migration—general.

The statement below shows the constitution per mille of the population according to birthplace in 1931, 1921 and 1911.

	1931.	1921.	1911.
1. Born in Assam	848	839	875
2. Born in other provinces	142	152	118
3. Born outside India	10	9	7
Total	1,000	1,000	1,000

There has thus been a considerable change since 1921 in the proportion of persons born in Assam and in other provinces of India. The reasons for this are to be found in the next paragraph.

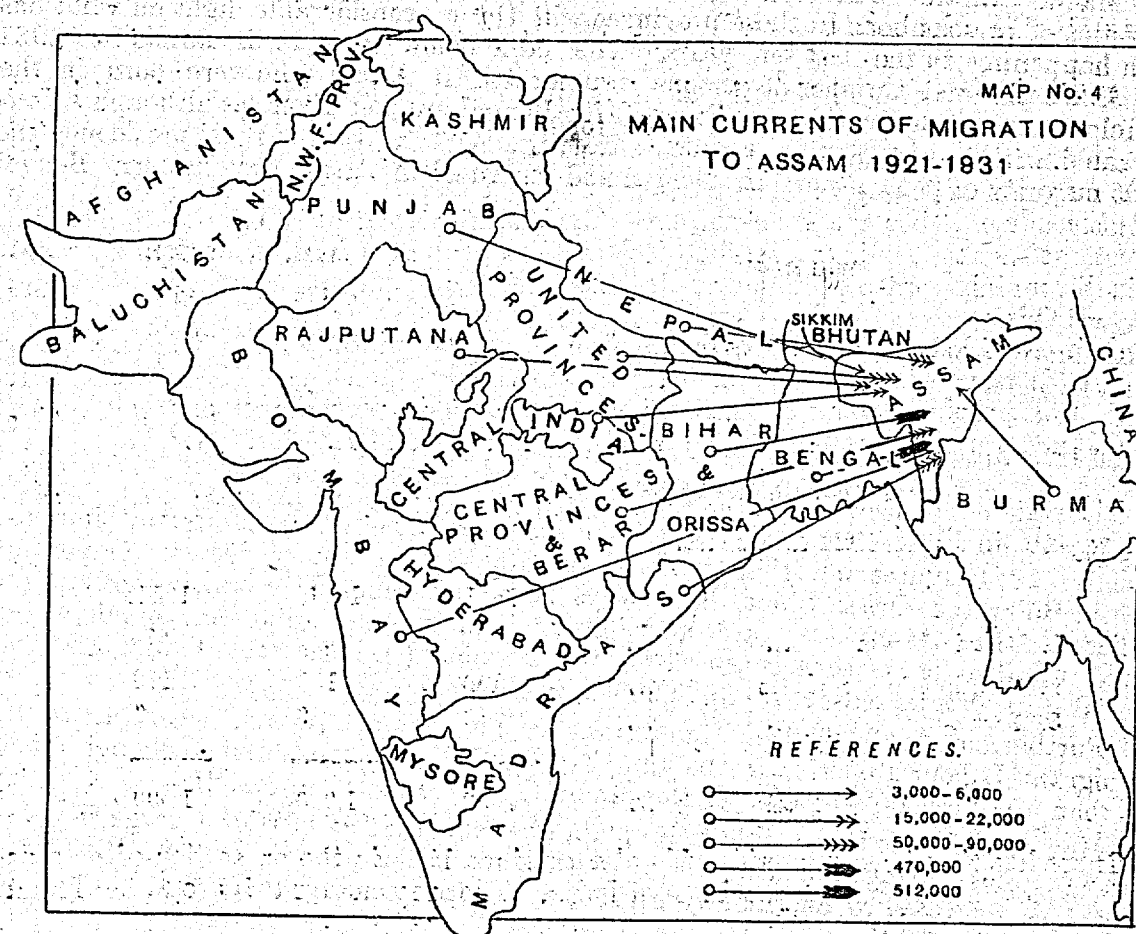
Where the
immigrants
come
from.

48. The exact numbers of immigrants into Assam from various parts of India are given in the subsidiary table appended to this chapter. It is however convenient to summarize the figures here and the table in the margin shows in thousands the number of immigrants into Assam and their country of origin. These figures are of considerable interest as they show that the currents of migration into Assam have not been flowing in the usual way during the last ten years. Up to the present census the main flow of immigrants into Assam has always been from the great tea garden recruiting provinces—particularly from Bihar and

Birthplace.	1931.	1921.	Difference.
Bengal	575	376	+199
Bihar and Orissa	472	571	-99
Central Provinces	82	91	-9
United Provinces	68	77	-9
Madras	58	55	+3
Central India Agency	15	18	-3
Rajputana	22	16	+6
Burma	8	7	+1
Bombay	6	1	+5
Punjab	6	3	+3
West of India	2	2	+0
Total from India	1,314	1,217	+97
From outside India	95	73	+22
(Nepal)	88	70	+18
Grand Total	1,409	1,290	+119

Orissa. In 1921 Bengal showed an enormous increase of 182,000 immigrants—as the result of colonization by Eastern Bengali settlers—but the tea recruiting provinces also showed large increases and there was no sign of any reduction in the supply of immigrants from those provinces. At the present census, however, there has been a considerable change. From Bengal immigrants have continued to pour into Assam as in the previous decade but in the case of the cooly recruiting provinces the stream has not flowed at the old rate and the total number of persons censused in Assam who were born in the main recruiting provinces, though still very large, is over 100,000 less than in 1921.

The map below illustrates the main currents of migration to Assam. The arrows show the net balance of migration, i.e., immigrants less emigrants, except in the case of Nepal for which figures of immigrants alone are known. The subtraction of Assamese emigrants makes some difference for Bengal and Burma but hardly affects any other province.



This map and the table above shows that immigrants into Assam come from three main sources, namely:—

(1) Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces, the United Provinces and Madras. These are the main provinces from which coolies are recruited for the tea plantations of Assam and most of the people recorded as born in those provinces are coolies or *ex-coolies*.

(2) Bengal.—The vast majority of these people are settlers from Eastern Bengal particularly from Mymensingh district.

(3) Nepal.

The immigrants from other parts of India are not numerous. The people from Rajputana are Marwaris—those ubiquitous merchants who control the trade of the Assam Valley. Their numbers have risen from 12,000 in 1911 to 16,000 in 1921 and to 22,000 in 1931. It appears that their numbers are expanding with the development of the province. The Punjabis are principally contractors, skilled mechanics, carpenters and motor *mistris*. As might be expected they have increased principally in Lakhimpur which is the most advanced industrial district in Assam. The immigrants from Burma are Chins or Pois who have settled across the border of the Lushai Hills and Manipur. Bombay shows a peculiar increase; this is due to an effort made to recruit tea garden coolies from that Presidency.

I now propose to examine in detail the three main currents of migration into Assam. As already pointed out these are:—

(i) Immigration to the Assam tea gardens.

(ii) Immigration of Eastern Bengal colonists.

(iii) Immigration of Nepalis.

49. It is not possible on this occasion to give separate figures showing the birthplaces of the coolies actually residing on tea estates. As, however, the great majority of persons censused in Assam who were born in Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces, Madras and the United Provinces are either coolies or *ex-coolies* a study of the statistics of persons born in those provinces will throw considerable light on what has been happening in the last ten years. The table below gives in thousands for 1921 and 1931 the total number of persons enumerated in Assam who were born in the principal recruiting provinces. Figures for Bengal are not given as although a considerable number of coolies are recruited from the Western part of that presidency the great majority of people born in Bengal and censused in Assam are Eastern Bengal colonists.

Immigration to the Assam Tea Gardens.

Birthplace.	1931.	1921.	1911.
Bihar and Orissa	472	571	399
Central Provinces and Berar	82	91	77
United Provinces	68	77	93
Madras	58	55	35
Central India Agency	15	18	7

Note:—The figures for the provinces include those of their States.

It will be noticed that Madras is the only province which shows any increase over the 1921 figures and that there has been an extraordinary decrease in persons born in Bihar and Orissa which has always been the principal recruiting ground for coolies for the Assam tea gardens. This is all the more peculiar in as much as the actual number of persons censused on tea gardens (including the managerial and clerical staff) has increased from 922,000 to 980,000.

Furthermore 422,000 new immigrant coolies entered Assam, according to the Immigrant Labour Reports, in the ten years 1921-31, a large number, though much less than the 769,000 who entered the province between 1911 and 1921.

How therefore is it possible to explain the fact that in spite of a large increase in new coolies during the last ten years the number of persons born in Bihar and Orissa has decreased so enormously without any corresponding increase in any other province.

That the decrease is confined to the tea districts is apparent from the marginal table.

Number of persons born in Bihar and Orissa censused in certain districts in Assam in 1931 and 1921 (000's omitted).

	1931.	1921.
Cachar	18	30
Sylhet	31	48
Goalpara	34	34
Kamrup	15	14
Darrang	93	105
Nowgong	18	20
Sibsagar	115	149
Lakhimpur	144	184

I ordered a resort of certain districts but the result was the same. To satisfy myself still further I personally checked the actual enumeration books of one thana in which a very large decrease had been shown. The figures must therefore be accepted as correct and their explanation is a matter of considerable interest. It is necessary, in the first place, to remember that had there been no recruitment at all from Bihar and Orissa during the last decade the 571,000 persons born in Bihar and Orissa and censused in Assam in 1921 would have been reduced by death to about 420,000. But in the last ten years a total of 169,000 new coolies have arrived from Bihar and Orissa (some of whom have since died) so that, in any case, we would expect to find about 572,000 Bihar and Orissa born people in Assam in 1931 whereas there are only 472,000. What has happened to the other 100,000? The answer to this must be sought in the history of labour immigration since 1919. The Superintendent of Census, Bihar and Orissa, has supplied me with figures showing the number of persons recruited for the gardens in Assam for every year since 1917-18. In the labour year 1917-18 the total number of recruits from Bihar and Orissa amounted to 12,462. In 1918-19 it jumped up to the astonishing figure of 178,918 which is not far short of the total number of recruits from that province for the whole of the decade 1921-31. In 1919-20 it was 68,466 and for the whole decade 1921-31 the total number of recruits amounted to 191,598 of whom 147,215 have been recruited in the last five years. It is thus clear that there was a completely abnormal flow of Bihar and Orissa coolies into Assam just before the 1921 census took place and this flow was responsible for the enormous increase recorded in 1921 in the number of Bihar and Orissa born persons in Assam.

After 1921, however, recruitment from Bihar and Orissa fell off rapidly and it is only in recent years that it has begun to revive—largely as the result of a system of short-term recruitment under which a coolie is brought up to Assam for a year or so and then sent back to his home.

The Superintendent of Census, Bihar and Orissa, has written to me as follows:

"The total number of emigrants (from Bihar and Orissa to Assam) for the decade ending on the 30th June 1930 was 169,043. This is less than the number recorded for the single year 1918-19. It is probable that a substantial number of coolies recruited by the tea gardens before 1921 have since returned to their homes in this province; and there is no doubt that the same thing applies in a much larger degree to the more recent recruits. The increase in the number of emigrants from 1927-28 onwards is attributed largely to the popularity of the system of recruitment for short terms of 6, 9 or 12 months."

The Chairman of the Assam Labour Board, Mr. F. C. King, I.C.S., who was asked whether he could throw any light on the matter has sent me the following reply:—

"I have not been able to ascertain the exact number of short-term labourers recruited from Bihar and Orissa, applying the word "short-term" to persons recruited for terms of three years and under, but I believe that the number of such recruits from Bihar and Orissa is in the neighbourhood of 50,000. A considerable proportion of these labourers would have returned to their homes before the census was taken, and this fact would partly account for the decline in the Bihar and Orissa element in the population. The short-term system of recruitment is practically confined to Bihar and Orissa.

Another factor which may have contributed to the decline is the number of labourers who have been repatriated on account of ill health or unsuitability, or who have given up their employment and returned to their homes. I am not able to supply you with figures showing the numbers lost to Assam in this way. As you know, however, the system of sending labourers to their homes with sardari certificates is often used as an indirect form of repatriation, as Managers frequently do not expect that these sardars will return to their gardens. On examining the returns for the past five years of sardars sent down from Assam, who did not report at the local agencies, I find that, on an average,

approximately 5,000 sardars from Bihar and Orissa were lost each year in this way. The tendency has, however, been for the number of such absentees to increase in recent years, as the following figures show:—

	September 1927.	September 1929.	September 1931.
Sardars from Bihar and Orissa not reported	7,725	9,374	11,115

The loss from this source during the decade might amount to something in the neighbourhood of 40,000.

A further factor influencing the situation is that there is now a large settled labour force of outside origin in the province, especially in Sylhet and Cachar, and that the children of these settled labourers are now taking their places in the tea garden labour forces, or are settling on land in the province of their adoption."

It must also be remembered that the great exodus of coolies from the Karimganj subdivision of Sylhet took place in May 1921, i.e., after the 1921 census, which was held in March 1921, and that there was considerable trouble in many gardens all over the province in that year. As the result of these troubles and of the depression in the industry the strength of the labour force on the tea gardens in Assam on the 30th June 1921 was 100,000 less than it was on the 30th June 1920. How many of this large total of 100,000 left the gardens or the province between the 18th March 1921—the date of the 1921 census—and the 30th June 1921—the close of the official year for the Report on Immigrant Labour for 1920-21—is unknown, but it must have been considerable as the main exodus took place during this period.

In the next two years, 1921-1923, the labour force was still further reduced. Recruitment was practically dead during those two years and at the end of June 1923 the total strength of the labour force was 40,000 less than it was in June 1921 and 140,000 less than in June 1920.

From 1923 onwards when the condition of the industry again became prosperous there was a continual shortage of labour and the Local Government in their resolutions on the Annual Immigration Reports continually emphasized the fact that it was time for the tea industry to consider whether it could not make work on the gardens more attractive by offering better terms to the coolies. The Resolutions also mention the great extent to which local labour was being employed. Thus the resolution on the Report for 1925-26 states "The Commissioner of the Surma Valley draws attention to the steady increase in the number of labourers added locally and lost by transfer, etc., as indicating the increasing freedom and fluidity of labour: the same holds good as regards the Assam Valley. In the last five years the number of adult labourers born in Assam has increased by nearly 50 per cent. in the Assam Valley and by over 60 per cent. in the Surma Valley", and the resolution on the Immigration Report for 1926-27 states—"65 per cent. of the new labour obtained during the year was local labour. The extent to which the industry now relies on local labour is illustrated by the practice adopted by some gardens of sending out motor lorries to bring in labour from villages."

The explanation for the extraordinary drop in the number of immigrants from the recruiting provinces—particularly from Bihar and Orissa—is now apparent.

In the first place it is clear that the enormous rush of immigrant coolies to Assam in 1918-19—due to distress in their home districts—was quite abnormal. These coolies appeared in the census returns of 1921 but soon after, as the result of economic troubles on the tea gardens, a large number must have returned to their homes. Hence when the tea industry began to prosper again in 1923 and subsequent years the continual shortage of labour became a most pressing problem. Endeavours were made to extend the field of recruiting (in 1923 the whole of the Madras Presidency was opened to recruitment) but, even so, sufficient labour could not be obtained. Hence the introduction of a new system of short-term recruitment from Bihar and Orissa and the increased attention directed to the employment of local and "home-grown" labour.

I might also mention that the increased flow of recruitment which was stimulated by the introduction of the short-term system was also assisted by propaganda introduced by the Tea Districts Labour Association in the shape of cinema exhibitions showing conditions of life on the tea gardens of Assam.

The table below gives, to the nearest thousand, the number of coolies imported annually into each valley from 1920-21, the number of coolies added locally, and the number lost by death, discharge, desertion, or other causes. The figures are taken from the Annual Government Reports on Immigrant Labour and, though I would not rely upon the absolute numbers too far, the general tendency which they disclose is, I think, clear enough :—

Year.	Number of coolies imported.	*Number of coolies added locally.	Number lost by death.	Number lost by discharge, desertion, etc.	Loss or gain on the labour force of the preceding year.
1	2	3	4	5	6
ASSAM VALLEY (000's OMITTED).					
1920-21	21	46	20	99	—52
1921-22	18	43	18	67	—24
1922-23	18	48	16	61	—11
1923-24	34	52	15	53	+13
1924-25	27	55	16	70	—4
1925-26	29	58	15	68	+4
1926-27	41	60	15	73	+13
1927-28	36	66	14	77	+11
1928-29	56	73	16	80	+33
1929-30	53	65	16	84	+18
1930-31	52	67	17	110	—8
SURMA VALLEY (000's OMITTED).					
1920-21	4	21	8	65	—48
1921-22	3	21	8	21	—5
1922-23	4	21	7	18	+0
1923-24	8	22	7	17	+6
1924-25	6	24	6	21	+3
1925-26	5	24	6	23	+0
1926-27	5	27	6	23	+3
1927-28	6	26	6	23	+3
1928-29	12	27	7	23	+9
1929-30	6	26	6	23	+8
1930-31	2	26	7	34	—13

The following interpretation of the figures given in the table is based mainly upon the explanations given in the Annual Reports on Immigrant Labour.

In 1921-22 the labour force in both valleys was considerably reduced. The industry showed signs of recovery from the depression of the previous year but the year was an anxious one and there was little recruitment. In 1922-23 the industry was prosperous but labour was scarce and sufficient recruits could not be obtained owing to the good harvests in the recruiting districts and to the competition of other industries for labour.

In 1923-24 recruitment was better, largely owing to the fact that the whole of the Madras Presidency had been thrown up for recruitment and in both valleys the number of labourers rose slightly. In 1924-25 there was, however, a fall in the Assam Valley due to an exodus of Madras coolies. There was, also, a noticeable tendency in the Assam Valley in this year for coolies to apply for discharge certificates.

Hence by the end of 1924-25—in spite of the great prosperity of the tea industry since 1923—the gardens had lost a large number of coolies and were apparently finding it difficult to retain all those who had been recruited. It was in this year that the Government of Assam in their resolution on the Immigration Report of 1924-25

* This column includes all coolies—adults as well as children—who were added to the strength of the garden during the year in question and who were not recruited by the garden under Act VI of 1901. How far the figures under this head represent managers "taking in each others' washing" is unknown.

stated :—"One important factor which must stand in the way of obtaining recruits, particularly from new areas, is the uncertainty that a labourer will be able to return to his home at the end of his term of employment.....It is time, therefore, for the tea industry to consider seriously whether it cannot make work in the gardens more attractive by revising the terms offered, particularly as regards repatriation."

In 1925-26 there was little change. In 1926-27 recruitment improved and there was a considerable increase in the labour force in the Assam Valley. In the Immigration Report of that year it is stated that labour was in great demand and that the failure to get a sufficient number of coolies had caused great competition for local *basti* labour. In 1927-28 recruitment fell off slightly in the Assam Valley. In 1928-29 recruitment of coolies from outside the province jumped up with a bound in spite of the fact that the prospects of the industry were anything but bright in that year. The reason for the large increase is reported to have been scarcity in the recruiting districts and the importation of short-term coolies from Madras. (This is the only time mention is made in the reports of the important system of short-term recruitment.) The two years 1929-30 and 1930-31 were very lean years for the tea industry and recruitment fell to practically nothing in the Surma Valley and, though still high, gradually decreased in the Assam Valley. The large number of coolies who were struck off the garden books in 1930-31 under the head "Lost by discharge, desertion, etc.," is particularly remarkable.

This brief analysis of the recruitment figures of the two valleys confirms, I think, the diagnosis I have already made. The Assam Valley figures show clearly the steady growth in the number of locally added coolies: this is visible also in the Surma Valley figures. The figures also show that the labour force suffered a considerable reduction in the early years of the decade on account of the fact that recruitment had fallen to practically nothing and the number of coolies lost by discharge, etc., was heavy, and that it was only in 1926-27 that recruitment really began to revive. It is noteworthy that it was about this time that the short-term recruitment system became popular. The gradual yearly increase in the Assam Valley in the number of coolies lost by discharge, etc., from 1926-27 onwards is probably due to short-term coolies leaving the gardens on the expiry of their contracts.

The census statistics reflect the conditions of the decade and indicate a very great difference in the volume of migration from the provinces which, for the last fifty years, have been supplying the labour needs of the Assam tea plantations. The real reason for this change appears to be that the tea industry did not offer sufficiently attractive terms to new recruits during the period when it was most prosperous (1923-1927). As a contributory cause must be reckoned the *sardari* system of recruitment under Act VI of 1901 (the Assam Labour and Emigration Act) which the Royal Commission on Labour has held to be very defective. As the result of the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Labour it has now been decided to repeal this Act and a Bill has just been introduced into the Legislative Assembly with the object of freeing the tea industry from many obsolete restrictions on recruitment and of giving labour more freedom of movement than it has had in the past.

Statistics showing the number of persons censused on tea gardens in every district of the province are given in Provincial Table III in Part II of the Report (Tables) and an estimate of the total number of coolies and *ex-coolies* in the province will be found in my essay on the backward and depressed classes of Assam which is published as an appendix to Chapter XII.

50. Probably the most important event in the province during the last twenty-five years—an event, moreover, which seems likely to alter permanently the whole future of Assam and to destroy more surely than did the Burmese invaders of 1820 the whole structure of Assamese culture and civilization—has been the invasion of a vast horde of land-hungry Bengali immigrants, mostly Muslims, from the districts

Immigration of Eastern Bengal colonists.

of Eastern Bengal and in particular from Mymensingh. This invasion began some time before 1911, and the census report of that year is the first report which makes mention of the advancing host. But, as we now know, the Bengali immigrants censused for the first time on the *char* lands of Goalpara in 1911 were merely the advance guard—or rather the scouts—of a huge army following closely at their heels. By 1921 the first army corps had passed into Assam and had practically conquered the district of Goalpara. The course of events between 1911 and 1921 has been described in the 1921 Census Report as follows :—

“In 1911 few cultivators from Eastern Bengal had gone beyond Goalpara, those censused in the other districts of the Assam Valley numbering only a few thousands and being mostly clerks, traders and professional men. In the last decade (1911-21) the movement has extended far up the valley and the colonists now form an appreciable element in the population of all the four lower and central districts. The two upper districts (*i.e.*, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur) are scarcely touched as yet. In Goalpara nearly 20 per cent. of the population is made up of these settlers. The next favourite district is Nowgong where they form about 14 per cent. of the whole population. In Kamrup waste lands are being taken up rapidly, especially in the Barpeta subdivision. In Darrang exploration and settlement by the colonists are in an earlier stage; they have not yet penetrated far from the banks of the Brahmaputra. Almost every train and steamer brings parties of these settlers and it seems likely that their march will extend further up the valley and away from the river before long.”

Let us now examine the progress of the invasion since 1921. It must in the first place be remembered that the children of the settlers born after their arrival in Assam have been recorded as Assam born and hence do not appear in the figures and that the table below shows the total number of people born in Bengal and not the number of the settlers only; still the figures give us a very good idea of what has been taking place during the last ten years—

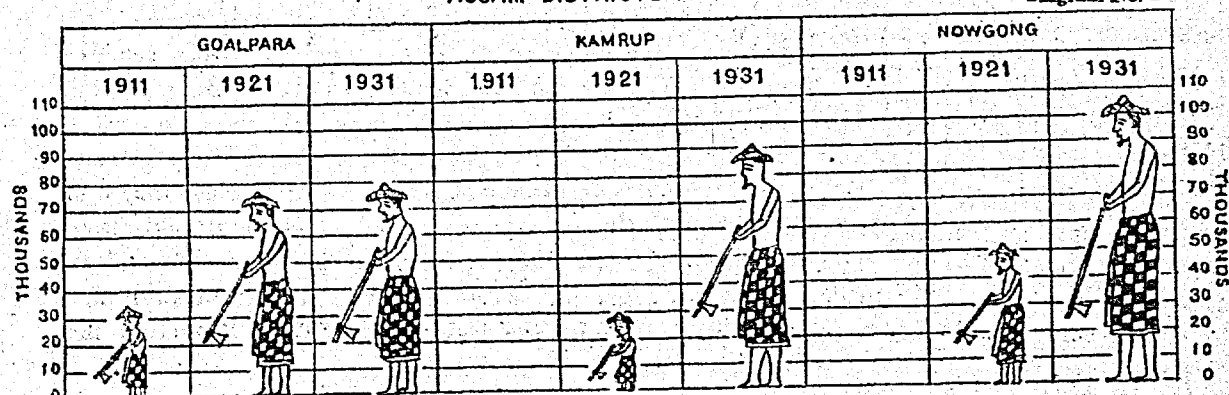
Table showing the number of persons born in Bengal in each district of the Assam Valley in 1911, 1921 and 1931 (Ms. = Mymensing district and 000's omitted).

Year.	Goalpara.	Kamrup.	Darrang.	Nowgong.	Sibsagar.	Lakhimpur.
1911 ...	77(Ms. 34)	4(Ms. 1)	7(Ms. 1)	4(Ms. 1)	14(Ms. Nil)	14(Ms. Nil).
1921 ...	151(Ms. 78)	44(Ms. 30)	20(Ms. 12)	58(Ms. 52)	14(Ms. Nil)	14(Ms. Nil).
1931 ...	170(Ms. 80)	134(Ms. 91)	41(Ms. 30)	120(Ms. 108)	12(Ms. Nil)	19(Ms. 2).

In the above table the figures for Mymensingh district have been given in brackets as that district is the one which is chiefly responsible for the flood of immigrant settlers.

These are startling figures and illustrate the wonderful rapidity with which the lower districts of the Assam Valley are becoming colonies of Mymensingh. The diagram below which shows the increase in certain districts of persons born in Mymensingh only appears even more startling than the figures themselves.

DIAGRAM SHOWING INCREASE IN NO. OF PERSONS BORN IN MYMENSINGH IN CERTAIN ASSAM DISTRICTS 1911-1931. Diagram No. 2



I have already remarked that by 1921 the first army corps of the invaders had conquered Goalpara. The second army corps which followed them in the years 1921-1931 has consolidated their position in that district and has also completed the conquest of Nowgong. The Barpeta subdivision of Kamrup has also fallen to their attack and Darrang is being invaded. Sibsagar has so far escaped completely but the few thousand Mymensinghians in North Lakhimpur are an outpost which may, during the next decade, prove to be a valuable basis of major operations.

Wheresoever the carcass, there will the vultures be gathered together.—Where there is waste land thither flock the Mymensinghians. In fact the way in which they have seized upon the vacant areas in the Assam Valley seems almost uncanny. Without fuss, without tumult, without undue trouble to the district revenue staffs, a population which must amount to over half a million has transplanted itself from Bengal to the Assam Valley during the last twenty five years. It looks like a marvel of administrative organization on the part of Government but it is nothing of the sort: the only thing I can compare it to is the mass movement of a large body of ants.

The following extracts from reports of district officers show the effect which the immigration of Bengali settlers is having on the districts concerned.

From Nowgong, Rai Bahadur P. G. Mukerji reports :—

“The increase in population is specially noticeable in Khathowal, Juria, Laokhowa, Dhing, Bokoni and Laborighat mauzas where it is solely due to the large influx of immigrant settlers mainly from Mymensingh. They have opened up vast tracts of dense jungle along the south bank of the Brahmaputra and have occupied nearly all the lands which are open for settlement in this tract. These people have brought in their wake wealth, industry, and general prosperity to the whole district. They have improved the health of the countryside by clearing the jungles and converting the wilderness into prosperous villages. Their industry as agriculturists has become almost proverbial and they extract from their fields the utmost that they can yield. Their love and care of cattle is also an object lesson to others. Government revenue has increased. Trade and commerce have prospered. The lakhs of rupees which annually pour into the district to buy their jute pass out from their pockets into those of the traders who sell them their food-stuffs and imported goods, as well as into those of the lawyers and *mahajans* who look after their litigation and finance. In spite of their income from land the immigrants seldom become rich as they are spendthrifts by habit, are prone to litigation and do not hesitate to run into debt. Petty disputes drive them to the law courts when the jute market is favourable. The Marwari *mahajans* are ready to accommodate them with loans at usurious interest so long as crop prospects are good. It is, however, expected that with the lapse of time and spread of education they will gradually change their mode of life and learn how to enjoy the fruits of their labour wisely and well. Immigration in recent years mainly signifies the influx into this district of Mahomedan and Hindu families from the Eastern Bengal districts, chiefly from Mymensingh. They had begun to come in large numbers from the latter part of the previous decade but their numbers gradually continued to swell every year till 1926 when there was a slight decrease in the flow on account of the fact that almost all the areas originally assigned to them were already occupied leaving little room for further extension and also because they were attracted by new lands made available in other districts. The table in the margins shows the area settled with these people during the last ten years from which it will be seen that between 1924 and 1930 there was an increase of 68,958 acres in the land settled with them. Not having sufficient land of their own in their home districts and leading a life of difficulty with the drawbacks peculiar to under tenants of Bengal Zamindars in overcrowded villages, it was quite natural for these industrious agriculturists to be attracted in large numbers to this district where they could occupy as much virgin soil as they could reasonably expect to bring under cultivation and live an independent life with no overlord above them except the Government. Their hunger for land

Area in acres settled with Mymensinghians.

	Hindu.	Muslim.
1920-21	3,299	30,106
1921-22	4,878	41,487
1922-23	5,960	50,790
1923-24	7,789	55,293
1924-25	7,619	64,192
1925-26	9,643	74,682
1926-27	8,899	75,857
1927-28	11,363	84,098
1928-29	11,614	87,435
1929-30	13,285	89,078

was so great that, in their eagerness to grasp as much as they could cultivate they not infrequently encroached on Government reserves and on lands belonging to the local people from which they could be evicted only with great difficulty. In the beginning they had their own way and there was frequent friction with the indigenous population who did not like their dealings as neighbours. The appointment of a special Colonization Officer and the adoption of certain definite rules tended much to regularize settlement and prevent friction. Boundary lines had to be fixed restraining the immigrants from occupying lands near Assamese villages by trespass or purchase but even these steps were often found to be inadequate to protect the Assamese villagers. Many immigrants had to be punished with fines and ejections, sometimes, with the assistance of the police. Now they understand that orders have got to be respected and are gradually settling down as peaceful citizens. The local Assamese at first did not like the advent of these peoples in their midst but gradually as they came to see their better side—their industry, their knowledge of agriculture, their contribution to the general prosperity of the district—their prejudices and dislikes are beginning to disappear."

Unlike Nowgong, Goalpara—as the figures given in the table show—did not attract many immigrants during the decade. The reason for this is explained by the Deputy Commissioner as follows :—

"Immigration from Mymensingh was not very active during the decade as in the previous one as most of the available lands in the riparian tracts suitable to settlers were already taken up and there was not much room left for further expansion. Some of the settlers migrated from Dhubri thana to Sorbhog in the Barpeta subdivision and from Lakhimpur thana to the Chamoria side of the Kamrup district—probably with the idea of taking settlement directly under Government."

In Kamrup there has been an enormous increase in the number of settlers. The Deputy Commissioner reports :—

"The immigration of Eastern Bengal Muhammadan settlers continued throughout the decade into Barpeta subdivision and parts of the Sadr subdivision. The *chars* and riverain tracts have now nearly been filled up and all available waste lands are gradually being occupied by them. The increase of 69 per cent. in the population of Barpeta is solely due to Eastern Bengal immigrants."

In Darrang the increase in Bengali settlers has been most noticeable in the Mangaldai subdivision. The Deputy Commissioner reports :—

"Immigration of both Hindu and Mussalman cultivators from Eastern Bengal to take up waste lands in Mangaldai continued.....There is little room for expansion of cultivation in the Tezpur subdivision as most of the Brahmaputra *char* lands are reserved for professional graziers."

The exact number of these Eastern Bengal settlers (including their children born in Assam) who are at present living in the Assam Valley is a difficult matter to estimate. Mr. Lloyd in 1921 estimated that including children born after their arrival in this province the total number of settlers was at least 300,000 in that year. As far as I can judge the number at present must be over half a million. The number of new immigrants from Mymensingh, alone, has been 140,000 and the old settlers have undoubtedly been increasing and multiplying. As pointed out in the Census Report for 1921 the colonists have settled by families and not singly. This can be seen from the fact that out of the total of 333,000 persons born in Mymensingh and censused in Assam over 152,000 are women. What of the future? As far as can be foreseen the invasion is by no means complete: there are still large areas of waste land in Assam—particularly in the North Lakhimpur subdivision—and Kamrup, in spite of the large number of immigrants which it has absorbed during the last ten years, is capable of holding many more. The Mangaldai subdivision is also capable of further development. Now that most of the waste lands of Goalpara and Nowgong have been taken up the trend of immigration should, therefore, be more and more towards Kamrup, Mangaldai and North Lakhimpur. The latter subdivision should prove a veritable "El Dorado" if news of its empty spaces awaiting the hoe and plough of the colonist reaches the ears of the main body of trekkers.

It is sad but by no means improbable that in another thirty years Sibsagar district will be the only part of Assam in which an Assamese will find himself at home.

51. The number of people born in Nepal and censused in Assam is now 88,306 against 70,344 in 1921 and 47,654 in 1911. The rate of immigration has therefore not been as rapid as it was in 1911-21 though it is still considerable. Unlike the Mymensinghians the immigrants are chiefly males, the number of women being—as in—1921 only about half the number of men. The figure of 88,306 represents, of course, only those Nepalis who were actually born in Nepal. In addition there are many others who were born of Nepali parents in Assam or in some other part of British India. Nepalis were specially sorted for by caste at this census and Imperial Table XVII (Caste) gives us a total of 120,287 Nepalis in Assam of whom 45,341 are females. This does not however include all Nepali Brahmins and the best way of estimating the total number of Nepalis is from the language table. This table (Imperial Table XV) shows that the number of speakers of Nepali languages (including Rai, Gurung, Limbu, Magari, etc.), amounts to about 140,000 (males 86,000, females 54,000). As nobody but a Nepali would have a Nepali language as his mother tongue this figure may be taken as the true number of Nepalis in the province. In 1921 an estimate made on similar lines showed that there were at least 104,000 Nepalis in Assam in 1921 and 55,000 in 1911. Nepali immigrants, therefore, have increased by only 35.6 per cent. in 1921-31 against 89 per cent. in 1911-21. It is difficult to assign any cause for this falling off in Nepali immigration. Probably the action taken by the Nepal Government to discourage the emigration of their subjects has had a good deal to do with it.

The districts which have proved most attractive to Nepali immigrants during the last ten years have been the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Darrang, Lakhimpur, and Kamrup. In other districts the increase in the number of persons born in Nepal is very slight or has decreased. In the hill districts and the Frontier Tracts a strict control over the immigration of Nepalis is generally exercised and the figures would seem to show that, except in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, new Nepali settlers are not exactly encouraged by the local authorities.

In the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, however, there is an alarming increase in the number of persons born in Nepal—from 5,000 to 12,000. Of these about a thousand or so would be due to the additional Gurkha battalion which was stationed in Shillong at the time of the census but, even allowing for that, the increase is remarkable. The Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, whom I have consulted on the matter, informs me that many Nepali immigrants arrived in the district during the last ten years.

Many of them find employment in Shillong as labourers and porters and many are graziers who have settled in the district. Nongstoin, Nongspung and Nongkloa States, in particular, have attracted many new Nepali graziers. The immigration of these graziers is, I am informed, encouraged by the Siems who levy a grazing tax on the immigrants—a tax which they cannot levy on their own subjects—and the immigration of Nepali graziers is thus a source of considerable profit to them. Cases of friction have, however, arisen between the Siems and their subjects on account of the damage done by the buffaloes of the graziers and a great deal of harm has been done to the countryside by the indiscriminate cutting down of forests to make room for the increasing herds. The total number of Nepalis in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills (including the Khasi States) is now about 17,000 whereas they only number about 3,000 in the Naga Hills, 3,000 in the Garo Hills, 2,000 in the Lushai Hills and 3,000 in Manipur. In the interests of the Khasi population some measures appear to be necessary to prevent any further expansion of Nepali colonization in the Khasi Hills. The advent of an alien population in the midst of a comparatively small tribe like the Khasis may increase the revenue of the Siems but is not likely to prove an advantage in the long run. Of the plains districts, Darrang, as in 1921, has attracted most immigrants. The number of persons born in Nepal and censused in that district is now 24,862 against 18,997 in 1921. Altogether there are about 40,000 Nepalis in Darrang, which, owing to its vast areas of grazing reserves, offers many attraction to Nepali *khutiwallas*. Kamrup and Lakhimpur which have also large grazing areas show a considerable increase in persons born in Nepal; Kamrup from 8,527 to 10,101 and Lakhimpur from 8,440 to 11,951.

Other Im-
migrants.

52. The only other immigrants in the province whom it is necessary to mention are the 2,742 persons born in Europe, Africa, America and Australia and the 3,638 persons born in Asiatic countries other than Nepal. The large majority of the former group are tea planters: others are officials, missionaries and persons engaged in the oil, coal and other industries. In the Asiatic group are 1,346 persons from Afghanistan, 1,571 from Bhutan and 640 from China. The Afghans and Bhutanese are mostly cold weather traders.

Emigra-
tion from
Assam.

53. The amount of emigration from Assam is very small. Details will be found in Subsidiary Table I and are summarized in the table in the margin which also gives the corresponding figures for 1921. It will be seen that except in the case of Bengal—our next-door neighbour—the figures are negligible, and that there has been very little change in the volume or direction of emigration since 1921.

Emigration from Assam.		1931.	1921.
Total Emigrants ...	...	72,854	75,698
To Bengal (Total) ...	...	63,416	68,802
" Bengal (British) ...	...	27,324	28,557
" Bengal States ...	...	36,092	40,245
" Burma ...	...	4,476	3,018
" Bihar and Orissa ...	...	2,030	949
" United Provinces ...	...	1,163	904
" Central Provinces ...	...	587	12
" Bombay ...	...	333	691
" Punjab ...	...	322	404
" Other Provinces and States ...	...	528	1,116

It is not possible to say on this occasion in what particular districts in Bengal the Assam born people were enumerated but there can be no doubt that, as in 1921 and 1911, the great majority are to be found in the Bengal districts contiguous to Sylhet and Goalpara and in Tripura State and that the statistics of emigration to Bengal largely represent casual and temporary border movements.

The number of Assam emigrants outside India is not known. Four males from Assam were enumerated in Ceylon.

Summary.

54. The balance of migration, *i. e.*, the excess of immigrants over emigrants is still enormously in favour of Assam and, as column 8 of Part I of the Subsidiary Table shows, now stands at +1,241,000 for India alone. In 1921 the corresponding balance was +1,141,000 and in 1911 +752,000. These figures, however, do not give a true idea of the extent of the foreign element in the population as they do not include the children and descendants of immigrants born after their arrival in Assam. In 1921 Mr. Lloyd calculated that one and five-sixth million persons in Assam, or 23 per cent. of the entire population, were of foreign extraction.

The following estimate for 1931 is probably not far from the truth:—

1. Total number of persons belonging to non-indigenous cooly castes (see the Appendix on the Backward and Depressed classes of Assam).	1,400,000
2. Total number of Eastern Bengal immigrants and their descendants.	550,000
3. Total number of Nepalis ...	140,000
4. Add 80,000 for other classes, <i>e.g.</i> , Marwaris, Bengali traders, etc.	80,000
Total ...	2,170,000

The percentage of persons of foreign extraction in Assam, according to this estimate is 23.5 per cent. which corresponds closely with the estimate made in 1921. As already explained the great increase in Bengali immigrants during the decade has been largely counterbalanced by the loss of a considerable number of foreign born tea garden coolies and the province as a whole has only about 120,000 more immigrants than in 1921.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

MIGRATION BETWEEN THE PROVINCE, INCLUDING MANIPUR AND OTHER PARTS OF INDIA.

PART I.

Province or State.	Immigrants to Assam.			Emigrants from Assam.			Excess (+) or deficiency (−) of immigration over emigration.	
	1931.	1921.	Variation.	1931.	1921.	Variation.	1931.	1921.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
TOTAL ...	1,314,047	1,216,661	+ 97,386	72,886	75,886	−3,000	+1,241,161	+1,140,775
A.—BRITISH TERRITORY	1,233,104	1,130,074	+103,030	35,034	35,251	+ 833	+1,197,020	+1,094,823
Ajmer-Merwara ...	77	32	+ 45	21	7	+ 14	+ 56	+ 25
Andamans and Nicobars ...	4	1	+ 3	153	147	+ 5	— 143	— 146
Baluchistan, (District and Administered Territories) ...	245	187	+ 58	17	22	— 5	+ 233	+ 165
Bengal ...	572,756	373,873	+198,883	27,324	28,557	−1,233	+ 545,432	+ 345,316
Bihar and Orissa ...	443,597	535,565	− 91,968	1,800	887	+ 913	+ 441,797	+ 531,678
Bombay (including Aden) ...	6,400	1,105	+ 5,295	331	678	− 347	+ 6,069	+ 427
Burma ...	7,787	7,413	+ 374	4,475	3,018	+1,457	+ 3,312	+ 4,395
Central Provinces and Berar ...	70,193	77,082	− 6,890	438	104	+ 334	+ 69,754	+ 76,978
Cooch ...	1	14	− 13	...	...	...	+ 1	+ 14
Delhi ...	107	97	+ 10	83	92	− 9	+ 24	+ 5
Madras ...	57,448	54,527	+ 2,921	*	51	— 51	+ 57,448	+ 54,476
North-West Frontier Province (Districts and Administered Territories) ...	593	295	+ 298	36	505	− 469	+ 557	— 210
Punjab ...	5,955	2,901	+ 3,054	313	388	− 73	+ 5,642	+ 2,515
United Provinces of Agra and Oudh ...	67,942	73,982	− 9,040	1,094	797	+ 297	+ 66,848	+ 76,185
B.—INDIAN STATES	80,746	85,841	− 5,095	36,802	40,635	−3,833	+ 43,944	+ 45,205
Baluchistan (Agency Tracts) ...	...	1	— 1	...	...	...	...	...
Baroda ...	232	125	+ 107	11	2	+ 9	+ 221	+ 123
Bengal States ...	2,443	1,705	+ 738	36,092	40,245	−4,153	+ 33,840	+ 38,540
Bihar and Orissa States ...	28,189	35,077	− 6,888	230	62	+ 168	+ 27,959	+ 35,015
Bombay States ...	152	71	+ 81	2	13	− 11	+ 150	+ 68
Central India Agency ...	14,887	17,602	− 2,715	32	56	− 24	+ 14,855	+ 17,546
Central Provinces States ...	11,853	14,311	− 2,458	149	23	+ 127	+ 11,704	+ 14,289
Gwalior ...	262	332	− 70	2	25	− 23	+ 260	+ 307
Hyderabad ...	389	160	+ 229	5	5	...	+ 384	+ 165
Kashmir ...	24	46	− 22	7	2	+ 5	+ 17	+ 44
Madras States (including Cochin and Travancore) ...	23	19	+ 4	3	14	− 11	+ 20	+ 5
Mysore ...	85	234	− 149	12	18	− 6	+ 73	+ 216
North-West Frontier Province (Agency and Tribal Areas) ...	...	23	− 23	44	...	+ 44	— 44	+ 23
Punjab States ...	179	277	− 98	9	18	− 9	+ 170	+ 259
Rajputana Agency ...	21,760	15,770	+ 6,010	124	46	+ 78	+ 21,650	+ 15,724
Sikkim ...	64	22	+ 42	11	...	+ 11	+ 53	+ 22
United Provinces States ...	184	66	+ 118	69	107	− 38	+ 115	— 41
C.—INDIA UNSPECIFIED	175	689	− 514	...	...	...	+ 175	+ 689
D.—FRENCH AND PORTUGUESE SETTLEMENTS	22	57	− 35	...	...	...	+ 22	+ 57

* Figures for Madras are not available.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

MIGRATION BETWEEN THE ASSAM BRITISH TERRITORY AND OTHER PARTS OF INDIA.

PART II.

Province or State.	Immigrants to Assam British Territory.			Emigrants from Assam British Territory.			Excess (+) or deficit (-) of immigration over emigration.	
	1931.	1921.	Variation.	1931.	1921.	Variation.	1931.	1921.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
TOTAL ...	1,317,850	1,218,933	+ 98,917	73,223	72,913	+ 310	+1,244,627	+ 1,146,020
A.—BRITISH TERRITORY	1,230,979	1,127,812	+103,167	31,973	23,518	+ 8,455	+1,199,006	+ 1,099,294
Ajmer-Merwara ...	77	30	+ 47	21	7	+ 14	+ 56	+ 23
Andamans and Nicobars ...	4	1	+ 3	117	113	+ 4	— 113	— 112
Baluchistan (District and Administered Territories) ...	245	187	+ 58	10	12	— 2	+ 235	+ 175
Bengal ...	572,570	373,501	+199,069	26,638	26,283	+ 355	+ 545,932	+ 347,221
Bihar and Orissa ...	443,412	535,127	— 91,715	1,794	605	+ 1,189	+ 441,618	+ 534,522
Bombay (including Aden) ...	6,395	1,105	+ 5,290	331	284	+ 47	+ 6,064	+ 921
Burma ...	6,285	6,315	— 30	1,113	807	+ 306	+ 5,172	+ 5,508
Central Provinces and Berar ...	70,187	77,064	— 6,877	432	12	+ 420	+ 69,755	+ 77,052
Coorg ...	1	14	— 13	...	...	...	+ 1	+ 14
Delhi ...	106	96	+ 10	83	4	+ 79	+ 23	+ 92
Madras ...	57,442	54,525	+ 2,917	*	...	...	+ 57,442	+ 54,525
North-West Frontier Province (Districts and Administered Territories) ...	592	291	+ 301	36	...	+ 36	+ 556	+ 291
Punjab ...	5,878	2,823	+ 3,055	306	1	+ 305	+ 5,572	+ 2,822
United Provinces of Agra and Oudh ...	67,785	76,730	— 8,945	1,092	390	+ 702	+ 66,693	+ 76,340
B.—INDIAN STATES	80,492	85,622	— 5,130	36,004	40,278	— 4,274	+ 44,488	+ 45,344
Baluchistan (Agency Tracts) ...	...	1	— 1	...	...	...	...	+ 1
Baroda ...	232	125	+ 107	11	...	+ 11	+ 221	+ 125
Bengal States ...	2,443	1,702	+ 741	35,374	40,047	— 4,673	+ 32,931	+ 38,345
Bihar and Orissa States ...	28,189	35,077	— 6,888	230	27	+ 203	+ 27,959	+ 35,050
Bombay States ...	152	71	+ 81	2	...	+ 2	+ 150	+ 71
Central India Agency ...	14,884	17,602	— 2,718	32	51	— 19	+ 14,852	+ 17,551
Central Provinces States ...	11,853	14,307	— 2,454	149	2	+ 147	+ 11,704	+ 14,305
Gwalior ...	262	332	— 70	2	...	+ 2	+ 260	+ 332
Hyderabad ...	389	160	+ 229	5	...	+ 5	+ 384	+ 160
Kashmir ...	23	44	— 21	7	...	+ 7	+ 16	+ 44
Madras States (including Cochin and Travancore) ...	23	19	+ 4	3*	14	— 11	+ 20	+ 5
Mysore ...	85	232	— 147	11	...	+ 11	+ 74	+ 232
North-West Frontier Province (Agency and Tribal areas) ...	...	23	— 23	12	...	+ 12	+ 12	+ 23
Punjab States ...	175	265	— 90	8	...	+ 8	+ 167	+ 265
Rajputana Agency ...	21,537	15,574	+ 5,963	83	31	+ 52	+ 21,454	+ 15,543
Sikkim ...	61	22	+ 39	6	...	+ 6	+ 55	+ 22
United Provinces States ...	184	68	+ 118	69	108	— 37	+ 115	+ 40
C.—INDIA UNSPECIFIED	175	689	— 514	...	...	...	+ 175	+ 689
D.—FRENCH AND PORTUGUESE SETTLEMENTS ...	22	57	— 35	...	...	...	+ 22	+ 57
E.—MANIPUR STATE ...	6,182	4,753	+ 1,429	5,246	4,117	+ 1,129	+ 936	+ 635

* Figures for Madras are not available.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

MIGRATION BETWEEN THE ASSAM STATES (MANIPUR ONLY) AND OTHER PARTS OF INDIA.

PART III.

Province or State.	Immigrants to Assam States (Manipur only).			Emigrants from Assam States (Manipur only).			Excess (+) or deficiency (-) of immigration over emigration.	
	1931.	1921.	Variation.	1931.	1921.	Variation.	1931.	1921.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
TOTAL ...	7,625	6,598	+ 1,027	11,091	7,434	+ 3,657	— 3,466	— 835
A.—BRITISH TERRITORY	2,125	2,262	— 137	4,111	2,473	+ 1,638	— 1,986	— 211
Ajmer-Merwara ...	...	2	— 2	...	...	+ 35	— 35	+ 2
Andamans and Nicobars ...	...	...	...	35	...	+ 35	— 35	...
Baluchistan (District and Administered Territories) ...	...	...	...	7	8	— 1	— 7	— 8
Bengal ...	186	369	— 183	686	338	+ 348	— 600	+ 31
Bihar and Orissa ...	185	438	— 253	6	55	— 49	+ 179	+ 383
Bombay (including Aden) ...	5	...	+ 5	...	61	— 61	+ 5	— 61
Burma ...	1,502	1,098	+ 404	3,362	1,505	+ 1,857	— 1,860	— 407
Central Provinces and Berar ...	5	18	— 13	6	12	— 6	— 1	+ 6
Coorg ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Delhi ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	+ 1	+ 1
Madras ...	6	2	+ 4	*	...	...	+ 6	+ 2
North-West Frontier Province (Districts and Administered Territories) ...	1	4	— 3	...	...	...	+ 1	+ 4
Punjab ...	77	78	— 1	7	302	— 295	+ 70	— 224
United Provinces of Agra and Oudh ...	157	252	— 95	2	192	— 190	+ 165	+ 60
B.—INDIAN STATES	254	219	+ 35	7,3	208	+ 599	— 544	+ 11
Baluchistan (Agency Tracts) ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Baroda ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bengal States ...	...	3	— 3	718	197	+ 521	— 718	— 194
Bihar and Orissa States ...	...	...	...	...	2	— 2	...	— 2
Bombay States ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Central India Agency ...	3	...	+ 3	...	...	...	+ 3	...
Central Provinces States ...	...	4	— 4	...	1	— 1	...	+ 3
Gwalior ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hyderabad ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kashmir ...	1	2	— 1	...	...	...	+ 1	+ 2
Madras States (including Cochin and Travancore) ...	...	...	...	*	...	...	...	...
Mysore ...	...	...	...	1	...	+ 1	— 1	...
North-West Frontier Province ...	...	2	— 2	32	...	+ 32	— 32	+ 2
Punjab States ...	4	13	— 8	1	...	+ 1	+ 3	+ 12
Rajputana Agency ...	243	196	+ 47	41	8	+ 33	+ 202	+ 183
Sikkim ...	3	...	+ 3	5	...	+ 5	— 2	...
United Provinces States ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
C.—INDIA UNSPECIFIED	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
D.—FRENCH AND PORTUGUESE SETTLEMENTS ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
E.—ASSAM BRITISH TERRITORY ...	5,216	4,117	+ 1,129	6,182	4,753	+ 1,429	— 936	— 635

* Figures for Madras are not available.

CHAPTER IV.

AGE.

55. The Chapters on Sex, Civil Condition, Literacy and Infirmities contain many references to the age-groups of the population. In those chapters, however, age is only one aspect of the main subject under discussion. In this chapter we are going to consider the age statistics themselves and see what conclusions we can draw from them and, for this purpose, the main statistics are contained in Imperial Table VII—Age, sex and civil condition. Appended to this chapter are ten subsidiary tables which have been prepared to illustrate various aspects of the subject.

56. But before proceeding further I should explain that the method of entering age was different at this census from that employed at previous censuses. In 1921 and earlier censuses age was entered according to the number of completed years on the night of the census. Thus if a man was 37 years and 9 months old on the night of the 1921 census he should have been returned as 37 years of age. At this census, however, the age of an individual was entered or was supposed to be entered in the census schedules as it was or would be on the birth-day nearest to the census date: that is to say, if a person was 5 years and 5 months old on the 26th February 1931 his age should have been recorded as 5 but if he was 5 years and 7 months old his age should have been recorded as 6 years. For infants under 6 months zero should have been recorded and 1 for infants over six months but under one year. Enumerators were also instructed not to accept absurd replies about age but in such cases to enter what appeared to them to be the real age of the individual.

57. The ages so obtained, *i.e.*, the crude ages, were subjected in the compilation office to a rather severe kind of treatment known as smoothing from which they emerged in their present quinary groups. The process was briefly this:—The ages actually returned were first grouped in alternate groups of 3 and 7, *i.e.*, 4-6 (which is a group of three), 7-13 (which is a group of seven), 14-16 (which is a group of three again), 17-23 (which is a group of seven again), and so on, and then redistributed into the quinary groups, namely, over 5 and under 10, over 10 and under 15 and so on, by halving the numbers in each of the adjoining alternate 3 and 7 years crude groups and then combining them into a quinary group by adding the halves. Thus, in order to find the population in the 5-10 group the crude 4-6 and 7-13 groups were halved and added together. For the annual age periods up to 5 special adjustments, which I need not give in detail, were made. Not being a mathematician I am afraid that I cannot explain the mathematical subtleties of this method but if any person is interested in the subject he should consult the "Report on the Age Distribution and Rates of Mortality deduced from the Indian Census Returns of 1921 and previous enumerations" by Mr. H. G. W. Meikle, Actuary to the Government of India, published in 1926 by the Government of India Press, Calcutta, in which the advantages of the 3 and 7 age group method are demonstrated in terms of T and L. The matter will also be dealt with in the Actuary's report which will be published on the results of the present census. The groups which appear in our tables are, therefore, the groups smoothed and rolled out according to a formula and hence differ considerably in their internal structure from the groups of the last census which did not have to undergo this painful process. As a result it is impossible to compare the smoothed quinquennial groups of this census with the groups of previous censuses. In fact the present Actuary to the Government of India considers that the previous method of grouping ages, namely, the method by which the numbers living at ages which are multiples of five were always treated as the youngest in each group, and with ages stated as age last birthday, produced less accurate results than would have been obtained by any of the numerous methods that exist for grouping ages.

58. The whole object of the method of smoothing adopted at this census was to eliminate as far as possible the errors which experience has shown to be most common in the returns of age at the Indian Census.

One of these is a preference for certain digits—principally for numbers ending in 0 followed by numbers ending in 5. The reason for this will be clear from the following extract from Mr. Meikle's report:—

"If an enumerator had to guess the ages of a lot of old men of about age 80 he would enter most as aged either 60, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 100 or possibly even 120. It would be absurd if he were to guess many as aged 77, 79, 81, 83, etc. At the youngest ages, say under 8, there is little preference shown for any particular age other than 5. At ages between 8 and 24 the preference is for even numbers and for age 15. Any one guessing the age of children aged about 10 would unconsciously enter more at 8, 10, 12, etc., than at 7, 9, 11, 13, etc. At ages 20 and over the largest numbers are found at each of the decennial ages. In this way 0 is much the most popular digit. The next most popular digit is 5."

This preference for round numbers is due principally to the very hazy idea which most people in India have as regards their ages. But in addition to this we get errors as the result of deliberate overstatement or understatement. For example, the father of an unmarried Hindu girl of 15 would generally return her age as 12 as he would see no reason to advertise a matter which was probably giving him a certain amount of uneasiness. And old people often like to exaggerate their age. A man of seventy is regarded as a very old man in Assam and it impresses the village if he claims to be a hundred. The number of European women in Assam is so small that the well known tendency of our ladies to understate their age makes no difference to our statistics but I mention it to show that in all countries social considerations tend to produce errors in the returns of age. The main inaccuracies in the age statistics are, however, principally due to the fact that most people in Assam simply do not know what their real age is. The ordinary illiterate cultivator, who forms the vast majority of the population, has only the foggiest idea about his age and his estimate may easily be ten years out on either side. Certain striking events in the history of the province can be used sometimes to fix a man's age approximately. One of these is the great earthquake of 1897 which is still clearly remembered by the older generation and one can often ascertain the approximate age of an individual by asking him how big he was at the time of the great earthquake.

But we may be certain that the percentage of enumerators who took the trouble of trying to fix a man's age by remembered events was very small and the crude returns of age must be candidly regarded as based almost entirely on guess-work.

59. Subsidiary Table I at the end of this chapter shows the proportion of persons of each sex in the various age groups since 1901. For the reasons already given—namely, the different method of recording age and the different system of forming the quinquennial groups—it is quite useless to compare the quinquennial groups of this census with the quinquennial groups of previous censuses and the proportionate figures of 1921 and earlier censuses given in Subsidiary Table I are principally of interest as disclosing the great differences in the results obtained by the old method of grouping from those given by the alternate 3 and 7 system of grouping ages.

Looking therefore only at the proportionate figures of the whole province for 1931 we notice that for males there is a steady reduction in numbers until the age group 20-30 when there is a rise and that from 30 onwards the decline is rapid. In the case of females, also, there is a steady reduction until the age group 20-25 when there is a slight rise and after that the numbers begin again to decline in each successive age period. Comparing males with females it is at once obvious that males have a higher proportion in the age groups from 25 onwards whereas females have a higher proportion under the age of 25. Looking at the figures for natural divisions we notice that in the hills, which have hardly been affected by immigration, the male and female proportions are almost exactly equal at most of the age periods and stand in remarkable contrast with the figures for the Brahmaputra Valley where, except between 5-15, the proportion of the sexes in the different age periods is very dissimilar.

In the Surma Valley the difference between the proportions of the sexes in the various age groups is a good deal less than the Assam Valley but more than in the hills. The explanation for many of the various differences that can be observed in the figures for natural divisions must, I think, be sought in the effect of immigration on the age distribution of the population. Of all three natural divisions the Assam Valley, as we have already seen, is the only one which has been considerably affected by immigration at this census—the immigrants being Eastern Bengal colonists and Nepalis.

Unfortunately no age tables for these immigrants could be prepared on this occasion but in 1921 the matter was examined and it was shown that although the Eastern Bengal settlers bring their women and children with them, their proportion of women and children is not so high as the rest of the population. Hence the numbers in the male age groups above 20 would naturally be raised somewhat for the whole valley. The immigration of Nepalis would also tend to have the same effect. As a result the difference between the average age of men and women should be more in the Assam Valley than in the Surma Valley—and we find that this is actually the case.

Furthermore, the presence of a large population in the prime of life on the tea gardens of the Assam and Surma Valleys should tend—as was shown in the Census Report of 1921—to raise the numbers between the ages of 20 and 40. It will be noticed that on this occasion the proportion of persons in this age group is considerably higher in both valleys than in the hills. But there are so many factors at work—the effect, for example, of the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 which proved more fatal to persons in the prime of life and which influenced the birth rate for some years afterwards—that, in the absence of proportionate figures for 1921 based on the same system of grouping as was adopted at this census, it is manifestly impossible to offer an adequate analysis of the present age distribution of the population.

60. The age distribution in each of the main religious communities is given in Subsidiary Table II. The table below reproduces some of the principal figures for the last two censuses.

Religion.	Year.	Proportion of persons per mille in certain age groups in 1921 and 1931.				
		0-5.	5-15.	15-40.	40-60.	60 and over.
Hindu Males ...	1931	156	237	417	156	24
	1921	123	263	406	167	39
Hindu Females ...	1931	178	242	421	128	31
	1921	139	266	418	137	40
Muslim Males ...	1931	168	274	401	126	31
	1921	132	318	350	132	38
Muslim females ...	1931	193	266	420	97	24
	1921	151	305	405	105	33
Tribal Males ...	1931	185	248	376	143	48
	1921	154	268	367	159	52
Tribal Females...	1931	189	239	399	128	45
	1921	159	254	401	138	48

It will be seen that all religions at this census exhibit the same features, namely, a large increase in the proportion of young children of both sexes under 5 years of age, a large decrease in the age group 5-15, an increase in the age group 15-40, and decreases in the age groups 40-60 and 60 and over. These differences are, however, mostly due to the method of grouping adopted at this census. No conclusion can, therefore, be drawn from these sudden variations which simply represent the smoothing of a previously irregular curve. It is however clear that the facts disclosed by the new method of grouping adopted at this census are the same as those exhibited by the figures for 1921. Thus both in 1931 and in 1921 the proportion of males under 15 is considerably higher among Muslims and followers of Tribal religions than among Hindus who have a greater proportion of males between the ages of 15 and 60. As in 1921, also, the proportion of female Muslim children under the age of 15 is a good deal higher than that of either Hindus or Animists and there is little difference in the age group 15-40 between the proportion of females in the various religions. Between 40-60 the proportion of Muslim females (as in 1921) is much less than that of Hindus or Animists, who are equal, and after 60 the proportion of Hindu females is greater than the proportion of Muslims but Animists have more than both.

The high proportion of Hindu males especially between 20-40, must, I consider, be due, to some extent, to the large number of male Hindus in the prime of life employed on the tea gardens of Assam. Hindu females have also a preponderance in the age group 20-40, as they had in 1921 and 1911. This is also probably due to the age distribution of the female element on the tea gardens.

61. Subsidiary Table III gives the crude age distribution of a thousand persons of either sex in certain selected castes. At previous censuses the only conclusion that could be drawn from an analysis of the distribution of age by castes was that the castes indigenous to the Brahmaputra Valley had a higher proportion of young children than the castes indigenous to the Surma Valley and it was suggested in 1911 that possibly the indigenous castes of the Brahmaputra Valley might be more prolific but also more short-lived than those in the other valley. An alternative explanation suggested was that the returns of age were less accurate in the case of the Assam Valley castes than in the case of the Surma Valley castes. It will be noticed that at this census, also, the Namasudras and Yogis, two large castes of the Surma Valley, have a much smaller proportion of children under 13 than Assam Valley castes like the Ahoms or Kacharis. I confess that I can give no logical explanation for this nor can I explain why the figures for Christian Khasis should differ so considerably from those of the Tribal Khasis. The whole basis of these age statistics being guess-work the only safe conclusion would seem to be that the whole thing is rather like the competition known as judging the weight of a cake—a common nuisance met with at charity bazars. Some people have a tendency to understate the weight; others habitually guess too much. Probably the figures for the Baidyas—a highly educated community—are the most accurate and may be taken as the standard.

62. It is customary in Indian census reports to judge the character of the population as regards its progressiveness by showing the proportion of children under the age of 10 per hundred of adults in the age group 15-40 and per hundred married women in the same age group. Subsidiary Tables V and V(a) give the necessary figures for this purpose. I confess, however, that in view of our different system of grouping at this census it seems to me to be a waste of time to attempt any elaborate analysis of the figures on this occasion. Furthermore the enormous number of marriages performed before the passing of the Sarda Act in 1929 has completely upset our normal marriage statistics and has unduly raised the number of married women in the age group 15-40, more particularly in the first year or two of this group. Hence the proportion of children under 10 to married females in this group has fallen generally in the plains districts, particularly in the Surma Valley, and—as Subsidiary Table V(a) shows—mostly among Muslims. Why the Sarda Act led to a rush of marriages and why Muslims were more affected than any other religious community is discussed in Chapter VI—Civil Condition.

Mean age.

63. In Subsidiary Tables I and II will be found the mean age of the population calculated for the province, the three natural divisions and the three main religions at each census since 1901. The mean age of the population is the average age of all the persons enumerated in Assam on the night of the census. It has nothing to do with the mean expectation of life which is a matter which belongs to the province of the Actuary.

Generally, a higher mean age indicates fewer children or greater longevity or both; a growing population with a large number of children will therefore have a lower mean age than a stationary population in which the number of children have been limited. It will be noticed that the mean age of the population and of all religions calculated at this census is very low compared with previous censuses, lower, in fact, than at any previous census of Assam. This must be largely due to the new method of grouping and hence no conclusion can be drawn from a comparison of the mean age as ascertained at this census with the mean ages of previous censuses.

The figures for 1931 exhibit, however, the same facts as those disclosed at previous censuses, namely, that the mean age of males and females is practically the same in the hills but that in the Assam and Surma Valleys the mean age of males is a good deal higher than females—the difference in the Assam Valley being particularly high. Looking at the figures by religions it will be seen that, as at previous censuses, Hindu males have a higher mean age and Muslim males a lower mean age than any other community. As at previous censuses, also Muslim females have a lower mean age than Hindu and Tribal females whose mean age is much the same. The probable reasons for these differences have already been stated in the preceding paragraphs.

Vital Statistics.

64. A close relation exists between the death rate and the age distribution of the population. Thus the death rate of a population which has an unusually high proportion of elderly people or of very young children would, normally, be higher than the death rate of a population in which the age distribution was more uniform—elderly people and very young children being more liable to death than any other section of the population. Unfortunately the record of vital statistics in Assam is so defective that it is a matter of considerable difficulty to ascertain even the approximate crude birth and death rates of the population and Subsidiary Tables VII to IX which give the reported birth and death rates by sex and natural division, calculated on the population of 1921, are of little use without considerable adjustment. The whole matter is discussed at some length in the Appendix to this chapter. Subsidiary Table X gives the reported number of deaths from various diseases during the decade; it can have no pretensions to even approximate accuracy.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF 10,000 OF EACH SEX IN THE PROVINCE AND EACH NATURAL DIVISION.

	1931.		1921.		1911.		1901.		Age.	1931.		1921.		1911.		1901.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.		Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
ASSAM	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	ASSAM	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
0-1	324	358	289	306	336	350	340	373	0-5	1,680	1,959	1,373	1,589	1,629	1,736	1,476	1,665
1-2	313	356	154	171	177	196	174	191	5-10	1,334	1,394	1,573	1,700	1,528	1,614	1,405	1,551
2-3	338	390	264	301	316	356	301	337	10-15	1,108	1,139	1,130	1,031	1,014	919	1,045	923
3-4	332	375	298	344	324	379	303	339	15-20	801	875	741	844	708	779	687	772
4-5	322	353	303	337	329	358	303	329	20-40	3,293	3,130	3,218	3,260	3,306	3,328	3,421	3,434
5-10	1,349	1,353	1,002	1,095	1,553	1,624	1,516	1,564	40-60	1,460	1,141	1,099	1,253	1,597	1,255	1,517	1,268
10-15	1,149	1,137	1,206	1,056	1,067	927	1,128	965	60 and over	311	262	356	332	351	369	329	357
15-20	833	1,015	792	910	751	856	751	881	Mean age	23.1	20.9	24.0	22.2	23.8	22.3	...	...
20-25	875	1,042	721	910	741	925	753	977									
25-30	893	865	802	948	823	976	857	925	SURMA VALLEY.	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
30-35	829	731	817	804	853	817	890	833	0-5	1,493	1,677	1,170	1,310	1,420	1,571	1,343	1,475
35-40	618	629	707	646	711	641	708	627	5-10	1,376	1,321	1,076	1,794	1,602	1,690	1,559	1,631
40-45	540	435	613	623	612	621	621	617	10-15	1,211	1,144	1,368	1,068	1,112	901	1,232	1,008
45-50	395	318	381	284	362	276	337	263	15-20	862	1,080	823	954	772	908	810	983
50-55	315	260	394	342	380	344	371	351	20-40	3,246	3,268	3,107	3,238	3,245	3,283	3,282	3,277
55-60	198	172	161	131	154	130	143	121	40-60	1,454	1,202	1,494	1,250	1,434	1,226	1,379	1,205
60-65	154	140	209	206	210	221			60 and over	358	308	416	306	416	415	413	418
65-70	71	62	53	51	53	51	384	407	Mean age	23.4	21.9	23.8	22.5	23.6	22.5	...	...
70 and over	123	109	141	125	138	113			HILLS	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Mean age	22.7	21.6	23.9	22.6	23.7	22.6	23.5	22.6	0-5	1,766	1,782	1,426	1,448	1,693	1,610	1,573	1,571
									5-10	1,336	1,293	1,495	1,443	1,465	1,440	1,476	1,280
									10-15	1,144	1,113	1,194	1,106	1,097	1,029	1,050	896
									15-20	888	908	812	1,012	830	833	765	802
									20-40	3,047	3,042	2,822	2,964	2,915	2,966	3,008	3,107
									40-60	1,250	1,290	1,423	1,443	1,542	1,448	1,529	1,475
									60 and over	469	454	575	584	623	661	471	629
									Mean age	23.0	22.9	24.2	23.7	23.9	23.8	...	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF 10,000 OF EACH SEX IN EACH MAIN RELIGION.

(1) HINDU.

Age.	1931.		1921.		1911.		1901.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
TOTAL	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
0-5	1,561	1,778	1,235	1,392	1,375	1,545	1,308	1,461
5-10	1,277	1,317	1,500	1,623	1,467	1,563	1,401	1,474
10-15	1,088	1,100	1,154	1,038	1,022	912	1,090	938
15-20	822	971	786	870	748	820	754	845
20-40	3,346	3,233	3,268	3,306	3,403	3,391	3,538	3,519
40-60	1,561	1,280	1,663	1,367	1,600	1,351	1,543	1,351
60 and over	345	316	394	399	335	418	366	412
Mean age	23.9	22.2	24.6	23.3	24.1	23.3	24.3	23.3

(2) MUSLIM.

TOTAL	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
0-5	1,680	1,926	1,320	1,514	1,594	1,782	1,517	1,685
5-10	1,479	1,433	1,837	1,955	1,749	1,858	1,731	1,824
10-15	1,265	1,222	1,345	1,092	1,172	932	1,264	1,030
15-20	859	1,118	813	987	770	925	783	989
20-40	3,148	3,081	2,986	3,070	3,040	3,076	3,057	3,033
40-60	1,257	971	1,322	1,052	1,386	1,054	1,259	1,067
60 and over	312	244	378	330	389	373	389	372
Mean age	22.0	20.1	22.5	20.9	22.3	20.9	22.1	20.8

(3) TRIBAL.

TOTAL	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
0-5	1,853	1,886	1,536	1,592	1,718	1,759	1,715	1,732
5-10	1,366	1,307	1,565	1,510	1,535	1,474	1,583	1,476
10-15	1,117	1,081	1,118	1,027	1,039	954	1,017	943
15-20	792	942	751	895	719	850	687	834
20-40	2,968	3,053	2,919	3,118	2,938	3,135	2,954	3,181
40-60	1,427	1,285	1,589	1,379	1,573	1,356	1,566	1,380
60 and over	478	447	522	479	478	472	443	449
Mean age	23.2	22.5	24.1	22.1	23.6	23.0	23.2	22.8

SUBSIDIARY TABLES.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE III.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF 1,000 OF EACH SEX IN CERTAIN CASTES.

Caste.	Males per mille aged						Females per mille aged					
	0-6	7-13	14-16	17-23	24-43	44 and over	0-6	7-13	14-16	17-23	24-43	44 and over
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Ahom	243	181	60	111	268	137	261	174	68	132	248	117
Baidya	191	201	65	116	249	178	220	207	60	106	266	135
Brahman	182	167	63	127	303	158	217	173	63	147	265	135
Bania (Brittial)	229	194	63	109	280	125	245	174	68	139	260	114
Garó (Hindu)	247	161	56	92	295	149	257	145	54	169	270	105
Garó (Tribal)	257	157	56	102	286	143	256	141	82	147	271	103
Kachari (Hindu)	259	171	51	93	287	139	275	167	65	122	259	112
Kachari (Tribal)	276	180	41	94	290	119	289	175	60	128	256	92
Khasi (Tribal)	233	168	65	114	276	145	227	158	65	146	268	136
Khasi (Christian)	225	192	75	152	228	128	210	168	79	162	248	133
Manipuri (Hindu)	225	183	63	183	259	137	197	159	83	151	252	158
Nadiyal (Kaibartta)	240	186	59	107	276	132	267	176	59	139	254	105
Namasudra	144	152	70	137	322	175	179	131	71	157	308	154
Tanti (Hindu)	205	136	45	82	394	138	219	131	50	128	371	101
Yogi	138	156	73	134	312	187	166	137	70	159	209	168

SUBSIDIARY TABLE IV.

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN UNDER 14 AND OF PERSONS OVER 43 TO THOSE AGED 14-43 IN CERTAIN CASTES; ALSO OF MARRIED FEMALES AGED 14-43 PER 100 FEMALES.

Castes.	Proportion of children both sexes, per 100.		Proportion of persons over 43 per 100 aged 14-43.		Number of married females aged 14-43 per 100 females of all ages.
	Persons aged 14-43.	Married females aged 14-43.	Male.	Female.	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Ahom	97	288	31	26	31
Baidya	94	286	41	31	31
Brahman	73	219	32	28	37
Bania (Brittial Bania)	92	259	28	24	35
Garó (Hindu)	87	205	34	21	41
Garó (Tribal)	86	192	32	21	42
Kachari (Hindu)	100	266	32	25	34
Kachari (Tribal)	106	262	28	21	35
Khasi (Tribal)	84	259	32	28	30
Khasi (Christian)	84	274	28	27	28
Manipuri	81	235	30	32	31
Nadiyal (Kaibartta)	97	266	30	23	34
Namasudra	57	156	33	29	40
Tanti	65	163	26	18	44
Yogi	57	159	36	32	37

SUBSIDIARY TABLE V.

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN UNDER 10 AND OF PERSONS 60 AND OVER TO THOSE AGED 15—40; ALSO OF MARRIED FEMALES AGED 15—40 PER 100 FEMALES.

District and Natural Division.				Proportion of children both sexes per 100.						Proportion of persons 60 and over per 100 aged 15-40.						Number of married females aged 15-40 per 100 females of all ages.			
				Persons aged 15-40.			Married females aged 15-40.			1931.		1921.		1911.					
				1931.	1921.	1911.	1931.	1921.	1911.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	1931.	1921.	1911.	
1				2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
ASSAM:	...	...	...	...	75	75	78	190	196	199	9	7	10	10	10	10	34	32	32
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	...	...	...	...	77	77	79	200	204	202	8	6	9	8	9	9	34	32	33
Goalpara	...	...	...	...	80	84	80	200	212	218	8	7	11	10	11	12	35	34	33
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	84	85	90	208	216	218	9	7	11	11	11	12	34	31	31
Darrang	...	...	...	...	69	69	68	179	182	178	6	5	7	7	7	7	38	34	35
Nowgong	...	...	...	...	85	83	88	215	222	229	9	7	11	10	10	11	33	30	30
Sibsagar	...	...	...	...	79	74	74	209	201	195	8	6	8	6	8	7	33	32	33
Lakhimpur	...	...	...	...	68	69	67	187	187	177	6	5	7	5	6	6	35	33	35
Sadiya	...	...	...	...	65	61	...	198	200	...	6	6	6	6	...	...	32	31	...
Dalipara	...	...	...	...	48	30	...	168	140	...	2	3	1	3	...	...	40	42	...
SURMA VALLEY	...	...	...	...	69	73	77	170	183	190	9	7	11	9	10	10	36	34	34
Cochar plains	...	...	...	...	72	75	75	178	183	183	9	8	11	10	10	9	36	33	35
Sylhet	...	...	...	...	69	73	77	169	182	191	9	7	11	9	10	10	36	34	34
HILLS	...	...	...	...	77	75	82	215	211	215	12	12	15	15	14	14	29	27	28
Garo Hills	...	...	...	...	79	80	82	183	185	186	12	8	16	9	16	10	30	36	36
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	...	...	...	...	73	74	78	217	215	213	8	9	10	11	11	14	23	27	28
North Cachar	...	...	...	...	67	64	68	202	206	200	8	8	9	10	9	9	31	29	31
Naga Hills	...	...	...	...	78	72	77	240	235	221	19	18	27	26	18	17	24	22	26
Lushai Hills	...	...	...	...	78	62	65	242	211	216	11	13	13	15	12	14	24	23	23
Manipur	...	...	...	...	80	78	88	216	217	232	12	13	15	16	14	15	23	26	27

SUBSIDIARY TABLE V-A.

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN UNDER 10 AND OF PERSONS 60 AND OVER TO THOSE AGED 15—40 IN CERTAIN RELIGIONS; ALSO OF MARRIED FEMALES AGED 15—40 PER 100 FEMALES.

Religion and Natural Division.	Proportion of children both sexes per 100.						Proportion of persons 60 and over per 100 aged 15—40.						Number of married females aged 15—40 per 100 females of all ages.					
	Persons aged 15—40.			Married females aged 15—40.			1931.		1921.		1911.							
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1931.	1921.	1911.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	1931.	1921.	1911.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
ASSAM—																		
ALL RELIGIONS	...	...	...	75	75	78	190	196	199	9	7	10	10	10	10	34	33	33
Hindu	...	...	...	71	70	71	187	192	188	8	8	10	10	9	10	34	32	33
Muslim	...	...	...	79	84	89	187	200	209	8	6	10	8	10	9	37	35	35
Tribal	...	...	...	83	81	85	218	216	217	13	11	14	12	13	13	29	29	30
Christian	...	...	...	75	66	71	215	203	195	8	9	8	9	8	9	29	27	31
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY—																		
ALL RELIGIONS	...	...	...	77	77	79	200	204	202	8	6	9	8	9	9	34	32	33
Hindu	...	...	...	76	74	75	199	200	195	8	6	9	8	8	9	34	33	33
Muslim	...	...	...	83	88	90	202	207	216	7	6	10	8	10	11	36	35	34
Tribal	...	...	...	87	79	82	219	201	223	9	7	9	7	10	9	32	34	32
SURMA VALLEY																		
ALL RELIGIONS	...	...	...	69	73	77	170	183	190	9	7	11	9	10	10	36	34	34
Hindu	...	...	...	60	62	64	157	166	171	9	9	11	11	10	11	35	33	33
Muslim	...	...	...	78	84	90	179	194	207	8	6	10	8	10	9	37	34	35
HILLS—																		
ALL RELIGIONS	...	...	...	77	75	82	215	211	215	12	12	15	15	14	14	29	27	28
Hindu	...	...	...	71	75	83	200	207	228	10	12	12	15	13	16	30	28	28
Tribal	...	...	...	81	77	80	218	215	212	14	13	19	16	16	14	23	27	28
Christian	...	...	...	78	66	78	231	222	207	9	11	7	10	9	11	26	24	29

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VI.

VARIATION IN POPULATION AT CERTAIN AGE PERIODS.

District and Natural Division.	Period.	Variation per cent. in population (increase + decrease —).						District and Natural Division.	Period.	Variation per cent. in population (increase + decrease —).					
		All ages	0-10.	10-15.	15-40.	40-60.	60 and over.			All ages	0-10.	10-15.	15-40.	40-60.	60 and over.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
ASSAM ...	1901-1911	+ 15.2	+ 19.8	+ 9.8	+ 12.6	+ 16.4	+ 18.8	SURMA VALLEY.	1901-1911	+ 10.8	+ 15.4	- 0.9	+ 9.5	+ 14.6	+ 10.2
	1911-1921	+ 13.2	+ 8.5	+ 28.4	+ 12.5	+ 15.4	+ 11.2		1911-1921	+ 3.4	- 2.4	+ 22.0	+ 2.3	+ 6.7	+ 1.1
	1921-1931	+ 15.7	+ 17.7	+ 16.7	+ 18.8	+ 7.8	- 4.6		1921-1931	+ 7.2	+ 5.9	+ 6.1	+ 11.0	+ 3.9	- 11.8
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY.	1901-1911	+ 18.7	+ 22.8	+ 16.5	+ 15.9	+ 17.9	+ 24.6	Cachar Plains.	1901-1911	+ 13.4	+ 23.0	- 1.4	+ 9.2	+ 16.8	+ 25.9
	1911-1921	+ 24.0	+ 20.5	+ 38.0	+ 23.1	+ 43.2	+ 18.9		1911-1921	+ 6.4	+ 2.2	+ 8.8	+ 2.3	+ 9.7	+ 10.5
	1921-1931	+ 22.5	+ 25.3	+ 26.9	+ 24.7	+ 11.9	+ 2.4		1921-1931	+ 7.4	+ 7.4	+ 3.2	+ 11.4	+ 4.1	- 7.1
Goalpara ...	1901-1911	+ 20.0	+ 31.3	+ 23.5	+ 30.6	+ 27.7	+ 25.6	Sylhet ...	1901-1911	+ 2.7	+ 114.3	- 0.9	+ 8.5	+ 14.1	+ 7.9
	1911-1921	+ 26.9	+ 25.7	+ 37.1	+ 28.6	+ 23.2	+ 12.1		1911-1921	+ 2.7	- 3.2	+ 20.4	+ 2.3	+ 6.1	- 0.6
	1921-1931	+ 15.4	+ 13.3	+ 32.8	+ 19.3	+ 6.3	- 10.6		1921-1931	+ 7.2	+ 5.6	+ 6.7	+ 11.7	+ 3.8	- 12.8
Kamrup ...	1901-1911	+ 13.3	+ 13.5	+ 8.7	+ 13.3	+ 13.5	+ 23.8	HILLS ...	1901-1911	+ 18.5	+ 23.8	+ 27.2	+ 12.0	+ 18.7	+ 23.3
	1911-1921	+ 14.2	+ 9.8	+ 27.3	+ 10.6	+ 10.7	+ 11.4		1911-1921	+ 8.3	+ 2.5	+ 17.4	+ 9.7	+ 6.8	+ 18.0
	1921-1931	+ 28.1	+ 30.8	+ 35.9	+ 31.6	+ 14.5	+ 6.0		1921-1931	+ 15.6	+ 22.8	+ 13.4	+ 15.3	+ 3.0	- 5.2
Darrang ...	1901-1911	+ 11.9	+ 12.0	+ 11.4	+ 11.6	+ 9.2	+ 24.9	Garo Hills ...	1901-1911	+ 14.9	+ 11.6	+ 15.6	+ 15.1	+ 14.7	+ 38.7
	1911-1921	+ 27.0	+ 24.2	+ 41.8	+ 22.0	+ 32.4	+ 20.0		1911-1921	+ 12.7	+ 12.2	+ 7.6	+ 10.1	+ 7.8	+ 11.7
	1921-1931	+ 23.4	+ 20.1	+ 22.5	+ 25.7	+ 10.6	- 1.0		1921-1931	+ 6.6	+ 7.4	+ 14.0	+ 7.6	+ 2.7	- 13.4
Nowgong ...	1901-1911	- 16.2	+ 26.7	+ 8.6	+ 10.8	+ 11.2	+ 27.0	Khasi and Jaintia Hills.	1901-1911	+ 16.2	+ 22.2	+ 0.9	+ 3.2	+ 17.2	+ 43.1
	1911-1921	+ 31.9	+ 23.4	+ 59.5	+ 31.0	+ 30.1	+ 29.0		1911-1921	+ 3.5	- 0.1	+ 28.6	+ 2.5	+ 2.9	- 14.9
	1921-1931	+ 41.4	+ 43.4	+ 48.4	+ 44.2	+ 20.9	+ 11.7		1921-1931	+ 19.2	+ 22.0	+ 8.6	+ 24.2	+ 11.7	+ 5.3
Sibsagar ...	1901-1911	+ 15.4	+ 23.2	+ 15.4	+ 10.9	+ 17.0	+ 14.0	North Cachar Hills.	1901-1911	- 33.1	+ 10.4	- 2.1	- 50.8	- 36.0	+ 0.3
	1911-1921	+ 19.1	+ 17.0	+ 32.6	+ 16.6	+ 22.0	+ 15.4		1911-1921	- 2.0	- 8.3	+ 9.8	- 2.8	+ 2.8	+ 0.4
	1921-1931	+ 13.4	+ 19.3	+ 12.2	+ 11.9	+ 7.0	+ 9.4		1921-1931	+ 22.8	+ 30.7	+ 11.3	+ 24.8	+ 15.7	+ 4.7
Lakhimpur ...	1901-1911	+ 11.5	+ 12.6	+ 19.3	+ 13.7	+ 2.0	- 4.1	Naga Hills ...	1901-1911	+ 45.1	+ 51.7	+ 78.9	+ 27.8	+ 47.5	+ 99.1
	1911-1921	+ 30.3	+ 22.1	+ 43.1	+ 19.1	+ 40.6	+ 29.2		1911-1921	+ 6.6	- 2.6	+ 16.1	+ 3.9	+ 7.0	+ 59.8
	1921-1931	+ 23.2	+ 24.7	+ 17.1	+ 27.0	+ 15.4	+ 14.0		1921-1931	+ 11.1	+ 23.7	+ 19.7	+ 14.5	- 2.9	- 18.8
Sadiya Frontier Tract.	1901-1911	+ 10.6	+ 3.9	+ 27.0	+ 8.8	+ 14.7	+ 18.3	Lushai Hills	1901-1911	+ 10.6	+ 3.9	+ 27.0	+ 8.8	+ 14.7	+ 18.3
	1911-1921	+ 7.9	+ 4.6	+ 15.7	+ 8.5	+ 3.7	+ 15.8		1911-1921	+ 7.9	+ 4.6	+ 15.7	+ 8.5	+ 3.7	+ 15.8
	1921-1931	+ 26.4	+ 51.3	+ 22.7	+ 21.2	+ 8.2	+ 7.2		1921-1931	+ 26.4	+ 51.3	+ 22.7	+ 21.2	+ 8.2	+ 7.2
Balipara Frontier Tract.	1901-1911	+ 21.7	+ 29.0	+ 43.3	+ 18.4	+ 11.8	+ 4.8	Manipur ...	1901-1911	+ 21.7	+ 29.0	+ 43.3	+ 18.4	+ 11.8	+ 4.8
	1911-1921	+ 10.2	+ 2.1	+ 16.6	+ 19.1	+ 9.3	+ 21.9		1911-1921	+ 10.2	+ 2.1	+ 16.6	+ 19.1	+ 9.3	+ 21.9
	1921-1931	+ 16.0	+ 24.0	+ 11.7	+ 19.7	+ 1.5	- 1.1		1921-1931	+ 16.0	+ 24.0	+ 11.7	+ 19.7	+ 1.5	- 1.1

NOTE.—The percentage variations in column 3 have been calculated on the unadjusted population of the districts at previous censuses and hence differ in some cases from the actual rate of increase in the adjusted district population.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VII.

REPORTED BIRTH-RATE BY SEX AND NATURAL DIVISIONS.

Year.	Number of births per 1,000 of total population of each sex (census of 1921).					
	Province.		Brahmaputra Valley.		Surma Valley.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1921 ...	...	...	29.4	29.8	32.3	32.0
1922 ...	...	...	28.0	28.8	29.9	29.8
1923 ...	...	...	28.4	29.2	28.6	28.8
1924 ...	...	...	30.7	31.3	32.0	31.8
1925 ...	...	...	28.7	29.4	29.7	29.4
1926 ...	...	...	30.4	31.2	32.2	31.8
1927 ...	...	...	29.9	30.5	31.7	31.2
1928 ...	...	...	30.9	31.5	32.3	31.9
1929 ...	...	...	32.4	33.1	36.0	35.6
1930 ...	...	...	30.8	31.9	31.8	32.0

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VIII.

REPORTED DEATH-RATE BY SEX AND NATURAL DIVISIONS.

Year.	Number per 1,000 of total population of each sex (census of 1921).					
	Province.		Brahmaputra Valley.		Surma Valley.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1921 ...	...	...	26.0	25.9	20.0	27.3
1922 ...	...	...	27.0	26.6	28.7	27.3
1923 ...	...	...	24.0	22.9	25.1	23.2
1924 ...	...	...	27.6	26.9	30.8	29.3
1925 ...	...	...	23.1	21.8	23.8	22.3
1926 ...	...	...	23.2	22.8	22.5	22.0
1927 ...	...	...	23.4	23.4	26.0	26.0
1928 ...	...	...	22.2	22.0	24.4	23.8
1929 ...	...	...	21.0	20.8	23.5	22.9
1930 ...	...	...	21.4	21.3	22.4	21.7

SUBSIDIARY TABLE IX.

REPORTED DEATH-RATE BY SEX AND AGE IN DECADE AND IN SELECTED YEARS PER MILE LIVING AT SAME AGE ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS OF 1921.

Age.	Average decade.		1923.		1924.		1925.		1929.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ALL AGES.	23.4	22.8	27.0	26.6	27.6	26.9	23.2	22.8	21.0	20.8
0-5	69.5	58.3	74.6	63.2	75.8	63.1	72.2	60.7	64.4	53.8
5-10	11.0	9.0	14.4	12.3	14.1	12.4	10.3	8.7	8.1	7.1
10-15	8.6	8.3	10.7	10.2	11.3	10.6	8.0	7.7	6.0	6.3
15-20	11.7	15.6	13.2	17.1	14.5	19.3	10.7	14.6	9.3	13.8
20-40	12.9	16.4	16.9	20.8	17.9	21.7	13.0	16.9	12.0	16.1
40-60	26.1	23.4	29.9	27.4	29.2	26.4	23.9	21.7	23.3	21.0
60 and over	67.8	58.9	71.3	66.2	74.1	63.9	66.1	56.6	65.2	53.6

SUBSIDIARY TABLE X.

REPORTED DEATHS FROM CERTAIN DISEASES PER MILE OF EACH SEX.

		Whole province.				Actual number of deaths in—				
		Actual number of deaths.			Ratio per mille of each sex.		Brahmaputra Valley.		Surma Valley.	
		Total.	Male.	Female.	Male	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Cholera—										
1921	...	12,829	6,861	5,968	1.91	1.82	2,763	2,636	4,078	3,342
1922	...	16,219	8,449	7,770	2.35	2.37	5,755	5,661	2,694	2,109
1923	...	3,728	2,160	1,578	.59	.48	993	793	1,168	785
1924	...	19,183	9,878	9,304	2.73	2.84	3,957	4,212	5,921	5,092
1925	...	6,233	3,319	2,914	.92	.89	2,185	1,938	1,134	976
1926	...	10,275	5,211	5,064	1.45	1.54	4,091	4,152	1,120	912
1927	...	16,393	8,158	7,234	2.27	2.21	3,461	3,163	4,697	4,071
1928	...	6,915	3,770	3,145	1.05	.96	1,451	1,238	2,319	1,907
1929	...	7,765	4,052	3,713	1.10	1.13	1,833	1,740	2,219	1,973
1930	...	6,332	3,393	2,939	.95	.89	1,274	1,205	2,119	1,734
Small-pox—										
1921	...	2,774	1,595	1,179	.44	.36	1,137	875	458	304
1922	...	2,610	1,423	1,187	.39	.36	1,386	1,153	37	25
1923	...	3,213	1,724	1,489	.48	.45	1,713	1,479	11	10
1924	...	1,647	895	752	.24	.22	842	702	63	50
1925	...	2,745	1,431	1,314	.39	.40	1,352	1,247	79	67
1926	...	4,840	2,710	2,130	.75	.65	2,579	2,026	131	104
1927	...	5,237	2,899	2,338	.80	.71	1,856	1,513	1,043	825
1928	...	8,461	4,536	3,925	1.26	1.20	893	843	3,638	3,032
1929	...	1,648	885	763	.24	.23	293	245	592	518
1930	...	1,208	658	550	.18	.17	570	478	88	72
Forer—										
1921	...	107,626	58,277	49,349	16.26	15.08	32,788	27,388	25,489	21,961
1922	...	112,094	60,039	52,055	16.75	15.91	33,649	28,089	27,390	23,966
1923	...	106,347	57,721	48,626	16.10	14.87	32,704	27,896	25,017	20,730
1924	...	113,198	60,897	52,301	16.99	15.99	34,180	29,358	26,717	22,943
1925	...	98,016	53,537	44,478	14.94	13.69	30,975	25,750	22,563	18,728
1926	...	93,689	49,954	43,735	13.94	13.37	30,233	26,134	19,721	17,601
1927	...	89,324	47,393	41,931	13.23	12.82	27,633	24,007	19,760	17,924
1928	...	89,255	47,384	41,871	13.23	12.80	29,023	25,440	18,361	16,431
1929	...	83,520	41,525	38,995	12.43	11.92	25,765	22,817	18,760	16,178
1930	...	89,772	47,669	42,103	13.30	12.87	28,996	25,893	18,673	16,210

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IV.

A note on Vital Statistics in Assam.

The registration of vital statistics in Assam is compulsory only in urban areas and on tea gardens. In the rest of the province (excluding hill districts and frontier tracts in which vital statistics are generally recorded only for certain limited areas) the statistics are collected through the agency of village *gaonburas* and *chaudikars*.

The statistics as presented in the annual reports of the Director of Public Health suffer from two very great defects: the first is that the recording agency is unreliable and that very serious omissions take place; the other is that the birth and death rates are worked out as if the population of the area under registration had remained stationary since the previous census. Thus the death rate for the province for 1929 as published in the Public Health Report was worked out on the census population of 1921. To take the second point first:—

Assam is a province whose population is continually expanding; hence the birth and death rates given in the public health reports for all years subsequent to the year in which a census is taken are too high—the error increasing yearly until the next census is reached. The following table shows how much the figures presented in the Public Health Reports can differ from the facts. The district taken as an example is Nowgong in which the population has increased by 41.3 per cent. since 1921. I may explain that the population figures for intercensal years have been calculated on the usual principle that the population increased in geometrical progression from 1921 to 1931. It must be remembered also that the census was taken on the 18th March 1921 and on the 25th February 1931 whereas the Public Health Reports deal with the calendar year. Hence the average population of a growing district like Nowgong for the calendar year 1921 was a little more than that disclosed by the census taken in March 1921 but the correction in the rates for 1921 which would be necessary to allow for the census having been taken before the middle of the year would be very small and the difference may be neglected. In this table therefore the population of March 1921 has been taken as the average population of the district for the calendar year 1921 and the same principle applied in subsequent years.

DISTRICT NOWGONG.

Year.	Population.	Death rate given in Public Health Reports.	Corrected death rate.	Birth rate given in Public Health Reports.	Corrected birth rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1921	338,007	23.59	23.59	25.65	25.65
1922	412,018	25.43	24.66	24.90	23.86
1923	426,527	24.05	22.44	23.19	21.64
1924	441,547	21.41	19.30	26.99	24.33
1925	467,096	22.29	19.41	24.72	21.62
1926	473,196	19.85	16.70	26.80	22.54
1927	489,850	20.78	16.92	27.97	22.73
1928	507,106	17.65	13.85	30.62	24.01
1929	524,957	17.15	13.0	32.13	24.36
1930	543,444	16.20	14.06	31.59	23.14
1931	562,581	13.90	13.90	21.57	21.57

This comparison between the rates given by the Director of Public Health in his annual reports and the rates corrected for increase of population shows clearly how very misleading the rates in the annual reports can be, the published death rate for Nowgong in 1930 being out by over 5 per mille and the birth rate by over 8 per mille. Nowgong is of course an exceptional district inasmuch as the population increased by over 40 per cent. but it is quite usual for a district in Assam to increase by over 20 per cent. and in fact four of the six plains districts in the Assam Valley have increased by over 20 per cent. since 1921, the largest next to Nowgong being Kamrup with an increase of 27.9 per cent.

The following table gives similar information for the total of all plains districts under registration :—

Year.	Population.	Public Health death rate.	Corrected death rate.	Public Health birth rate.	Corrected birth rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1921	6,852,242	26.48	26.48	29.63	29.63
1922	6,952,850	26.85	26.47	28.43	28.03
1923	7,054,792	23.54	23.87	28.82	27.99
1924	7,158,402	27.30	26.14	31.04	29.72
1925	7,263,343	22.53	21.25	29.03	27.43
1926	7,369,952	23.02	21.41	30.82	28.66
1927	7,478,007	23.47	21.50	30.25	27.72
1928	7,587,835	22.16	20.01	31.24	28.21
1929	7,699,278	20.91	18.61	32.77	29.17
1930	7,812,220	21.40	18.77	31.35	27.50
1931	7,926,829	18.68	18.68	28.13	28.13

The sudden drop in the reported birth and death rates in 1931 due to the percentages being worked out on the new 1931 population is remarkable. A study of these tables show clearly :—

(1) That owing to the rapid increase of population in Assam the published birth and death rates, except in the years in which a census is taken, are considerably higher than they should be, the error increasing yearly until the maximum error is reached at the close of the decade.

(2) That therefore the figures of birth and death rates published in the Annual Public Health Reports are only of use if it is remembered that a gradual rise in the figures of the published birth rate is not necessarily an index of better public health; it merely means that the number of births has increased, and this may be due to the presence of more mothers in the province. A gradual decrease in the published birth rate would however *prima facie* indicate that something was seriously wrong.

Similarly a gradual rise in the published death rate is not necessarily an index of worse health conditions, it may be, and probably is, due to the fact that there are more persons liable to death in the province, i.e., that the population had expanded. A gradual fall in the death rate would, however, (*prima facie*) indicate an improvement in public health. Abrupt increases in either the birth or death rates would indicate some special phenomenon.

(3) That the corrected birth and death rates are extraordinarily low and this leads to the discussion of the first point mentioned by me above, namely, that the recording agency is unreliable and that very serious omissions occur.

All previous census reports have commented upon the great inaccuracy of the registration of vital statistics, Mr. McSwiney remarking in his report for 1911 that "the inaccuracy is so great that there is danger of inferring that the present system of collecting vital statistics is absolutely useless". How far the vital statistics are wrong—assuming that the percentage of error is constant—is a matter of considerable interest. In 1921, Mr. Thompson, Superintendent of Census Operations, Bengal, and a keen statistician, calculated by three different methods that in Bengal

- (1) between 26 to 29 per cent. of male deaths go unreported,
- (2) between 28 to 31 per cent. of female deaths go unreported,
- (3) the omission of births is generally one to two per cent. more than deaths.

As Bengal has the same agency for reporting deaths that we have in Sylhet, viz., the village *chaudikar* and as Sylhet is for all intents and purposes a Bengal district, let us assume to start with, that the vital statistics of Sylhet are cut by the same amount as Mr. Thompson's calculation for Bengal, namely, about 30 per cent. Now the published figures in the public health reports show that the birth and death rates of Sylhet for the last ten years (except in one year) have always been higher by from 1 to 5 per mille than the death and birth rates of the Assam Valley. On the corrected rates the difference would be still higher. I do not conclude from this that omissions in the Assam Valley are more than in the Surma Valley (though I strongly suspect it) as owing to the greater immigration into the Assam Valley—the immigrants being assumed to be healthy persons—the death rate may be less than in Sylhet, but I can, I think, justifiably conclude that in any case there is no greater accuracy in the Assam Valley as regards reporting vital statistics than in Sylhet. If therefore about 30 per cent. is the percentage of omissions in Sylhet we can safely conclude that the same percentage of omissions prevails throughout all the plains districts under registration.

Now let us see whether an assumption that about 30 per cent. of vital occurrences go unreported is inconsistent with the tests actually carried out in Assam. Vital statistics, as already stated, are legally compulsory only in urban areas and in tea gardens. We would therefore expect to find that in these areas at least, they are approximately accurate. In fact, however, this is very far from being the case. The annual enquiries carried out by vaccination inspecting staff show that in urban areas the percentage of omissions can be as high as 40 per cent. This is unusual but reported omissions of over 10 per cent. are quite common. In 1928 for example the reported percentage of omissions of births was over 10 per cent. in seven towns and the omission of deaths was over 10 per cent. in three towns. This may not appear very high but we must remember that, as stated by the Director of Public Health in his report for 1930, "The number of omissions detected does not represent the actual condition of registration in the various towns but, within certain limits, is an index of the activity of the inspecting staff". In Shillong—where no attempt has been made to verify the registration for many years the Health Officer informs me that the omission of vital occurrences may be 50 per cent. It must be at least that, as, although the Public Health Report gives 14.36 for the death rate for Shillong for 1930, the actual death rate worked out on the population of 1930 (instead of 1921) comes to 9.7 which, of course, is incredible.

It is clear, therefore, that in urban areas the registration is extremely unsatisfactory and that it is quite probable that the total percentage of omissions is as high as 30 per cent.

In tea gardens also where one might hope for a considerable degree of accuracy there is, I fear, no doubt that the reported statistics cannot be relied on. In 1929, when I was officiating Deputy Commissioner, Sibsagar, I submitted a note* to the Royal Commission on Labour pointing out that the vital statistics of the tea gardens in that district were, as a whole, unreliable. Judging by the letters which I subsequently received from several prominent tea garden doctors thanking me for the efforts I had made to improve registration and agreeing with me that the principal defect in the vital statistics of tea gardens was the non-registration of infants' deaths, I do not think that my note was very wide of the mark. I may mention in this connection that a doctor who had recently come to Assam and who became particularly interested in the matter instituted a strict system of registration in his gardens with the result that the previous *mamuli* death rate of 17-20 *per mille* went up at once to over 30, purely as a result of stricter supervision of registration.

It is difficult to hazard even a guess as to the total percentage of omissions on the tea gardens of the province in which nearly a million persons reside. I have myself no doubt that it is high.

In any case I have, I hope, made it quite clear that even in the areas in the province where it is legally an offence not to register births and deaths the registration is extremely unsatisfactory and the percentage of omissions is large. If this is so in compulsory areas what, we may well ask, can be expected in the rural areas where the recording agency is generally almost illiterate and sometimes quite illiterate (the actual writing being done by a literate relation) and subject to practically no supervision or check. The only possible answer is that the percentage of omissions must be very high indeed. Hence it appears that as far as we can tell from the tests actually carried out in Assam 30 per cent. of omissions is not at all an improbable figure to take for the province as a whole.

Now, births are apparently more commonly omitted in Assam than deaths. Taking therefore 30 per cent. as the probable omissions of deaths and 33½ per cent. for births let us see what the birth and death rates of the province for the last decade would stand at after applying this correction. I am simply taking 30 and 33½ per cent. for arithmetical convenience. If I followed Mr. Thompson exactly I should take 28.5 and 30 but as the figures which will emerge can only be regarded in any case as purely relative there is no harm in selecting the easier fractions to work with. The following table gives the figures :—

Birth and death rates for Assam after correction for yearly increase in population and probable percentage of error.

Year.	Death Rate per mille.	Birth Rate per mille.	Rate of natural increment per mille.
1921	37.83	44.44	+6.60
1922	37.81	42.04	+4.23
1923	32.67	41.98	+9.31
1924	37.34	44.58	+7.24
1925	30.26	41.14	+10.78
1926	30.59	42.99	+12.40
1927	30.71	41.68	+10.87
1928	28.59	42.31	+13.72
1929	26.63	43.75	+17.16
1930	26.81	41.25	+14.44
1931	26.69	42.19	+15.50

* Printed at pages 94-95 of Vol. VI, Part I, of the Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India.

The figures given above are of course only approximations, but they are certainly much nearer the truth than the published birth and death rates. Unfortunately the Assam figures have never been treated separately in the decennial reports of the Actuary to the Government of India so that I am unable to give the rates of birth and mortality calculated by an expert. Judging, however, by the actuarial reports of previous censuses on the figures of other provinces, which show that the birth rate varies between 40-50 and the death rate from about 33-45, it does not appear in any case that the rates given in my table above are very far wrong. It is, indeed, probable that they are too low rather than too high, in which case the percentage of omissions of registration would be more than the 30 and 33½ per cent. which I have assumed.

Judged by the estimates made by some previous Superintendents of Census, Assam, the birth and mortality rates I have given are decidedly low. In 1891 the Superintendent of Census (Sir Edward Gait) calculated that the birth rate of the province was 49·3 per mille and the death rate 42 and in 1911 Mr. McSwiney by a different method calculated the birth rate at 49·2 and the death rate at 39·2. Mr. Lloyd in 1921 considered that very bold assumptions had been made in framing these estimates and that they were both too high and stated that it seemed best in the absence of an examination by an actuary to accept an estimated birth rate of 45 per mille which the Chief Commissioner had laid down in 1903 as the standard birth rate of the province.

I agree with Mr. Lloyd and hope that the Actuary to the Government of India will find it possible on this occasion to examine the Assam figures separately and to work out our rates of birth and mortality for 1921-31.

I have, I think, now proved fairly conclusively that the percentage of omissions in the registration of vital statistics is very high in Assam and that it is probable that at least one-third of vital occurrences go unreported.

But, in spite of defective registration and in spite of the fact that the figures I have finally worked out as the approximate birth and death rates of the province for 1921-31 must be regarded as having relative validity only, we can, nevertheless, justifiably come to the following definite conclusions:—

- (1) There has, during the last decade, been a very remarkable decline in the death rate in Assam,
- (2) The birth rate has remained more or less stationary.

Assuming always that registration has remained equally inaccurate throughout the decade (and in view of the steady birth rate there seems no reason to doubt this assumption), there must be some reason or reasons which have produced this result. Probably the age constitution of the population in 1921 has had something to do with it. The influenza epidemic of 1918-19 fell most heavily on those in the prime of life and, as a result, the proportion of older people would have been higher in 1920 than normally. Hence, as foretold by Mr. Lloyd in the 1921 census report, a death rate higher than the normal was to be expected in the earlier years of the decade 1921-31. By a similar process of reasoning there should have been a lower birth rate in the earlier years of the decade owing to the fact that a large proportion of women of child-bearing age were carried off by the influenza epidemic and the birth rate should have gradually risen as the younger generation reached reproductive age. This, also, was foretold by Mr. Lloyd but the figures show no sign of it: on the contrary they show an almost absolutely steady birth-rate.

I am therefore inclined to think that the age distribution of the population in 1921 has not been the main cause of the very great reduction in the death rate though it must, as far as I can see, be partly responsible for it. The past decade has, of course, been healthy, but this healthiness is undoubtedly due in a large measure to the great campaign against *kala azar* and it is, I think, due largely to this campaign and to the increased attention paid to matters of public health that the death rate has remained so low since 1925.

The following figures taken from the Public Health Report for 1930 shows the number of *kala azar* cases treated from 1921 to 1930:—

1921.	1922.	1923.	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.	1929.	1930.
15,880	19,659	35,071	48,770	60,940	49,385	33,415	23,676	23,804	16,430

The year 1925 was an *Annus Mirabilis* for Assam as it was in that year that the victory over *kala azar* was won and it was in that year too that the system of mobile epidemic units which have done excellent work in controlling cholera epidemics was first sanctioned. What would have happened had *kala azar* not been firmly controlled is dreadful to imagine. Expert authorities upon the subject affirm that were it not for the widespread sterilisation of the peripheral blood due to treatment, the outbreak of *kala azar* in the period 1917-1927 would have been more widespread and more disastrous than that of the decade 1891-1901 which carried off over a quarter of the entire population of Nowgong and caused enormous tracts of cultivated land in that district to fall back into jungle.

The question remains as to whether the method of presenting the statistics of vital occurrences in the annual health reports could not be improved so as to show more accurately the real course of the birth and death rates: in other words could not some estimate be made of the population of the various districts in intercensal years and the death and birth rates worked out on the basis of such estimates instead of on the basis of the figures of the previous census. Mr. Lloyd showed clearly in 1921 that, so long as heavy immigration continued, the vital statistics were useless for the calculation of population of intercensal years. With this I agree in *toto* . In the Surma Valley, however, where immigration is now not heavy and where the population is nearly equal to a half of the total population under registration it would, I think, be quite possible to estimate the population in intercensal years by adding the number of births and subtracting the number of deaths annually. Thus between 1921-31 there were about 152,000 more births than deaths in Sylhet. Adding this figure to the population of Sylhet in 1921 the present population of Sylhet should be about 2,694,000 whereas it is 2,724,000, a difference of only 30,000 or a little over 1 per cent. Similarly in Cachar plains the excess of births over deaths during the decade was 43,000 and this should have given us a population of about 543,000 in 1931 whereas we actually get 537,000, a difference of 6,000 only or a little over 1 per cent. In the whole of Surma Valley therefore an estimate of population formed in this way would only have been out by .7 per cent. at the end of the decade. In the Assam Valley, on account of heavy immigration, it would be quite useless to frame any estimate on the above lines but it would be quite feasible to obtain annually fairly accurate figures of the tea garden population under registration in each district and to use these as a basis for working out the annual death and birth rates for the tea garden population for years subsequent to the census year instead of using the census figures, as at present, for the whole of a decade.

In any case the experiment might well be tried during the next decade for the Surma Valley and for tea gardens and the death and birth rates for this part of the population (over half of the total population under registration) shown in the Annual Public Health Reports calculated both on the census figures for 1931 and on the estimated population for the year in question.

It may be thought that my suggestion that ratios for the population of the Surma Valley plains should be calculated from deduced population while ratios for the population of the Assam Valley should continue to be calculated on the basis of the previous census population would lead only to confusion. I do not, however, see why this should be so. In the Imperial statements attached to the Public Health Report the birth and death rates, for the sake of all-India uniformity, could continue to be shown on the basis of the previous census population but, in a separate paragraph inserted in the main body of the report, the birth and death rates of the Surma Valley plains, worked out on the basis of the previous census population, could be compared with the rates worked out from the deduced population. This would at least have the advantage of bringing clearly to the notice of the readers of the report the fact that the figures for the birth and death rates of Assam, as published from year to year, may be most misleading unless allowance is made for variation in the population since the last census.

CHAPTER V.

SEX.

Introductory.

65. Though this chapter is entitled sex it contains nothing even faintly reminiscent of the works of our more popular novelists. It deals only with the proportion of women to men in Assam and endeavours to explain the causes which have brought about an excess of males in the population. The main statistics for sex are contained in Imperial Table II which gives the number of males and females in each district since 1881. Imperial Tables VII, VIII and XVII which give the distribution by sex for the main religions at different ages and for certain selected tribes and castes are also important tables for our purpose. At the end of the chapter are six subsidiary tables which have been prepared to facilitate the study of various aspects of the subject.

Sex proportions general.

66. The proportion of females to 1,000 males in the actual population of Assam was 926 in 1921 and is now only 909. If, however, we take the natural population of the province *i.e.*, the actual population *minus* immigrants *plus* emigrants the proportion becomes much higher and stands at 945 females for every thousand males. In 1921 the proportion of females calculated on the natural population was 951 so that there has been only a slight fall in the female proportion of the natural population. It is obvious from these figures that immigration into Assam largely accounts for the small proportion of females in the actual population of the province. It does not, however, account for the fact that at every census of Assam since 1881 the proportion of females calculated on the natural population of the province has always been a good deal less than the proportion of males and has tended to fall since 1911. In 1881 the proportion of females per 1,000 males of the natural population was 966; in 1901 it was exactly the same and in 1911 it was 963; in 1921, however, it dropped to 951 and at this census has dropped still further to 945.

The predominance of males throughout India has been the subject of much discussion in previous census reports. In Western Europe females are in excess and certain critics have, at times, impugned the accuracy of the Indian statistics of sex and suggested that a serious omission of women takes place in the Indian census returns. These criticisms were refuted with great vigour by Sir Edward Gait in the Indian Census Report of 1911; he pointed out that social conditions in India were entirely different from Europe, that in Europe boys and girls were equally cared for whereas in India sons were highly prized and daughters generally regarded as a burden. Furthermore girls in India were usually given in marriage at a very early age and primitive midwifery added very largely to the normal dangers to which they were exposed at childbirth.

It is unnecessary for me to go over the old ground again. The subject has already been discussed threadbare and I can shed no further light on it. Personally I have no doubt that early marriage and the lack of proper prenatal attention and care are mainly responsible for the low proportion of females to males in the natural population of the plains of Assam. It may be argued that tribes like the Ahoms of the Assam Valley (where men predominate) marry just as late as the women of the hills (where women predominate) and that the hill women receive no more skilful treatment at childbirth than the Ahom women do. This argument, however, does not prove that Ahom women have been omitted from the census returns; Ahom women are not generally *purdah* and move about as freely as hill women and there seems to be no reason at all why there should be any attempt to conceal their presence from the census enumerators. It only proves that other factors are at work.

What those factors are seem to be impossible to determine. I know of no reason which would sufficiently explain why Ahom males have always been in excess of Ahom females but Lalung females have always been in excess of Lalung males. Both tribes have lived in the plains of Assam since the British occupation and the only difference seems to be that the Ahoms have lived there for many centuries but the Lalungs are later arrivals as they are not mentioned by Ahom historians and there is a tradition that they originally came from the Jaintia Hills. It was stated in the Indian Census Report of 1921 that the sex statistics indicated that in the regions where the Mongolian and Dravidian race element was strongest there was a higher proportion of females than in areas where the Semitic or Aryan strain prevailed. It is possible, of course, that the Aryan strain in the Ahoms is much greater than in the Lalungs but we have now arrived at the borders of the fascinating country of conjecture and it is time to get back to facts again. And the facts are that there is no reason whatever to suspect that the statistics of Ahom women are not just as correct as those of Lalung women or Manipuri women or the women of any other tribe or race who are found to be in excess of their menfolk.

I have already mentioned that between 1911-21 there was a sudden drop in the proportion of females to males in the natural population of the province—a drop which was confined to the plains. Mr. Lloyd in the census report for 1921 was unable to give any satisfactory explanation for this. At this census there has been a further reduction in the proportion of females to males in the natural population but it is small (from 951 to 945) compared with the reduction in 1911-1921 (from 963 to 951). The reduction has apparently taken place in the natural population of the plains as it will be seen in the next paragraph that there has been no reduction in the proportion of females among the indigenous people of the hills.

67. Subsidiary Table I shows that the proportion of females to 1,000 males in the actual population of the province is now only 909 and that there has been a continual fall since 1901. I have explained in the preceding paragraph that this fall in the proportion of females in the actual population is largely due to immigration. This will again be apparent when we examine the figures by natural divisions. The following table summarizes the position:—

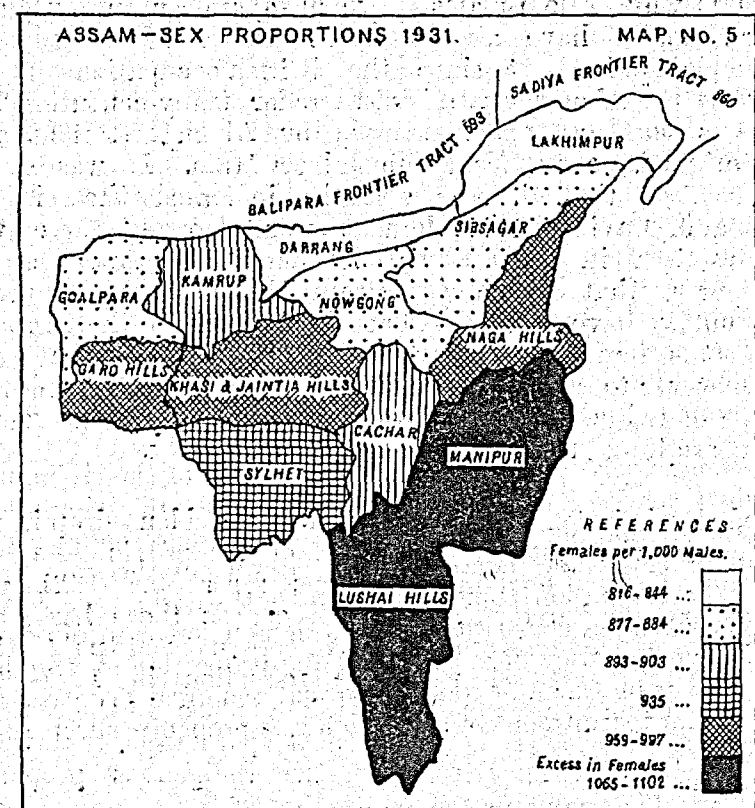
Number of females per 1,000 males (actual population).

	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.
Assam	909	926	940	949
Brahmaputra Valley	869	892	913	924
Surma Valley... ..	928	937	943	947
Hills	1,017	1,023	1,026	1,037

It is clear from this table that in the hills and the Surma Valley the rate of decrease in the proportion of women has been very slow compared with the rate of decrease in the Brahmaputra Valley. We have already seen in Chapter III—Migration, that the Brahmaputra Valley is the natural division which has attracted most of the immigrants to the province and hence the large decrease in the proportionate figures of that valley do not come as a surprise.

Another feature which the table brings out is that the hills are quite different from the plains as regards the proportion of women to men and that, as at all previous censuses, women in the hills outnumber men.

The actual proportion of females to 1,000 males in each district is given in



Subsidiary Table I and is further illustrated by the map in the margin which shows at a glance the districts in which the proportion of females to males is large or small. It will be seen from this map that the Lushai Hills and Manipur State are the only two areas where females are actually in excess but that in all the other hill districts—the Garo Hills, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Naga Hills—females, though in a minority, are nearly equal to the number of males. In the Naga Hills, in fact, they are almost exactly equal and would be in excess except for the presence in that district of a few

thousand foreigners who are mostly males. There are, actually 84,977 *Naginis* in the Naga Hills district and only 82,690 *Nagas*.

In the case of the Khasi Hills the female proportion has been considerably affected by the fact that Shillong, the headquarters of the province with a large foreign population, is situated in that district which has, moreover, been subject during the decade to an influx of Nepali immigrants; there are now over 17,000 Nepalis in the Khasi Hills of whom over 12,000 are males and it is this large excess of Nepali males which is mainly responsible for the sudden decrease since 1921 in the proportion of women to men. Among the indigenous hillmen females still outnumber males and, as Subsidiary Table IV shows, there are 1,058 Khasi women to every 1,000 Khasi men. Among Syntengs the proportion is higher and there are 1,080 Synteng women to every 1,000 men. The Garo Hills contains a large plains area and this has the effect of reducing the proportion of women. Among tribal Garos, who form the vast majority of the dwellers in the actual hill area of the district, females are slightly in excess of males there being 1,005 tribal Garo women to 1,000 men. If Christian and Hindu Garos are included the proportion of Garo women to men would, however, be a good deal lower and would stand at 989. There is thus an excess of females among practically all the indigenous people in the hill districts. Except for the large fall in the proportion of females in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, which, as I have already stated, is mainly due to a heavy influx of immigrant males, the proportion of women in the hills natural division would, in fact, have increased a little at this census instead of decreasing slightly. In Manipur, the Naga Hills and the North Cachar Hills the proportion has actually risen, in the Garo Hills it remained exactly as before and the slight decrease in the Lushai Hills is so small as to be negligible. We can, therefore, conclude that, as far as the indigenous population of the hills is concerned, there has been practically no change in the sex composition of the people. Looking again at the map we notice that the proportion of females to males is fairly high in the Surma Valley and that it is in the Assam Valley alone that very great differences occur in the proportion of women to men.

Leaving out the Balipara Frontier Tract with its tiny population Lakhimpur and Darrang are seen to be the two districts in which men are greatly in excess of women, Lakhimpur having only 816 women and Darrang 844 women to every thousand men.

Goalpara, Nowgong and Sibsagar are much alike as regards the distribution of the sexes and Kamrup with 903 women per thousand men has the highest proportion of females of any district in the Assam Valley.

Compared with 1921 there is very little change in the order in which the districts stand as regards the proportion of females to males. In the hills the Lushai Hills had the greatest proportion of females in 1921 followed by Manipur; exactly as at this census. The only change, in fact, that has occurred in the order of precedence is that the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, which in 1921 had a higher proportion of females than the Naga Hills, now goes below it. I have already mentioned that this is due to the immigration of a large number of foreign males into the Khasi Hills during the decade. The Surma Valley plains districts maintain the same order as in 1921 and in the Assam Valley the only difference is that Goalpara, which in 1921 shared the lowest place with Lakhimpur, has now gone ahead of both Darrang and Lakhimpur which have suffered great reductions in their proportion of women to men.

In Lakhimpur the decrease is largely due to the great expansion of the oil industry at Digboi which now employs nearly 8,000 men and where the female population is very small. The coal industry of that district also employs many more males than females. In Darrang the low proportion of females is due largely to the low proportion of females to males in the tea garden population. In that district there are now only 814 females to a thousand males censused on tea gardens whereas in Sibsagar the proportion is 925 and in the whole valley 853. In 1921 the proportion of females to males censused on the tea gardens of Darrang was 959 so that the great decrease at this census is apparently due to the recruitment of single males—probably short-term coolies.

68. Subsidiary Tables II and III enable us to compare the sex proportions in the main religions. In the whole of Assam the proportion of women to a thousand males is 892 among Hindus, 902 among Muslims and 1,010 among followers of tribal religions. Since the first census of Assam was held this relative order has remained unchanged and it has been found at every census that Hindus have the smallest proportion of women and Animists have the largest. Turning to the figures for natural divisions we see that the low Hindu proportion is mainly due to the small proportion of Hindu women in the Brahmaputra Valley (872), the proportion of Hindu and Muslim women per 1,000 males in the Surma Valley (924 and 932) being almost equal. We also notice that the proportion of Muslim women to men in the Assam Valley (850) is the lowest figure in the whole table. These features will be found also in the figures for 1921 and 1911 and their persistence is obviously due to some cause or causes which we should be able to trace.

As regards the small proportion of Muslim women in the Assam Valley this is not entirely due, as might be suspected, to the immigration of Eastern Bengal settlers as Sibsagar and Lakhimpur which have not been affected by this migration have the lowest proportions of Muslim women. Sibsagar has only 750 Muslim females to 1,000 Muslim males and Lakhimpur only 480 whereas Kamrup and Nowgong, which have large numbers of Muslim immigrants, have the fairly high proportions of 868 and 859.

There is no doubt that the extremely low proportion of Muslim women in Lakhimpur is due to the presence of numerous immigrant Muslim male labourers. On the tea gardens of that district, for example, there are 2,130 Muslim males and only 759 Muslim females and the number of males employed in the oil and coal industries far outnumber the females. In Sibsagar also, the excess of Muslim males is largely due to the presence of Muslim immigrants—tea garden coolies, Bengali shopkeepers, etc. In the other districts of the Assam Valley the immigration of Eastern Bengal settlers is the main cause for the low proportion of Muslim women. These immigrants generally bring their women and children with them but not in proportion to the rest of the population. Thus in Nowgong the proportion of females per 1,000 males born in Mymensingh is only 818 and in Kamrup only 800.

The cause of the small proportion of Muslim females to Muslim males in the Assam Valley is thus clearly due to the effect of immigration on the sex distribution of the population. Similarly the low proportion of Hindu women to Hindu men in that

valley (872) is due to the same cause. The presence of numerous tea gardens in the Assam Valley, in which the proportion of Hindu females to Hindu males is only 867 per mille, has reduced the female proportion of the Assam Valley to some extent and the presence of numerous Nepalis and Marwaris, among whom males are largely in excess, makes a noticeable difference. I have calculated that, if Hindus on tea garden and Nepali and Marwari immigrants be excluded, the proportion of Hindu women per 1,000 men in the Assam Valley would be 857 instead of 872 as at present.

Immigration is therefore largely responsible for the small proportion of Hindu females in the Assam Valley. Among the indigenous Hindu castes and tribes the proportion of women is just as high as among the Hindus in Sylhet.

Few castes were sorted for specially on this occasion but Subsidiary Table IV shows that the Ahoms and the Kacharis—two of the largest Assamese racial castes have 920 and 948 women respectively for every 1,000 men and the Nadiyals have 918. These figures are as high as the Namasudras (932) and the Yogis (916) of the Surma Valley. In 1921, also, when many more castes were sorted for, it was found that the indigenous castes of the Assam Valley had just as high a proportion of females as the indigenous castes of the Surma Valley.

69. The sex proportions in the actual population of Assam have been so much affected by immigration, and the returns of age are so unreliable that it seems to me to be useless to discuss at length the sex proportions in the various age groups of the population. In Subsidiary Tables II and III the proportionate figures have been set out by religion and natural divisions. The general conclusion that can be drawn from these tables is that females of all religions are in excess of males in the age groups 0-5, 15-20 and 20-25 and are in defect in all other age groups. The figures of previous censuses give a similar result. The peculiar defect in the proportion of females between 5-1, which has occurred at all censuses and which is found among the tribal population of the hills as well among Hindu and Muslim population of the plains, must be largely due to the fact that the common errors in age declaration are different in the two sexes at different age periods.

Sex ratios
at birth
and death.

70. Subsidiary Tables V and VI give figures for determining the sex ratios at birth and death. It will be seen that the proportion of female births per 1,000 male births has been practically the same at each of the last three decades. In 1901-1910 the reported number of females born per 1,000 males born was 934; in 1911-20 it was 937 and 1921-30, 935. The record of vital statistics in Assam is, however, so defective that I would be unwilling to draw any definite conclusion from these figures any more than I would do so from the figures showing the sex ratio at death. According to the statistics of vital occurrences the ratio of female deaths to male deaths is much lower (as at all previous censuses) than the corresponding ratio for births. We would naturally expect, therefore, that the proportion of females in the population would be higher than it was in 1921. But we have already seen that there has been a drop in the proportion of females in the natural as well as in the actual population.

The only conclusion which we can draw appears to be that the combined effect of immigration and of inaccuracy in the registration of vital statistics has so obscured the real facts that it is hopeless to attempt to base any argument upon the statistics as they stand.

Sex on tea
gardens.

71. The total population censused on tea gardens was 979,714 of whom 523,326 were males and 456,388 females. This gives a proportion of 872 females per 1,000 males. In 1921 proportion of females on gardens per 1,000 males was 958 and in 1911 it was 940. The proportion of females on tea gardens is much higher in the Surma Valley (913) than in the Assam Valley (853). The great reduction since 1921 in the proportion of females on the tea gardens of both valleys—from 950 to 853 in the Assam Valley and from 976 to 913 in the case of the Surma Valley—is due to the very poor recruitment of women coolies during the decade.

Fertility of
marriages.

72. An appendix giving the results of a special enquiry relating to the fertility of marriage among garden coolies and certain hill tribes is attached to this chapter. The enquiry offers distinct evidence in favour of a higher ratio of masculinity in the first-born child.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

GENERAL PROPORTIONS OF THE SEXES BY NATURAL DIVISIONS AND DISTRICTS. NUMBER OF FEMALES TO 1,000 MALES.
(ACTUAL POPULATION.)

District and natural division.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1881.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ASSAM	909	926	940	949	942	953
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	869	892	913	924	923	931
Goalpara	877	875	886	904	912	947
Kamrup	903	920	908	1,012	976	947
Darrang	844	888	900	916	907	919
Nowgong	884	907	959	964	936	936
Sibsagar	881	897	892	896	902	903
Lakhimpur	816	875	883	863	863	867
* Sadiya	860	796	*	*	*	*
* Balipara	593	477	*	*	*	*
SURMA VALLEY	928	937	943	947	948	957
Cachar Plains	893	913	909	974	884	864
Sylhet	935	942	949	965	937	969
HILLS	1,017	1,023	1,026	1,037	1,019	1,022
North Cachar Hills	898	883	917	492	1,035	975
Garó Hills	959	959	956	974	986	958
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	978	1,031	1,054	1,080	1,092	1,104
Naga Hills	997	993	1,002	982	1,035	973
Lushai Hills	1,102	1,109	1,120	1,113	911	...
Manipur	1,065	1,041	1,029	1,037	969	1,018

* Figures of Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tracts from 1881 to 1911 are included in Lakhimpur and Darrang districts respectively.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II.

NUMBER OF FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES AT DIFFERENT AGE PERIODS BY RELIGIONS AT EACH OF THE LAST THREE CENSUSES.

Age.	All religions.			Hindu.			Muslim.			Tribal.		
	1911.			1921.			1931.			1911.		
	1911.	1921.	1931.	1911.	1921.	1931.	1911.	1921.	1931.	1911.	1921.	1931.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
0-1 ...	1,004	981	1,005	1,003	980	999	989	982	1,014	1,027	1,001	1,017
1-2 ...	1,042	1,031	1,033	1,019	1,018	1,025	1,000	1,046	1,053	1,077	1,015	1,036
2-3 ...	1,061	1,057	1,050	1,058	1,057	1,043	1,070	1,058	1,064	1,056	1,055	1,046
3-4 ...	1,067	1,063	1,023	1,078	1,062	1,022	1,067	1,037	1,039	1,038	1,059	1,029
4-5 ...	1,023	1,030	996	1,013	1,005	988	1,025	1,037	1,001	1,044	1,052	1,013
TOTAL 0-5 ...	1,039	1,034	1,023	1,036	1,024	1,015	1,040	1,047	1,034	1,047	1,043	1,023
5-10 ...	983	980	912	983	987	919	988	971	877	981	971	967
10-15 ...	817	811	901	823	818	902	740	741	871	938	944	977
15-20 ...	1,073	1,064	1,109	1,010	1,006	1,054	1,117	1,110	1,173	1,210	1,200	1,201
20-25 ...	1,174	1,170	1,082	1,105	1,102	1,033	1,249	1,253	1,129	1,323	1,299	1,213
25-30 ...	991	984	880	964	949	864	956	989	860	1,136	1,118	1,041
TOTAL 0-30 ...	1,003	991	979	983	974	964	999	987	980	1,072	1,060	1,051
30-40 ...	817	820	778	804	818	768	761	756	738	859	944	938
40-50 ...	760	751	731	747	731	719	738	715	687	866	875	805
50-60 ...	836	787	765	836	776	751	813	749	716	872	871	826
60 and over ...	974	892	813	1,002	910	817	809	799	707	1,007	923	944
TOTAL 30 AND OVER ...	824	803	765	814	797	755	778	749	716	930	909	927
Total all ages (actual population) ...	940	936	909	923	909	892	930	913	902	1,023	1,006	1,010
Total all ages (natural population) ...	963	951	915	955	940	899	932	939	899	1,030	1,018	999

SUBSIDIARY TABLE III.

NUMBER OF FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES AT DIFFERENT AGE PERIODS BY RELIGION AND NATURAL DIVISION. (CENSUS OF 1931.)

AGE.	Brahmaputra Valley.				Surma Valley.				Hills.			
	All religions.				All religions.				All religions.			
	All religions.	Hindu.	Muslim.	Tribal.	All religions.	Hindu.	Muslim.	Tribal.	All religions.	Hindu.	Muslim.	Tribal.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
0-1 ...	1,090	995	1,017	1,003	1,012	1,012	1,013	893	1,010	990	863	1,023
1-2 ...	1,021	1,016	1,031	1,049	1,023	1,038	1,035	987	1,027	1,015	1,041	1,031
2-3 ...	1,038	1,031	1,041	1,063	1,073	1,056	1,073	1,045	1,038	1,039	1,041	1,033
3-4 ...	1,015	1,017	1,012	1,018	1,048	1,036	1,056	1,056	1,029	1,025	1,010	1,034
4-5 ...	976	981	959	970	1,015	1,001	1,024	960	1,025	1,018	983	1,033
TOTAL 0-5 ...	1,010	1,009	1,012	1,021	1,042	1,035	1,048	991	1,026	1,015	1,009	1,032
5-10 ...	908	918	871	922	891	909	880	933	981	973	915	987
10-15 ...	896	896	885	937	877	896	864	945	989	979	896	994
15-20 ...	1,059	1,036	1,113	1,177	1,163	1,103	1,210	1,302	1,142	1,021	1,092	1,205
20-25 ...	1,017	1,011	1,015	1,065	1,152	1,099	1,107	1,380	1,139	968	916	1,277
25-30 ...	827	842	755	942	919	915	924	1,061	1,004	870	699	1,085
TOTAL 0-30 ...	953	953	942	999	996	983	1,002	1,101	1,038	976	916	1,072
30-40 ...	729	737	633	820	896	818	796	839	944	855	650	991
40-50 ...	664	679	589	730	758	778	738	709	955	900	715	903
50-60 ...	695	701	658	757	785	821	747	765	1,003	959	759	1,008
60 and over ...	733	743	670	789	801	876	724	830	1,051	1,004	787	989
TOTAL 30 AND OVER ...	701	715	623	781	788	813	765	788	972	917	701	987
Total all ages ...	869	872	850	930	928	924	939	992	1,017	953	854	1,044

SUBSIDIARY TABLE IV.

NUMBER OF FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES FOR CERTAIN SELECTED CASTES AND TRIBES.

Caste or Tribe.	Number of females per 1,000 males.						
	All ages.	0-6.	7-13.	14-18.	19-23.	24-43.	44 and over.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ahom ...	...	920	992	854	1,034	1,090	850
Baidya ...	...	874	1,005	698	884	801	934
Brahman ...	...	818	972	847	809	943	714
Bania (Brittal Bania) ...	...	869	931	779	936	1,113	805
Garos (Tribal) ...	...	1,005	1,002	901	1,469	1,442	956
Kachari ...	...	948	1,007	928	1,222	1,250	852
Khasi ...	...	1,058	1,023	979	1,065	1,291	1,053
Manipuri ...	...	1,081	948	943	1,416	1,220	1,050
Nadiyal (Kaibartia) ...	...	918	1,020	874	921	1,161	846
Namasudra ...	...	932	1,157	801	952	1,068	801
Tanti ...	...	943	1,007	910	1,039	1,467	887
Yogi ...	...	916	1,101	805	882	1,027	909

SUBSIDIARY TABLE V.

ACTUAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS REPORTED FOR EACH SEX DURING THE DECADES 1901-1910, 1911-1920 AND 1921-1930.

	NUMBER OF BIRTHS.			NUMBER OF DEATHS.			Difference between columns 2 and 6 (excess or deficit of latter over former).	Difference between columns 5 and 7 (excess or deficit of latter over former).	Difference between columns 4 and 8 (excess or deficit of former over latter).	Number of female births per 1,000 male births.	Number of female deaths per 1,000 male deaths.
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1901	83,078	86,211	170,289	77,503	69,436	146,939	- 8,567	- 8,067	+ 32,350	928	806
1902	83,146	87,323	180,476	80,068	72,972	153,070	- 5,817	- 7,126	+ 27,405	938	911
1903	86,877	90,702	187,669	72,613	67,456	140,069	- 8,985	- 5,157	+ 47,600	937	929
1904	86,761	90,778	187,639	70,507	65,895	136,392	- 5,483	- 4,622	+ 51,147	938	934
1905	89,584	93,087	182,671	77,235	72,765	150,000	- 6,497	- 4,470	+ 42,671	935	942
1906	95,236	98,884	184,100	83,122	78,421	161,543	- 6,372	- 4,701	+ 22,557	933	943
1907	96,993	91,786	188,779	70,366	64,658	135,024	- 5,207	- 5,708	+ 53,755	946	910
1908	105,128	97,011	202,730	66,051	69,840	135,891	- 7,517	- 6,211	+ 16,848	928	935
1909	97,470	90,112	187,582	60,618	63,169	123,777	- 7,358	- 7,459	+ 13,805	925	918
1910	99,591	93,141	192,702	92,986	88,331	181,317	- 6,480	- 4,655	+ 11,285	935	950
Total Assam 1901-1910 ...	973,864	909,681	1,883,545	811,099	752,923	1,564,022	- 61,183	- 58,176	+ 319,523	934	928
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY ...	474,708	444,511	919,291	422,019	391,186	813,205	- 30,197	- 30,833	+ 106,014	936	927
SURMA VALLEY	499,156	465,170	964,326	389,080	361,737	750,817	- 33,986	- 27,343	+ 213,509	932	930
1911	99,872	93,688	193,560	73,733	69,183	142,915	- 6,184	- 4,551	+ 50,645	939	933
1912	100,869	94,007	194,676	79,657	71,909	151,566	- 6,662	- 7,748	+ 43,110	934	903
1913	103,423	96,653	200,076	83,106	79,273	162,379	- 6,771	- 8,833	+ 32,606	935	900
1914	103,321	96,023	199,343	78,973	70,271	149,244	- 7,299	- 8,702	+ 50,069	929	890
1915	105,023	98,319	203,339	85,147	89,631	180,778	- 6,716	- 9,516	+ 16,558	928	903
1916	95,691	89,048	184,739	61,927	61,111	123,038	- 6,643	- 10,816	+ 11,701	931	882
1917	97,663	92,073	189,741	66,986	76,939	163,925	- 5,895	- 10,047	+ 25,816	943	884
1918	103,730	102,987	211,717	145,693	133,041	279,024	- 5,433	- 12,652	+ 67,317	947	911
1919	95,287	89,451	184,738	159,838	143,295	303,133	- 5,836	- 16,543	+ 118,395	939	897
1920	98,370	92,465	190,835	65,797	79,606	145,403	- 5,905	- 16,191	+ 15,432	940	831
Total Assam 1911-1920 ...	1,068,057	944,703	1,952,760	999,157	893,258	1,892,415	- 63,351	- 105,899	+ 60,345	937	891
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY ...	529,107	499,590	1,028,697	531,740	478,556	1,010,296	- 29,517	- 53,184	+ 18,401	944	900
SURMA VALLEY	478,950	445,113	924,063	467,417	414,702	882,119	- 33,837	- 52,715	+ 41,944	929	887
1921	105,305	97,758	203,153	66,688	64,825	131,513	- 7,637	- 11,663	+ 21,640	928	877
1922	100,433	94,465	194,898	67,041	67,016	134,057	- 5,963	- 10,025	+ 10,811	941	897
1923	101,861	95,657	197,518	66,293	75,040	141,332	- 6,204	- 11,252	+ 36,186	939	870
1924	110,107	102,648	212,755	99,088	69,039	168,127	- 7,459	- 11,040	+ 25,628	932	858
1925	103,009	96,252	199,261	62,789	71,563	134,351	- 6,757	- 11,227	+ 44,910	934	864
1926	108,967	102,360	211,333	63,168	74,619	137,787	- 6,701	- 8,649	+ 53,446	939	897
1927	107,401	99,829	207,289	64,073	76,740	140,813	- 7,633	- 7,333	+ 46,476	929	913
1928	110,774	103,263	214,057	79,819	72,039	151,857	- 7,491	- 7,779	+ 62,200	932	903
1929	116,177	108,417	224,594	75,270	68,007	143,273	- 7,760	- 7,569	+ 81,311	933	903
1930	110,400	104,435	214,835	76,763	69,658	146,419	- 5,965	- 6,907	+ 68,218	946	910
Total Assam 1921-1930 ...	1,074,534	1,005,009	2,079,593	860,996	767,743	1,628,739	- 69,575	- 93,253	+ 159,854	935	892
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY ...	576,993	542,047	1,119,050	457,667	405,411	863,078	- 34,856	- 52,256	+ 255,723	940	896
SURMA VALLEY	497,631	462,962	960,643	403,329	362,332	765,661	- 34,719	- 40,997	+ 194,982	930	898

SUBSIDIARY TABLES.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VI.

NUMBER OF DEATHS OF EACH SEX AT DIFFERENT AGE PERIODS.

AGE.	1926.		1927.		1928.		1929.		1930.		Total.		Average number of female deaths per 1,000 male deaths.
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
0-1	21,029	17,403	19,253	16,266	20,233	16,587	19,374	15,98	2,0196	17,310	100,055	68,553	835
1-5	12,334	11,575	11,691	10,747	11,511	10,699	10,369	9,609	11,619	10,793	67,613	53,913	934
5-10	6,031	5,006	5,940	5,219	5,580	4,855	4,710	4,040	4,853	4,255	27,114	23,474	869
10-15	3,594	2,671	3,431	2,691	3,037	2,339	2,637	1,58	2,650	2,302	15,180	12,124	799
15-20	3,603	4,206	3,659	4,434	2,841	4,507	2,606	4,036	2,509	3,958	14,073	20,051	1,490
20-30	6,844	10,390	7,410	11,731	6,971	10,505	6,137	9,931	6,023	9,792	33,164	52,349	1,573
30-40	8,141	7,616	8,824	8,222	7,841	7,502	7,408	7,203	7,233	6,816	39,612	37,359	949
40-50	7,330	4,730	7,601	5,360	6,077	4,489	6,872	4,474	6,669	4,362	35,410	23,421	681
50-60	6,070	4,182	6,759	4,475	6,066	4,062	6,153	4,136	6,229	4,004	31,277	20,859	667
60 and over	9,082	6,690	9,015	7,533	8,758	6,407	8,931	6,331	8,927	6,304	45,633	33,358	731
ALL AGES	83,168	74,619	84,073	76,740	79,818	72,039	75,376	68,007	76,763	69,856	399,098	361,261	905

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER V.

RESULTS OF AN ENQUIRY INTO THE FERTILITY OF MARRIAGE LIFE IN ASSAM.

At the instance of the Census Commissioner for India a special enquiry was held at this census with the object of ascertaining the fertility of marriage life. For obvious reason the enquiry could not be conducted by the ordinary census staff and it was only found practical to collect statistics for women belonging to tea garden cooly castes in selected groups of tea gardens and for women of certain hill tribes. In the case of tea gardens booklets containing fifty slips each were issued to tea garden doctors and these slips were filled in under their supervision and, in the hill districts, the booklets were filled in by the most reliable agencies which the local officers could secure.

The following was the form in which the information was collected :—

State the following particulars for each married woman :—

1. Caste or Tribe.
2. Age.
3. Whether previously married or not.
4. Age of present husband.
5. Occupation of husband.
6. Duration of married life (*i.e.*, number of years since commencement of cohabitation).
7. Sex of first child (whether quick or still born).
8. Number of children born alive.
9. Number of children still living.
10. Age of children still living.

N. B.—If married more than once enter the particulars for the first marriage first and for the second marriage after that in lines 6 to 10. Thus if there be one child by a former marriage aged 12 and three children by a later aged 7, 5 and 3, the reply in lines 9 and 10, respectively, will be as follows :—

9. Number of children still living... 1; 3.
10. Ages of children still living... 12; 7, 5, 3 years

At the census of 1921 enquiries on somewhat similar lines were made in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces, the Punjab, and in Baroda and Travancore States and a summary of the results is contained in Appendix VII to the India Census Report of 1921. The general conclusions suggested by the enquiries in 1921 were as follows :—

- (1) The rate of masculinity was higher for the first born than for subsequent children.
- (2) The usual number of children born was from 5 to 7 the number being higher in the south than the north and in the lower classes than in the higher classes.
- (3) Between one-third and two-fifths of the children born die.

No enquiry into these matters was made in Assam in 1921 or at any previous census; it will therefore be interesting to observe now for the results of the enquiry held in Assam on this occasion agree with the general conclusions stated above.

But before I proceed to discuss the results of the enquiry which are contained in the six Sex Tables printed in this appendix a word of warning is necessary. In the first place the total number of families in Assam the details of which were recorded in the booklets amounts only to 6,446. It is manifestly impossible to draw any conclusions which could be accepted as final from a study of such a small number of cases. In the second place, as pointed out in Chapter IV, very few people in Assam know their correct age and though the figures of ages in these tables, many of which were filled in by medical officers and the rest by an agency which was far more reliable than the ordinary census staff, should be a great deal more accurate than those of the general census they can, at the best, be regarded only as approximations. It must also be remembered that the ages given are crude ages without any gradation or smoothing.

The actual number of children born in each family and the sex of the first born should however be accurate.

It may well be asked why, if I say that I cannot draw any valid conclusions from an examination of the statistics, it is worth publishing the results of the enquiry at all. My reply to this would be that this is the first time such an enquiry has been conducted in Assam—it is pioneer work so far as this province is concerned—and it will, at least, be useful as a basis for future discussion and future experiments in this field. For this reason alone the results are valuable. Furthermore similar enquiries have been conducted in other provinces and the results of the All-India enquiry (in which the Assam figures will presumably be incorporated) can be used to throw light on many points which are obscure in our statistics.

The first Sex Table which is a very simple one relates to the sex of the first born. Here it is :—

SEX TABLE I.
SEX OF FIRST BORN.

Natural Division and District.	Class of individual.	Number of females first born.		Number of males first born.		Number of females first born (alive) per 1,000 of males first born (alive).	Number of slips examined.
		Quick.	Still.	Quick.	Still.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
TOTAL ...		2,716	168	3,062	222	897	6,466
Plains ...	Tea garden coolies	891	75	1,013	106	880	2,198
Cachar ...	Ditto ditto ...	215	18	241	30	892	507
Sylhet ...	Ditto ditto ...	239	23	279	30	857	656
Sibsagar ...	Ditto ditto ...	364	25	385	32	922	832
Lakhimpur ...	Ditto ditto ...	73	9	98	14	745	203
Hills ...	Total	1,825	93	2,049	116	891	4,268
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	Hills tribes ...	187	13	258	16	725	481
Lushai Hills	Ditto ditto ...	779	10	768	30	1,014	1,658
Garohills ...	Ditto ditto ...	665	67	795	63	836	1,671
Manipur State	Ditto ditto ...	194	13	228	7	851	458

This table is of considerable interest. It shows that among tea garden cooly women in all districts and among all hill people except the Lushais the sex of the first born is more often a male than a female. This agrees with the general conclusion suggested by the enquiries held in other provinces of India in 1921. The table shows also that out of a total of 6,168 first births (quick and still) 390 or over 6 per cent. were still births.

The figures of individual districts show very peculiar differences which I cannot attempt to explain.

Sex Table II which is printed below gives us some idea of the size of the family by occupation of the husband.

SEX TABLE II.
SIZE OF FAMILIES BY OCCUPATION OF THE HUSBAND.

Occupation of Husband.	Number of families examined.	Total number of children born (alive).	Average per family.	Number of children surviving.	Proportion of surviving to total thousand born alive.
1	2	3	4	5	6
TOTAL ...	6,466	27,761	4.3	17,596	634
Tea garden coolies (plains).	2,198	7,540	3.4	5,184	688
Hill Tribes (total) ...	4,268	20,221	4.7	12,412	614
Khasi labourers ...	481	2,065	4.3	1,563	757
Lushai cultivators ...	1,658	8,016	4.8	5,424	677
Garohills cultivators ...	1,671	8,145	4.9	4,203	516
Hill tribes (cultivators) of Manipur State.	458	1,995	4.4	1,222	613

This table includes women who have only been married a year or so and who have thus only started their reproductive period as well as women who have passed child-bearing age. It does not therefore tell us the average number of children which a woman married to a man belonging to one of the classes mentioned normally bears in her whole married life. To ascertain this it would be necessary to compile figures for marriages in which the wife had passed, say, her 45th birthday *i.e.*, her family would by then be complete.

The low average of children (3·4) given in this table for wives of tea garden coolies compared with the average of the hill women (4·7) is difficult to explain. A simple explanation would be that the tea garden cooly women dealt with in the enquiry were generally younger women who had not been married so long as the hill women but Sex Table VI does not bear this out entirely and indicates that at every period of marriage duration hill women have more children than cooly women and that at the end of her reproductive life a cooly woman would normally have had 6 children and a hill woman 7 to 8.

The table shows also that on the average, about 36 per cent. of the children born alive in every family have died. This agrees with the general conclusion recorded in 1921 as the result of enquiries in other provinces.

Sex Table III repeats the information given in Sex Table II but adds details regarding the age at which the wife was married.

SEX TABLE III.

SIZE OF FAMILIES BY CLASS OF FAMILY.

Class of family.	Number of families examined.	Total number of children born alive.	Average per family.	Number of children surviving.	Proportion of surviving to 1,000 born alive.	Number of families with wife married at—				
						Under 13.	13—14.	15—19.	20—30.	30 and over.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
TOTAL ...	6,466	27,761	4·3	17,596	634	913	1,075	3,301	1,104	73
Tea garden cooly castes (plains).	2,198	7,540	3·4	5,184	638	401	598	1,096	102	1
Hill tribes ...	4,268	20,221	4·7	12,412	614	512	477	2,205	1,002	72
Khasi labourers ...	481	2,065	4·3	1,563	757	10	16	221	216	13
Jashai cultivators ...	1,658	8,016	4·8	5,424	677	83	97	992	458	23
Garo cultivators ...	1,671	8,145	4·9	4,203	516	409	312	727	185	8
Hill tribes (cultivators) of Manipur.	438	1,995	4·4	1,222	613	10	22	265	143	18

It will be noticed that tea garden cooly women and Garo women are the only classes which have a high proportion of their women married under 13 years of age. We would therefore expect to find some points of resemblance between Garo and cooly women in columns 4 and 6 of the table. Actually we find none. This must be due to some extent to the fact that, as shown by Sex Table VI, 49 per cent. of the total number of cooly marriages examined were of less than 11 years duration whereas only 39 per cent. of Garo marriages were marriages under 11 years duration, *i.e.*, the Garo marriage examined were of longer duration and hence a higher average of children would be natural.

Sex Table IV correlates the average size of the family with the age of the wife at marriage.

SEX TABLE IV.

AVERAGE SIZE OF FAMILY CORRELATED WITH AGE OF WIFE AT MARRIAGE.

Age of wife at marriage.	Number of families.	Number of children born alive.	Average observed.	Number of children surviving.	Average observed.
1	2	3	4	5	6
TOTAL ...	6,466	27,761	4·3	17,596	2
TEA GARDEN COOLY CASTES.					
All ages ...	2,198	7,540	3·4	5,184	2·4
Under 13 ...	401	1,447	3·6	984	2·5
13—14 ...	598	2,003	3·3	1,382	2·3
15—19 ...	1,096	3,694	3·4	2,537	2·3
20—30 ...	102	394	3·9	279	2·7
30 and over ...	1	2	2·0	2	2·0
HILL TRIBES.					
All ages ...	4,268	20,221	4·7	12,412	2·9
Under 13 ...	512	2,628	5·1	1,396	2·7
13—14 ...	477	2,101	4·4	1,258	2·6
15—19 ...	2,205	10,703	4·9	6,664	3·0
20—30 ...	1,002	4,518	4·5	2,921	2·9
30 and over ...	72	271	3·8	173	2·4

According to this table it apparently does not matter whether a tea garden cooly caste girl marries under fourteen or between 15-19. Under 14 the average fertility rate is 3·4 and between 15-19 it is the same. The proportion of children who survive would also be practically the same. In the case of hill women, however, the evidence is in favour of a higher fertility rate and a greater proportion of surviving children if the marriage takes place between 15-19.

We now come to Sex Table V which shows the proportion of fertile and sterile marriages.

SEX TABLE V.

PROPORTION OF FERTILE AND STERILE MARRIAGES.

Age of wife at marriage.	Duration of Marriage Years.							
	0—4.		5—9.		10—14.		15 and over.	
	Fertile.	Sterile.	Fertile.	Sterile.	Fertile.	Sterile.	Fertile.	Sterile.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
TOTAL* ...	691	231	1,412	68	1,380	19	2,631	34
Hill Tribes...	455	141	887	29	885	12	1,839	20
Under 13 ...	18	17	81	7	101	2	284	2
13—14 ...	38	29	114	5	98	2	198	2
15—19 ...	232	73	430	8	479	4	968	11
20—30 ...	157	26	242	8	194	3	367	5
30 and over ...	10	5	20	1	13	1	22	...
Tea garden cooly castes (plains).	236	90	525	39	405	7	792	14
Under 13 ...	17	16	83	16	88	3	173	5
13—14 ...	71	33	144	9	132	2	205	2
15—19 ...	136	40	267	14	250	2	350	7
20—30 ...	12	1	31	...	24	...	34	...
30 and over ...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...

*The difference of 24 between the total of columns 2, 4, 6, and 8 of this table and the total of columns 3 to 6 of Sex Table I is due to the fact that marriages in which only one still born child was born have been treated as sterile.

This table shows that out of a total of 922 marriages of between 0—4 years duration 691 or 75 per cent. were fertile whereas in the case of marriages of from 5—9 years duration 95 per cent. were fertile and in the case of marriages of from 10—14 years duration nearly 99 per cent. were fertile.

The actual age at which a girl was married (provided she was married under 30) appears to have no effect on the ultimate fertility of the marriage but it will be noticed that only about 51 per cent. of marriages of girls under 13 were fertile during the first four years of marriage whereas in the case of girls married at ages 15—19 about 76 per cent. were fertile during the first four years of married life. Probably the much lower fertility under 13 indicates postponement of consummation—although our instructions were that the duration of the marriage should be calculated from the commencement of cohabitation.

The last table prepared in connection with the enquiry is Sex Table VI which is the most interesting of all.

SEX TABLE VI.

DURATION OF MARRIAGE CORRELATED WITH CASTE OR RELIGION OF THE FAMILY.

Caste or tribe of the husband.	Total.			Duration of marriage with present wife.					
	Number of families.	Number of children born (alive).	Average number of children.	Under 10 years.			10 years.		
				Number of families.	Number of children born (alive).	Average number of children.	Number of families.	Number of children born (alive).	Average number of children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TOTAL	6,466	27,761	4.3	2,402	4,489	1.9	448	1,491	3.3
TEA GARDEN COOLY CASTES (PLAINS)...	2,198	7,540	3.4	890	1,458	1.6	170	484	2.8
Hill Tribes	4,268	20,221	4.7	1,512	3,031	2.0	278	1,007	3.6
Khasi Labourers	481	2,063	4.3	226	472	2.1	23	118	5.1
Lushai cultivators	1,635	8,016	4.9	604	1,131	1.9	113	396	3.5
Garo cultivators	1,671	8,145	4.9	546	1,066	1.9	103	365	3.5
Hill Tribes (cultivators) of Manipur State	459	1,905	4.2	176	363	2.0	34	128	3.8

Caste or tribe of the husband.	Duration of marriage with present wife.											
	Between 11—19.			20—31.			32.			33 years.		
	Number of families.	Number of children born (alive).	Average number of children.	Number of families.	Number of children born (alive).	Average number of children.	Number of families.	Number of children born (alive).	Average number of children.	Number of families.	Number of children born (alive).	Average number of children.
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
TOTAL	1,818	9,369	5.1	1,320	8,923	6.8	55	370	6.7	394	3,219	8.2
TEA GARDEN COOLY CASTES (PLAINS)...	634	2,574	4.1	415	2,461	5.9	18	93	5.2	71	470	6.6
Hill Tribes	1,184	6,695	5.7	904	6,462	7.1	37	277	7.5	323	2,749	8.5
Khasi Labourers	113	637	5.6	89	611	6.8	3	27	9.0	13	170	13.1
Lushai cultivators	437	2,613	6.0	416	2,506	6.0	10	63	6.3	118	616	5.2
Garo cultivators	610	2,820	4.6	326	2,325	7.1	19	145	7.6	158	1,421	9.0
Hill Tribes (cultivators) of Manipur State	116	696	6.0	103	690	6.7	5	40	8.0	25	179	7.2

The general conclusion which I would draw from this table is that hill women are more fertile than cool women in the plains and that up to about 20 years of married life fertility is continuous: after that period it declines.

It would be ungrateful of me to conclude this note—the inadequacy of which nobody can realize more fully than I do—without expressing my grateful thanks to the many tea garden medical officers who so kindly supervised the filling in of the enquiry slips. My thanks are specially due to Mr. H. C. Berlie, Medical Officer of the Jhazie Tea Association, who will not, I hope, rest content with a layman's deductions from material which is really insufficient.

CHAPTER VI.

CIVIL CONDITION.

73. This chapter deals with the statistics of unmarried, married, and widowed persons by sex and religion. The actual number of married, unmarried, and widowed persons by age, sex, and religion in each district is given in Imperial Table VII and similar statistics for certain selected castes and tribes will be found in Imperial Table VIII. Appended to this chapter are five subsidiary tables which exhibit the proportionate and comparative figures. The instructions regarding the entry of civil condition were the same at this census as at former censuses and provided that all persons were to be shown as either unmarried, married or widowed; that divorced persons were to be entered as widowed, and that persons recognized by custom as married should be recorded as such even though they had not gone through any formal ceremony.

The meaning of the statistics.

It must be remembered that the word "married" does not mean exactly the same thing in Assam as it does in Western countries where it is synonymous with cohabitation. In Assam, as in other parts of India, the so-called infant and child marriages mean nothing but what we would call "engagements" or "betrothals" with this difference that the "engagements" are made by the parents of the parties and are irrevocable. The ordinary Hindu girl wife in Assam returns after her so called "marriage" to her parents' house and lives there until puberty when another ceremony is performed and it is not till then that she goes to her husband and becomes a wife in more than name. Unless this fact be remembered the statistics of "marriage" will give a completely wrong impression.

Another point that must be remembered in dealing with the figures is that, as pointed out in Chapter IV, the statistics of age are very unreliable and hence the statistics of civil condition by age must suffer from the same defect. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the figures showing the actual or proportionate number of unmarried, married and widowed by sex or religion; it is only when the figures are shown by age groups that they must be accepted with a certain amount of caution.

74. The main features about the statistics of civil condition in India as compared with Western countries are:—

Main features of the statistics.

- the universality of marriage,
- the early age of marriage, and
- the large proportion of widows.

All these features are to be found in Assam though, owing to the presence in this province of a large number of hill tribes and of castes which are of a tribal nature, the general age of marriage is not so low and the proportion of widows is not so high as in other parts of India. A mass of information dealing with the marriage customs and ceremonies prevalent in Assam is contained in the previous census reports of the province—particularly in that of 1911—and it is not necessary to go over this ground again. All, therefore, that I propose to do in this chapter is to exhibit the statistics of the present census and to discuss the reasons which have caused them differ from those of previous censuses.

But before examining the figures I would invite the readers' attention to the following diagram which illustrates at a glance the three main features mentioned above. This diagram shows that practically everybody in Assam gets married, that women get married very early—much earlier than men—with the result that, at the later age periods, there is a much higher proportion of widows than widowers.

PROPORTION OF UNMARRIED, MARRIED AND WIDOWED PER MILLE
BY SEX AND AGE IN ASSAM, 1931.

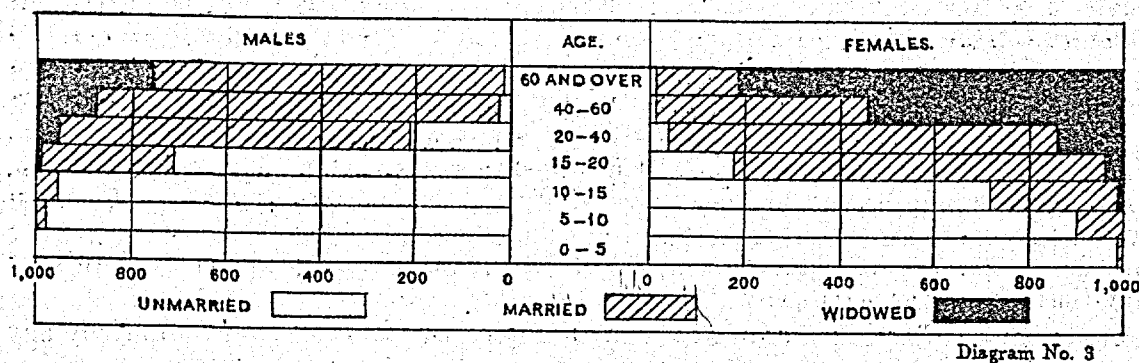


Diagram No. 3

Universal-
ity of mar-
riage.

75. The figures in Subsidiary Table I show that marriage is now more universal in Assam than it ever has been. There are now only 536 unmarried males in every thousand males as compared with 557 in 1921 and 555 in 1911 and only 415 unmarried females in every thousand females as compared with 430 in 1921 and 420 in 1911. Looking at the figures under the various age groups the difference between this census and that of 1921 becomes much more striking. Owing to the different method of forming the age groups the quinquennial groups of this census are not strictly comparable with those of previous censuses but the general tendency disclosed by the figures is clear and it is apparent that it is in the earlier age groups that the large increase of marriages has taken place. Thus in 1921 there were only 18 married Muslim girls in the whole province under the age of 5 years: now there are 18 in every thousand under the age of 5; in 1921 there were only 18 married Muslim girls per thousand in the age group 5-10: now there are 188.

It is, therefore, at once obvious that something very much out of the ordinary has happened to bring about this peculiar change in the marriage statistics of Assam. Strange as it may seem, the cause of the large increase in the number of child marriages was a legislative enactment passed with the very object of preventing early marriages. This was the Child Marriage Restraint Act (XIX of 1929) commonly known as the Sarda Marriage Act which fixed the legal minimum age of marriage at 14 years for females and 18 years for males. Before this bill became law there was a considerable amount of apprehension among persons whose custom it was to marry their daughters below the age of 14 years and a large number of child marriages were celebrated with the deliberate intention of avoiding the provisions of the Act. The actual effect of the Act is discussed in a subsequent paragraph; all that need be said here is that its introduction was directly responsible for a host of child marriages which has had the effect of raising the proportion of married girls and boys to a figure unknown in any previous census of Assam.

The age of
marriage.

76. A glance at the marginal statement shows the astonishing effect which the introduction of the Sarda Bill brought about. It will be noticed that up to 1921 the proportion of unmarried males increased very little, except in the age group 15-20, whereas the proportion of unmarried females increased considerably, particularly in the age group 10-15.

Proportion of unmarried per mille of each sex in certain age groups.				
MALES.				
Aged	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.
5-10	982	996	997	994
10-15	953	977	977	973
15-20	710	864	859	844
FEMALES.				
5-10	900	982	978	971
10-15	715	753	719	695
15-20	178	260	235	226

Commenting on the 1921 figures Mr. Lloyd (Census Superintendent in 1921) remarked as follows:—

"Comparison shows the striking fact that while the proportion of girls in the age group 10-15 in the whole population has increased considerably, the proportion of married at those ages has actually fallen in relation to the total female population of all ages. That is to say, the average age of marriage for males has risen somewhat and the age for females much more. These results appear to be due partly to the spread of education and to social and religious reasons but chiefly to economic causes. In the case of both sexes poverty has compelled parents to postpone marriages of their children in many cases but the early age customary for the girls has left more margin in their case; the desire for social advancement in certain castes, leading them to keep down the marriage age as a supposed badge of orthodoxy or high civilization is not widespread enough to counteract the strong economic tendency acting in the opposite direction."

Had the Sarda Marriage Act not been passed there is no reason to doubt that the 1931 statistics would have continued to exhibit the tendency—disclosed by the three previous censuses—for the average age of marriage to rise. I say this because, to my mind, the economic causes which tended to raise the marriage age are more powerful to-day than they ever have been.

As it is, however, the statistics for 1931 disclose the fact that in all the early age groups—both for males and females—the proportion of unmarried persons has fallen abruptly: in other words that there has been a large increase in the number of child marriages and the average age of marriage has fallen accordingly. Religious scruples have thus triumphed—at least for the time being—over all economic difficulties and this has had the effect of making the marriage statistics of the 1931 census completely abnormal and not really comparable with those of any previous census.

77. The large number of widows has always been a striking feature of Indian marriage statistics. In Assam the proportion of widows in every thousand females has been steadily decreasing since 1901. In that year it was 176; in 1911 it was 162, in 1921 it stood at 157 and at the present census it is 141. This continuous fall in the proportion of widows is due to many factors which are so closely interwoven that it is almost impossible to say what the chief cause is. Assam is a province in which the constitution of the population is continually changing as the result of immigration and one of the main changes in the last thirty years has been the steady increase in the Muslim percentage in the total population owing to the colonization of the lower districts of the Assam Valley by Muslim immigrants from Bengal and the natural growth of Muslims in the Surma Valley. As Muslim widows are allowed to remarry the natural result of a gradually increasing percentage of Muslims in the total population would be a gradual reduction in the total proportion of widows in the province. In the absence of other causes we would, therefore, expect the Assam statistics to show a gradual fall in the total proportion of widows—and this what they do. But there are many other factors at work as well and we cannot ascribe the large drop in the total proportion of widows at the present census to the increase in the Muslim element in the province. All religions at this census show a decrease in the number of their widows though the Hindu decrease may be due to some extent to the fact that many Animists in the Assam Valley returned themselves as Hindus. In the case of widowers, also, there has been a fall since 1921 in the total proportion and in all religions, and the present figure of 44 widowers in every thousand males agrees more with earlier censuses than with that of 1921 when the proportion was 51.

On account of the different system adopted at this census in forming the age groups an exact comparison between the age group figures of this census and of previous censuses would be misleading. But it is, I think, justifiable to conclude from the age group figures given in Subsidiary Table I that the proportion of widowed of 40 years and over is much the same at this census as in 1921 and that the chief reduction in the proportion of the widowed has taken place in the case of persons between 20 to 40 years of age. We have already seen that the past decade was probably the healthiest decade in the history of Assam and hence it seems probable that the reduction in the proportion of widowed at this census is mainly due to the

fact that there were fewer deaths among husbands and wives in the prime of life. There has been no visible change during the decade in the social customs governing the remarriage of widows.

78. The distribution of the population by Civil Condition is largely determined by religious customs and observances and we would therefore expect to find considerable differences in the statistics by Civil Condition of the followers of the various religions.

The following table shows how the proportion of married persons is distributed among the principal religions of the province :—

Number of married per 1,000 of each sex, 1931.

Age period.	Hindus.		Muslims.		Tribal.		Christian.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0-5 ...	...	1	2	18	1	2	1	2
5-10 ...	9	66	36	188	6	17	4	12
10-15 ...	27	228	85	442	19	96	14	55
15-20 ...	227	766	338	915	244	534	163	450
20-40 ...	705	809	817	861	741	794	668	767
40-60 ..	818	431	922	379	866	631	849	688
60 and over	685	150	827	117	767	351	765	256

These figures show that the Muslims have now far the largest proportion of child-wives in all the early age groups which is surprising in view of the fact that at all previous censuses the proportion of married Muslim girls under the age of 10 has always been less than that found among Hindus. In the case of males, also, Muslims now show a far higher proportion of married boys than any other community, whereas at all previous censuses the proportion of married Muslim males under the age of 15 years has always been less than the corresponding proportion among Hindus. It is thus obvious that the introduction of the Sarda Act caused a higher proportion of child marriages among Muslims than among Hindus. The reason for this seems to be as follows :—

The only classes of Hindus who were really affected by the introduction of the Act were the Brahmans of the Assam Valley and the Brahmans and lower castes of the Surma Valley. Among the rest of the Hindu population the prohibition of the marriage of girls under the age of 14 was no hardship as it was not customary for most girls of those classes to be married before that age. Except, however, among Assamese Muslims, who are comparatively few in number, and who do not generally give their daughters in marriage before the age of 15 or 16, the rest of the Muslims of the province were much affected as with them the marriage of girls about the ages of 12 or 13, *i.e.*, just after puberty, was very common. In fact the statistics of previous censuses show that the proportion of married Muslim females in the age group 10-15 has always been greater than among any other community.

Hence, except in the case of the Assamese Muslims, there was a universal rush among the Muslims in the province to evade the provisions of the Act whereas the only Hindu castes who were at all concerned were the Brahmans and the low caste Hindus of the Surma Valley. Khan Bahadur Nuruddin Ahmed, M.L.C. of Nowgong, in discussing this matter with me has informed me that just before the Sarda Act came into operation the Mahammadan Marriage Registrars of that district were kept hard at work registering the marriages of girls under the age of 14. The rush to marry off young girls in Nowgong was however confined to the Muslim Mymensinghia immigrants who had brought with them from Bengal the custom of marrying their daughters at an early age.

Khan Bahadur Abdul Mannan Chaudhuri (of Sunamganj) writes to me as follows on the same point :—

"Just on the eve of the Sarda Marriage Act coming into operation, marriages which would have been illegal under the Act took place hurriedly in many families, even a male child of 4 years being married to a female child of one year." and Maulvi Amer Ali Barlaskar of Silchar mentions that the same thing occurred in his district. "To avoid", he states, "the restriction of marriageable age imposed by the Act a very large number of marriages took place immediately before the Act came into force".

Maulvi Manawwarali, M.L.C. in discussing the matter with me stated that he personally knew of many Muslim families in which such marriages had taken place.

Among the Muslims in the Assam Valley the increase since 1921 in the proportion of married girls in the age group 5-10 has been from 40 to 349 and in the age group 10-15 from 461 to 620. In the Surma Valley the corresponding increase has been from 10 to 106 and from 284 to 354. In both valleys, therefore, the increase has been at much the same rate though the proportion of young Muslim married girls in the Assam Valley is much higher than in the Surma Valley. This peculiarity has been noticed at previous censuses. As Assamese Muslims do not give their daughters in marriage at an early age the only possible explanation seems to be that either the Bengali-Muslim immigrants in the Assam Valley are accustomed to marry their daughters earlier than the Muslims of Sylhet or that the Muslims of one valley guess ages on a different principle to those in the other valley.

Among Hindus, as well as among Muslims, many marriages of young girls were celebrated in order to avoid the provisions of the Sarda Act but for the reasons already stated the proportion of such marriage to the total community was much less than among the Muslims.

As we would expect, the proportion of married Christians and followers of tribal religions is small in the earlier age groups in comparison with the Hindu and Muslim figures. Among tribal males the proportion of those married below 15 has not varied much since 1921; among tribal females, however, it would appear that there has been some increase in the proportion of married girls under the age of 15. Thus in 1921 only 8 girls out of every thousand in the age group 5-10 and 88 girls per mille in the age group 10-15 were married whereas in 1931 the corresponding figures are 17 and 96. As already explained, however, the system of forming the age groups was different at this census from the system adopted in 1921 and the proportions are not strictly comparable.

Generally speaking girls belonging to hill tribes marry much later than Hindu or Muslim girls, but there are exceptions; for example, child-marriages are fairly common among the Garos. As I write I have before me an enquiry form despatched from the Central Census Office to the Deputy Commissioner, Garo Hills, requesting that the entry of one Dingse Marak aged 6 who was recorded as married should be verified. To this enquiry the Charge Superintendent replied :—"In certain cases Garos have infant marriages. Dingse Marak aged about 6 of village Chigijangiri was given in marriage to her step-father along with her mother. Such marriages are a recognized custom among the Garos". Marriages of this nature are, of course, bound up with the tribal law of inheritance. Persons interested in these matters should consult the magnificent series of monographs on the various hill tribes of Assam published at various times by MacMillan & Co., London, by direction of the Government of Assam.

Christians would appear to have a higher proportion of married persons of both sexes in the earlier age groups than they had in 1921 but, as I have already stated, the age group figures of this census are not strictly comparable with those of 1921. Among the Christians of the hill districts there has certainly been no increase in the number of married girls under the age of 10. Of the Christians in the plains those belonging to cooly castes were reported by the central sorting offices to be the classes which had the largest number of married girls under the age of 10. As no Christian priest, pastor or minister would, I feel sure, give the Church's blessing to a marriage of this nature it seems probable that many of these so-called married Christian girls under the age of 10 are children who were betrothed according to Hindu or tribal custom before their parents became Christians.

So far in this paragraph we have dealt only with the most noticeable feature of the decade—namely the large increase in the proportion of married girls of tender years—an increase which is particularly noticeable in the case of Muslims. Corresponding with this increase in the proportion of young married girls we get, as we would expect, a corresponding increase in the proportion of young married men. In the age groups above 40 years of age, in the case of males, and above 20 years of age in the case of females the difference between the 1921 and 1931 proportion of married persons in the different religions is not great and calls for no explanation.

The proportion of widows, as might be expected, is higher among Hindus than among any other community—there being 156 Hindu widows in every thousand Hindu females; then come Muslims with 127, Tribals with 112 and Christians with 105.

There is a noticeable difference between the Surma Valley and the Assam Valley (excluding Goalpara) as regards the proportion of Hindu widows. In Assam Valley the proportion of Hindu widows in every 1,000 females was 142 in 1921 and 120 in 1931, in the Surma Valley it was 210 in 1921 and 225 in 1931. This striking difference between the two valleys must be partly due to the fact that the ordinary marriage age of the girls of the racial castes of the Assam Valley is much higher than that of the girls of the Surma Valley and that widow remarriage except among the orthodox, is not uncommon in the Assam Valley. That valley contains, also, over a million tea garden coolies and *ex-coolies* most of whom have returned themselves as Hindus. Among people of this class a young widow never remains long without a mate.

It will be noticed that in the Surma Valley the proportion of Hindu widows is nearly double that of Muslim widows; this is due, not to any greater equality in the ages of the parties, but to the fact that there is no bar to the remarriage of Muslim widows. Muslim males have a surprisingly small proportion of widowers—25 in every thousand—as compared with Hindus (55), Animists (46) and Christians (34). The same phenomenon is visible in the statistics of previous censuses.

Civil Con-
dition by
Caste.

79. The Statistics of Civil Condition for certain selected castes are given in Subsidiary Table V. This table is extremely interesting as it brings out clearly the extraordinary differences in the distribution by civil condition between typical castes and tribes. We find for example that the Ahoms marry their girls very late—in the age group 14-16, 82 per cent. of the Ahom girls are still unmarried and only 18 per cent. married; on the other hand the Brahmans and such typical low castes as the Namasudras and Yogis of Sylhet marry their girls very early—84 per cent. of Brahman girls, 91 per cent. of Namasudra girls and 91 per cent. of Yogi girls aged between 14 and 16 being married. The Baidyas—a highly educated Hindu *Bhadralok* caste of the Surma Valley—marry their daughters quite late—in the age group 14-16, 65 per cent. of their girls are still unmarried. The Khasis—as might be expected marry very late, especially the Khasi Christians.

Effect of
the Sarda
Act.

80. We have seen that the most outstanding feature in the marriage statistics of the past decade has been the enormous increase in the proportion of child marriages and that the cause of this increase was the initial fear of the penal provisions of the Sarda Act. This Act was bitterly opposed by the orthodox who did their best to avoid it by giving their children in marriage before the Act came into operation; hence there was a regular boom in the marriage market in 1929. But those parents who thought that they were being so clever in thus avoiding the consequences of the Act need not—it now appears—have worried themselves unduly because there is an almost unanimous consensus of opinion that the Sarda Act is, in practice, a dead letter.

The following extracts from opinions received from Honorary Correspondents are illuminating and speak for themselves:— Rai Bahadur Promode Chandra Datta, C.I.E. (Sylhet), writes as follows:—

"I am afraid the Sarda Marriage Act is not having much effect. Among the *Bhadralok* economic difficulties and the difficulty of finding out bridegrooms is forcing the marriage age even much beyond the Sarda Act minimum. Among the orthodox Brahmins and people of the lower classes, the Act is as a rule, being disregarded in practice".

Babu Rajani Kanta Rai Dastidar, late Additional District Magistrate, Sylhet writes to the same effect. He says:—

The Sarda Marriage Act has had practically no effect on society. As a result of changes in ideas brought about by culture and education, the marriageable age of boys and girls had already increased, long before the Act was passed, among the upper classes of society with the exception of a very few rigid orthodox Brahmins of the old type who always held and even now hold that post-puberty marriages are sinful. The uneducated masses without any touch of culture and enlightenment used to give their girls in marriage before they attained the age of say 11 or 12 years, and in disregard of the provisions of the Sarda Act, they and some of the orthodox Brahmins are even now occasionally celebrating marriages of infant girls.

Babu Girish Chandra Nandi, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Sylhet, states as follows:—

"The recent Sarda Marriage Act", he writes "has had no appreciable effect on society. It is simply disregarded in practice. The upper classes are unaffected by it, because these classes—Hindus or Mahammadans—cannot usually marry their girls before the age of 14 or 15 years; so this Act only sealed their present practice. Thus they have not much grudge against it. But the lower classes, Hindus and Mahammadans alike, are much affected by it. They fear that if this Act is enforced strictly, their social structure will be totally broken, and they will not be able to protect their unmarried sisters and daughters from the attacks or influence of the immoral

youths whose number in every village will not be small. Hence they are strongly in favour of disregarding it. A great commotion was noticed just at the time of the passing of the Act. A large number of marriages of young girls took place then."

Babu Dinesh Chandra Datta of the Murarichand College, Sylhet, writes to the same effect:—"The Sarda Marriage Act" he says "has had no visible effect on society, except that it prompted certain classes to celebrate a large number of child marriages before its provisions came into operation. The Act is simply now disregarded in practice. It does not touch the upper classes (except the orthodox Brahmins) among whom marriages are now hardly ever celebrated so early. The lower classes in the villages are generally ignorant of its provision."

Rai Sahib Pyari Mohan Das of Sunamganj writes:—

"The Sarda Act is simply disregarded in practice. It has produced no effect on society."

So much for the Surma Valley. In the Assam Valley (excluding Goalpara), post-puberty marriages have always been the rule except among the Brahmans and a few who imitate them.

The following opinions of gentlemen from that valley are however of interest:— Rai Bahadur P. C. Sen Gupta, Extra-Assistant Commissioner, Gauhati writes as follows:—

The Sarda Marriage Act was an unnecessary piece of legislation as far as the Assam Valley is concerned, where pre-puberty marriages are confined to Brahmins and a few Kayasthas in Kamrup. Amongst them this is the most despised Act that was ever put on the statute book; they think that their religion has been invaded and the blame is laid at the door of the British Government. The orthodox will ever disregard its provision in spite of the penalties imposed. For them it is a religious necessity and not a mating utility. These pre-puberty marriages are nothing more than "betrothals", as they are called in English. In Assam, they never culminate into consummation till the girl is of age. "Marriage" as understood in English is what is known as second marriage; no girl in Assam is allowed to go to her father-in-law's home before the performance of the second marriage, which is celebrated some months or generally a year after the girl reaches puberty.

Babu D. C. Chakrabarty, Dewan of Gouripur Raj (Goalpara), states:—

The Sarda Act is usually disregarded because the penal provisions of the Act are not enforced. In educated families, a girl is hardly ever married before the age of 14. But in this district, I regret to say that the *Bhadralok* classes are still marrying their girls at the age of 9 or 10. Amongst the lower classes, also, the girls are still married very young.

From Tezpur Rai Bahadur A. O. Agarwalla writes:—"The Sarda Act is considered to be practically a dead letter"; and Mr. G. O. Bardalai, Extra Assistant Commissioner (Jorhat).—"The Sarda Marriage Act affects only the Brahman community of the Assam Valley, but they are not showing any respect for the Act". Sriyut B. C. Goswami, Member of the Legislative Council (Nowgong), reports—"The Act has affected only the Brahmans and a portion of the Kayastha and Kalita communities, who give their daughters in marriage just before puberty but the marriages are going on just as before" and Babu Kunja Behari Nandi, Sub-Deputy Collector (Lakhimpur).—"The Act is simply disregarded in practice. It has not even reached the ears of common people. In the Assam Valley early marriage is prevalent only among Brahmans and in the Surma Valley it is in vogue only among Brahmans and the low classes of Hindu Society and the practice still continues".

Rai Sahib Haresh Chandra Rajkhowa, Mauzadar of Silakuti, Sibsagar, states:—

The Sarda Act has had no effect on society, it is not generally followed in practice.

The opinions given above are all from Hindu gentlemen and show clearly that the only Hindu communities in Assam which are affected by the Act, namely, the Brahmans in both the valleys and the lower castes in the Surma Valley, regard the Act much as the ordinary individual regards the Assam Juvenile Smoking Act—that is as something which nobody ever thinks of obeying and which can, in practice, be completely disregarded.

As for Muslims—they too are disregarding the Act but, as one gentleman told me, so many young Muslim girls were married before the Act came into force that there are now few left under the age of 14 whose parents would have wished to marry them before that age. In any case it is certain that those Muslims who consider that the Act infringes their religious rights will, in any case, refuse to pay any attention to it.

It thus appears that the only effect which the Sarda Act has had is that it has caused many more child and infant marriages than would otherwise have taken place and that—apart from the increased proportion of widows which will be the eventual result of this—the Act is not likely to have any other consequences.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

DISTRIBUTION BY CIVIL CONDITION OF 1,000 OF EACH SEX, RELIGION AND MAIN AGE PERIOD AT EACH OF THE LAST FIVE CENSUSES.

Religion, sex and age.	Unmarried.					Married.					Widowed.				
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
ALL RELIGIONS.															
<i>Male</i> ...	536	537	555	554	562	420	392	398	399	397	44	51	47	47	41
0-5 ...	909	1,000	1,000	1,000	999	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
5-10 ...	982	996	997	994	997	17	4	3	6	3	1	...	...	...	...
10-15 ...	953	977	977	973	974	45	23	22	26	24	2	1	1	1	2
15-20 ...	710	864	859	844	847	278	129	135	147	146	12	7	7	9	7
20-40 ...	210	239	237	245	254	740	690	706	690	763	50	62	57	56	43
40-60 ...	23	29	29	37	32	851	836	848	839	856	127	135	123	124	112
60 and over ...	15	21	21	27	21	737	730	735	732	749	248	249	244	241	230
<i>Female</i> ...	415	430	420	411	414	444	413	418	413	416	141	157	162	176	170
0-5 ...	993	1,000	1,000	1,000	999	7	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
5-10 ...	900	982	978	971	973	98	17	21	27	26	2	1	1	2	1
10-15 ...	715	753	716	695	690	277	239	274	291	328	8	9	10	14	12
15-20 ...	178	260	235	226	208	781	697	722	718	747	41	43	43	56	45
20-40 ...	35	40	27	39	32	821	801	816	780	803	144	159	157	181	165
40-60 ...	8	10	6	13	9	448	453	434	406	427	544	537	560	581	584
60 and over ...	8	9	5	11	7	178	172	147	129	130	814	819	849	860	863
HINDU.															
<i>Male</i> ...	535	546	542	542	559	410	392	400	401	392	55	62	58	57	49
0-5 ...	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5-10 ...	990	996	996	993	997	0	4	4	6	2	1	...	...	1	1
10-15 ...	971	975	973	971	976	27	24	26	27	21	2	1	1	2	3
15-20 ...	700	869	863	851	870	227	123	130	139	123	13	8	7	10	7
20-40 ...	238	261	258	264	280	705	669	678	672	663	57	70	64	64	49
40-60 ...	27	35	37	46	43	818	805	816	805	825	155	160	147	149	133
60 and over ...	18	20	26	36	30	685	677	673	673	700	297	297	301	292	270
<i>Female</i> ...	413	411	394	383	392	431	410	418	414	410	156	179	188	203	198
0-5 ...	999	1,000	1,000	1,000	999	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
5-10 ...	932	979	971	963	968	66	20	28	35	31	2	1	1	3	1
10-15 ...	764	744	687	671	643	229	246	301	312	343	8	10	12	17	14
15-20 ...	187	255	223	221	222	708	694	726	712	724	47	51	51	67	54
20-40 ...	31	34	29	33	30	809	783	789	753	774	160	183	183	209	196
40-60 ...	7	9	4	13	9	431	419	384	361	376	562	572	612	626	615
60 and over ...	5	6	3	8	5	150	129	104	95	97	845	865	863	897	898
MUSLIM.															
<i>Male</i> ...	526	531	531	533	531	449	391	392	386	396	25	28	27	26	23
0-5 ...	999	1,000	1,000	1,000	999	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
5-10 ...	963	997	997	995	998	36	3	3	5	2	1	...	...	...	...
10-15 ...	913	983	982	981	979	85	18	13	13	20	2	...	...	1	1
15-20 ...	602	860	863	855	843	389	134	132	140	153	10	4	5	5	4
20-40 ...	153	205	203	223	208	817	756	755	737	763	31	39	37	35	27
40-60 ...	9	15	14	24	11	922	908	915	907	927	69	77	71	69	62
60 and over ...	6	12	11	14	7	827	818	827	825	836	167	170	163	161	157

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I—concl'd.

DISTRIBUTION BY CIVIL CONDITION OF 1,000 OF EACH SEX, RELIGION AND MAIN AGE PERIOD AT EACH OF THE LAST FIVE CENSUSES—concl'd.

Religion, sex and age.	Unmarried.					Married.					Widowed.				
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
MUSLIM—concl'd.															
<i>Female</i> ...	382	430	429	426	424	491	430	428	417	423	127	140	143	157	153
0-5 ...	982	1,000	1,000	999	999	18	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
5-10 ...	809	981	981	975	974	183	18	18	23	24	3	1	1	2	2
10-15 ...	548	664	627	619	583	442	325	361	366	400	10	11	12	15	12
15-20 ...	53	96	73	82	72	915	864	889	871	891	32	40	38	47	37
20-40 ...	10	14	10	24	10	861	849	859	818	850	129	137	131	158	140
40-60 ...	4	6	4	8	5	379	395	384	343	380	617	590	612	644	615
60 and over ...	3	5	4	8	4	117	110	96	83	86	880	835	900	909	910
TRIBAL.															
<i>Male</i> ...	552	548	551	545	543	402	397	403	410	414	46	55	46	45	43
0-5 ...	999	1,000	1,000	1,000	999	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
5-10 ...	904	995	997	994	996	6	5	3	5	4	...	...	...	1	...
10-15 ...	980	974	978	963	957	19	25	21	35	41	1	1	1	2	2
15-20 ...	738	841	828	798	763	244	149	163	181	226	18	10	9	11	11
20-40 ...	201	211	207	199	198	741	715	733	751	751	59	74	61	69	51
40-60 ...	18	26	23	22	24	866	843	863	867	868	110	131	110	111	109
60 and over ...	15	21	20	18	14	767	758	775	772	768	212	221	205	210	218
<i>Female</i> ...	486	482	476	469	464	402	399	400	404	424	112	119	118	127	112
0-5 ...	999	1,000	1,000	1,000	999	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
5-10 ...	982	993	993	988	986	17	8	6	13	13	1	...	1	1	1
10-15 ...	890	909	906	870	830	96	63	90	125	164	5	3	4	5	6
15-20 ...	424	625	605	469	393	534	447	462	490	676	42	28	33	41	31
20-40 ...	98	92	72	78	79	794	791	819	801	829	110	117	109	121	101
40-60 ...	17	20	11	19	17	631	623	629	638	637	352	357	360	383	340
60 and over ...	21	23	12	20	14	361	351	314	273	306	623	620	674	707	680
CHRISTIAN.															
<i>Male</i> ...	608	597	586	...	...	358	358	379	...	...	34	45	35	...	...
0-5 ...	999	1,000	1,000	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5-10 ...	926	997	996	...	...	4	3	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
10-15 ...	985	989	992	...	...	14	10	8	...	...	1	1	...	...	...
15-20 ...	825	933	905	...	...	163	61	60	...	...	12	6	6	...	...
20-40 ...	284	256	253	...	...	668	680	694	...	...	48	64	48	...	...
40-60 ...	58	42	47	...	...	649	639	660	...	...	63	119	93	...	...
60 and over ...	47	23	14	...	...	765	739	801	...	...	188	241	185	...	...
<i>Female</i> ...	523	520	490	...	...	372	359	394	...	...	105	121	116	...	...
0-5 ...	998	1,000	1,000	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5-10 ...	987	996	996	...	...	12	4	3	...	...	1	...	1	...	...
10-15 ...	943	977	962	...	...	55	22	26	...	...	2	1	2	...	...
15-20 ...	618	653	633	...	...	450	324	437	...	...	32	24	20	...	...
20-40 ...	133	113	77	...	...	767	763	813	...	...	100	123	110	...	...
40-60 ...	27	29	18	...	...	563	564	571	...	...	355	407	411	...	...
60 and over ...	34	23	12	...	...	256	244	234	...	...	710	733	754	...	...

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DISTRIBUTION BY MAIN AGE PERIODS AND CIVIL CONDITION OF 10,000 OF EACH SEX AND MAIN RELIGION.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE IV.

PROPORTION OF THE SEXES BY CIVIL CONDITION AT CERTAIN AGES FOR RELIGIONS AND NATURAL DIVISIONS.

Natural Division and Religion.		Number of females per 1,000 males.														
		All ages.			0-10.			10-15.			15-20.			20 and over.		
		Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	
ASSAM.																
ALL RELIGIONS	705	961	2,383	936	5,162	3,824	675	5,510	4,029	207	1,172	2,638	286	358	3,022	
Hindu	689	938	2,535	947	6,708	3,132	709	7,629	4,364	176	1,178	2,480	189	353	2,550	
Muslim	654	988	4,690	830	4,720	5,103	523	4,613	6,438	60	1,142	3,647	290	262	8,800	
Tribal	889	1,010	2,463	998	2,891	3,500	890	4,892	4,113	691	1,238	2,037	942	610	2,740	
Christian	867	1,040	3,146	999	2,616	1,750	605	3,776	1,600	690	1,282	2,176	666	637	4,095	
Buddhist	679	791	1,227	530	1,429	3,000	516	3,333	4,000	309	937	853	144	252	1,400	
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY.																
ALL RELIGIONS	715	914	2,152	929	3,889	2,433	689	3,740	2,731	224	1,093	1,766	268	363	2,400	
Hindu (Excluding Goalpara)	737	917	1,863	956	4,101	1,548	765	5,236	1,987	241	1,164	1,607	270	380	2,100	
Hindu (Goalpara)	646	855	3,214	911	8,765	7,671	595	5,394	6,676	107	1,093	3,612	212	280	2,900	
Muslim	632	919	3,617	626	3,635	3,281	406	2,782	3,262	69	960	2,691	333	257	4,820	
Tribal	834	976	1,893	970	2,498	1,824	832	4,492	2,600	446	1,201	1,410	602	602	2,160	
SURMA VALLEY.																
ALL RELIGIONS	627	1,019	4,093	924	11,746	11,302	574	11,573	14,661	67	1,282	4,387	103	254	3,900	
Hindu	579	908	3,603	926	14,545	8,562	581	14,307	12,125	60	1,294	4,571	63	265	3,140	
Muslim	663	1,038	6,027	923	10,388	15,333	567	10,248	16,403	71	1,274	4,187	267	247	6,570	
HILLS.																
ALL RELIGIONS	869	1,000	3,118	1,002	3,609	6,765	914	5,232	7,214	528	1,211	2,735	945	611	3,370	
Tribal	914	1,034	2,702	1,009	3,271	7,289	924	5,201	5,027	650	1,250	3,270	1,127	633	2,020	
Christian	951	1,077	4,173	1,020	2,660	6,000	994	2,644	1,223	781	1,324	2,976	1,731	659	5,230	

SUBSIDIARY

DISTRIBUTION BY CIVIL CONDITION OF 1,000 OF EACH SEX

Serial number.	Caste and locality.	Distribution of 1,000 males of each age by civil condition.																				
		All Ages.			0-6.			7-13.			14-16.			17-23.			24-43.			44 and over.		
		Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1	Ahom (Hindu) Brahmaputra Valley.	615	331	54	1,000	...	...	993	6	1	976	23	2	706	194	10	159	767	74	20	738	242
2	Bairya (Hindu) Sylhet and Cachar.	625	341	34	1,000	...	...	997	3	...	938	62	...	872	123	5	265	701	34	28	831	141
3	Brahman (Hindu) Plains Districts.	536	418	46	999	1	...	975	23	2	916	76	8	671	317	12	136	816	48	38	774	188
4	Bania; Driftial Bania (Hindu) Brahmaputra Valley.	603	352	45	998	2	...	989	11	...	949	47	4	724	256	20	147	783	71	25	791	184
5	Garos (Hindu) Garo Hills and Goalpara.	537	444	19	1,000	...	...	968	9	5	943	52	...	630	370	...	64	921	15	15	803	92
6	Garos (Tribal) Garo Hills	524	463	13	1,000	...	...	993	8	...	808	130	2	437	537	6	51	933	16	14	934	52
7	Kachari (Hindu) Brahmaputra Valley.	549	383	68	999	1	...	982	18	...	820	172	8	542	423	33	98	809	93	19	712	269
8	Kachari (Tribal) Brahmaputra Valley.	561	387	52	999	1	...	984	16	...	858	143	...	514	469	17	80	849	71	12	742	246
9	Khasi (Tribal) Khasi and Jaintia Hills.	568	369	65	1,000	...	...	999	1	...	966	29	5	626	322	50	106	792	102	18	773	209
10	Khasi (Christian) Khasi and Jaintia Hills.	619	341	40	999	1	...	998	2	...	800	9	1	631	351	18	136	802	62	16	609	175
11	Manipuri (Hindu) Manipur State.	575	383	42	1,000	...	...	995	5	...	970	23	2	636	332	32	80	833	67	11	678	111
12	Nadial (Hindu) (Kabarita) Brahmaputra Valley.	598	352	50	1,000	...	...	991	7	2	974	25	1	748	237	15	126	808	60	16	761	223
13	Namasudra (Hindu) Sylhet and Cachar Plains.	500	441	59	998	2	...	985	11	4	841	141	18	619	351	30	173	770	57	42	763	195
14	Tanti (Hindu) Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.	462	461	77	1,000	...	...	980	18	2	879	100	15	542	382	76	95	709	106	6	602	92
15	Yogi (Hindu) Sylhet	508	426	66	995	5	...	993	57	5	850	131	19	681	303	16	191	749	61	61	709	230

TABLE V.

AT CERTAIN AGES FOR SELECTED CASTES.

Serial number.	Distribution of 1,000 females of each age by civil condition.																				
	All ages.			0-6.			7-13.			14-16.			17-23.			24-43.			44 and over.		
	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1	531	364	105	1,000	...	...	983	17	...	820	176	4	269	700	31	23	539	136	9	415	577
2	494	352	154	998	2	...	974	23	8	647	343	10	88	662	50	89	721	197	...	209	701
3	369	447	184	997	3	...	781	214	5	126	839	35	25	895	80	15	717	268	13	258	729
4	470	389	141	997	3	...	969	40	1	468	623	9	128	624	50	29	770	201	14	276	710
5	443	486	71	997	3	...	997	103	...	391	594	15	168	809	23	20	898	94	15	667	418
6	445	511	44	998	4	...	936	62	2	412	579	9	117	661	22	20	917	63	17	701	222
7	498	393	109	999	1	...	941	57	2	529	461	11	174	795	31	33	815	152	11	406	583
8	503	398	99	999	1	...	947	53	...	467	518	15	120	648	32	16	836	148	15	376	600
9	488	350	164	1,000	...	...	994	5	1	621	161	23	274	597	129	29	741	230	9	392	600
10	534	332	134	999	1	...	999	2	...	914	76	10	421	516	63	61	761	178	10	399	591
11	437	393	180	999	1	...	974	23	3	597	354	49	169	688	153	38	798	254	11	428	563
12	496	383	121	999	1	...	971	28	1	621	368	11	112	652	39	19	763	189	7	346	647
13	275	469	256	996	4	...	670	320	10	40	906	54	17	906	77	6	635	359	12	169	829
14	391	437	122	999	1	...	946	53	1	525	459	16	193	658	39	21	823	156	7	421	572
15	277	431	292	997	2	1	728	259	15	38	914	48	10	863	127	12	570	418	24	149	527

CHAPTER VII.

INFIRMITIES.

Scope and
accuracy
of statis-
tics of in-
firmities.

81. I must start this chapter with a warning that the figures given in it for the various infirmities are not reliable and that their only merit is that they give some indication of the distribution of infirmities and their quantitative variation at successive censuses. It is not in India alone that statistics of infirmities, collected by the census staff are unreliable: it is the same in every country in the world and it has been held by the highest statistical authorities that the census is not a suitable agency for collecting information of this nature. There are, unfortunately, few other means in India of obtaining statistics on these subjects over wide areas and hence the census is still burdened with an enquiry which it is not really competent to perform.

The infirmities for which statistics have been collected are the same as in 1921, namely, insanity, deaf-mutism, total blindness, and leprosy. The difficulties of diagnosing insanity and leprosy for anybody but an expert, are obvious and even deaf-mutism and total blindness are not matters on which the opinion of ordinary enumerators can be accepted without hesitation. In addition there is a considerable amount of wilful concealment, especially—as we shall see—in the case of leprosy and we may be certain that few self-respecting parents would willingly admit that any of their children were idiots. “Johnny might not be as bright as others”; would, I think, be the reply that any decent parent would give to an inquisitive enumerator who suspected that little Johnny was a strong candidate for the post of village idiot. How far the figures are inaccurate is (except, perhaps, in the case of leprosy) impossible to say. Even a guess may be hopelessly wrong. Mr. Lloyd thought he was going to the furthest limit when he suggested in 1921 that the leprosy figures were out by 100 per cent. We know now that they were out by a great deal more and, in view of this, I do not propose to attempt any further guesses. It is, however, extremely probable that none of the figures are so defective as those for leprosy (a disease which many people do not know they have and which those who know they have generally endeavour to conceal) and that of all the figures those for blindness (which is a matter for compassion and which there is no reason to conceal) most nearly approach the truth. A comparison of the number of males and females suffering from an infirmity is generally the best guide to the extent to which the statistics are vitiated by concealment and our statistics show that in the case of blindness the number of afflicted males and females is almost equal, while in the case of the other infirmities males far exceed females.

Reference
to a statis-
tics.

82. But, even though the absolute figures may be unreliable, a study of the relation which they bear to figures collected at previous censuses may, at any rate, prove to be of interest. The main census statistics of infirmities are given in Imperial Table IX which is divided into two parts—one showing the distribution by age and the other the distribution by districts. Appended to this chapter are three subsidiary tables which give proportionate figures for infirmities by sex, district and age for the last five censuses.

Variation
since 1891.

83. The total number of afflicted persons in Assam has increased since 1921 by 5,918 and now stands at 27,506. The increase, as shown in the table below, is shared by all infirmities:—

Year.	Insane.	Deaf-mute.	Blind.	Lepers.	Total of persons afflicted.
1931	5,426	6,978	9,926	5,420	27,506
1921	4,099	5,557	7,728	4,461	21,588
1911	3,164	5,399	6,408	4,372	19,183
1901	2,510	4,675	6,769	5,038	17,932
1891	3,023	4,681	5,832	6,727	20,263

It will be noticed that in this table the sum of the infirmities from the year 1911 onwards does not agree with the total of persons afflicted. This is due to the fact that, while the total gives the actual number of persons afflicted, the figures for individual infirmities include persons suffering from double infirmities of whom there were 214 at this census and 260 in 1921; details of these miserable people will be found on the title page of Imperial Table IX.

The absolute increase of nearly 6,000 in the total number of infirmities since 1921 is very large compared with the increases at the previous censuses and cannot be explained entirely by the growth of the population as in every 100,000 persons in the province, the total number of afflicted persons now stands at 297 against 270 in 1921 and 272 in 1911. Why the proportion of afflicted persons should have increased so rapidly is impossible to say; the easiest answer would be more accurate enumeration but, as I have already said, all these infirmity figures are so unreliable that it is better not to attempt explanations.

Taking the infirmities individually about one-fifth of the total number of afflicted persons in Assam are insane, one quarter deaf-mute, one third blind and one-fifth lepers. In the whole of India about one-ninth of the total number of afflicted persons are insane, over a fifth deaf-mutes, more than a half blind and between one-seventh and one-eighth lepers. Assam therefore leads in insanity and leprosy, is about equal as regards deaf-mutism but has much less blindness than India as a whole.

INSANITY.

84. For obvious reasons no definition of “insanity” was given in our census schedules and hence the figures merely give us the number of persons whom the enumerators—each according to his own standard of what constituted insanity—considered to fall under this very wide term. To the ordinary lay mind the word “insane” connotes acute mania or “madness” only and the ordinary enumerator would not generally write down any persons as insane unless such a person was patently what we loosely call “mad”.

Some remarks of the Superintendent of the Yervada Lunatic Asylum on this point are quoted in the Indian Census Report of 1921 and the following extract is worth repeating:—

“In my experience I have known a medical man, well qualified in an Indian University, speak of a person who had been demented for ten years, dirty in habits and mindless as ‘not exactly mad you know, but like this for ten years’”. The Superintendent goes on to show that the census figures for insanity in India are ridiculously low and quite untrustworthy. My study of the Assam figures does not give me any reason to doubt the general conclusion arrived at by an expert alienist and I therefore repeat the warning which I gave at the beginning of this chapter that the absolute figures of insanity are of no value.

85. The number of persons recorded as insane had increased by 1,327 since 1921, and the proportion of insane in the total population is now higher than at any of the last four censuses. If we examine the figures by natural divisions we find that the number of insane persons has increased in every district of the Assam Valley as well as in every district of the Surma Valley and that the proportion of both male and female insane per 100,000 of the population has also increased in each valley. In the hills, however, although the proportion of insane per 100,000 of the population is still considerably higher than in the plains, there has been an actual decrease of 36 lunatics since 1921 and the proportional decrease has been fairly large especially in the case of males.

This welcome decrease is, however, merely due to the eccentricity which the Naga Hills exhibited in their figures for 1921. In 1931 only 62 insane persons were recorded in that district against 255 in 1921 and 52 in 1911. The high figure of 1921 was such a surprise that a special reference was made to the Deputy Commissioner of the district who attributed the rise to increased accuracy and to the fact that more local enumerators were employed than in 1911. But in view of the 1931 figures this explanation is not convincing. In all the other hill districts, except Manipur, the number of lunatics has increased. Manipur shows a very slight fall

Value of
the figures
of insanity.

Variation
and distri-
bution of
insanity.

and the Garo Hills a very slight rise. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills shows a considerable increase and the Lushai Hills which had highest proportion of insane of any district in Assam in 1921 beats all previous records and in that district there are now 480 lunatics against 242 in 1921. The proportion of lunatics in the Lushai Hills per 100,000 of the population has always been far higher than any other district in Assam as the figures in Subsidiary Table I will show. Why this should be so is impossible to explain adequately but it must be remembered that, high though the proportion appears, it is not high compared with the proportion in England and Wales and it may well be that the Lushai Hills figures are fairly accurate and those of the other districts are very far wrong.

Insanity by
age
and
sex.

86. Except in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Lushai Hills, and the Naga Hills insanity—according to our statistics—is more prevalent among males than females and in the whole province for every 1,000 insane males there are only 729 insane females. Concealment of this infirmity is, of course, very much more likely in the case of females, as insanity is not confined to persons of low castes and among the higher castes the enumerators have to rely on information supplied by the chief male member of the family.

The statistics by age show that insanity is not determined up to the age of 5 (or if determined is not acknowledged) and that from the age of 5 onwards there is a steady increase in the proportion of insane persons in each age group of the population up to the age of about 45 in males and 50 in females, after which there is a decline. Our statistics, imperfect as they are, indicate, therefore, that, unlike blindness, which is a disease of the old, and deaf-mutism which is mostly to be found among the young, insanity is a disease of full adult life.

Tezpur
Mental
Hospital.

87. Since 1921 the Tezpur Mental Hospital, which is the only institution in Assam for treating mental diseases, has been reconstructed and enlarged at considerable expense and the average daily number of inmates has risen from 427 in 1921 to 560 in 1931 (males 459, females 101). On the night of the census there were 550 inmates in the asylum (males 447, females 103) of whom 349 were born in Assam, 147 outside the province, and the birthplace of 54 was unknown. Ordinary cultivators and tea garden coolies are the principal classes of persons admitted into the asylum and most of the cases treated fall under the categories of "mania" and "melancholia". Lunatics on admission are generally found to be from 20—40 years of age. Criminal lunatics form nearly a half of the total number of inmates.

DEAF-MUTISM.

Distribu-
tion and
variation
of deaf-
mutism.

88. At all censuses up to and including that of 1911 it was laid down that only those persons should be recorded who were deaf and dumb *from birth*. In 1921 and at the present census the words *from birth* were omitted.

Our statistics show that since 1921 the total number of deaf-mutes has increased from 5,557 to 6,978 and that the only districts in which the number of deaf-mutes has decreased are the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Naga Hills, the Garo Hills, Goalpara and Manipur State. In 1921 it was found that the number of deaf-mutes had decreased in all the plains districts and increased in all the hill districts except the Naga Hills so that our present figures are almost a complete reversal of what was found in 1921. The most astonishing feature about the present statistics is the large drop of deaf-mutes in the Naga and Garo Hills and their sudden increase in the Sadiya Frontier Tract. In 1921, 1911 and 1901 the Naga Hills was far the worst district for deaf-mutism, yet the figures for 1931 show that this infirmity is not much more prevalent there than in several of the plains districts. The Sadiya Frontier Tract has now suddenly jumped forward as the worst district for deaf-mutism while the Garo Hills which had a normal proportion of deaf-mutes in 1921 has now far the smallest proportion of deaf-mutes in the whole province. It is useless to attempt to give any logical explanation for these diversities; our statistics as explained in the next paragraph, are *prima facie* more accurate than those of 1921 but the absolute figures are nevertheless clearly unreliable and any extensive discussion of the regional distribution of deaf-mutism would be a mere waste of time.

89. True deaf mutism is a congenital defect and persons suffering from it are relatively short-lived. The proportion of deaf-mutes to the total number of persons living at each age period should, therefore, show a progressive decline. Judged by this criterion our statistics, except for children under 5, are fairly good as a study of the figures in Subsidiary Table III will show and are much better than those of 1921 which showed a steady rise in the proportionate number of male deaf-mutes over 50 and of female deaf-mutes over 50—a fact which pointed to the erroneous inclusion of persons who had lost their hearing late in life.

Deaf-mutism, according to our figures, is clearly an infirmity which is most prevalent among the young, nearly a half of the total number of deaf-mutes in the province being under the age of 15 years.

The figures for deaf-mutes under 5 years of age are, apparently, much too low but this may not be due so much to concealment as to the parents' ignorance. It would generally be impossible for a parent to be certain that his child was deaf and dumb until the child was at least two years of age and even after that age the parent might quite reasonably think that the child was merely backward.

The sex distribution shows that, as in the case of insanity, more males than females have been returned as suffering from this defect and this, at once, raises the suspicion of concealment in the case of females.

BLINDNESS.

90. The statistics of total blindness are the only infirmity figures which can be considered to be fairly reliable. The reason for this is that blindness is easy to diagnose and, as it excites neither shame nor disgust, there is little temptation to conceal it.

The total number of cases of blindness has risen from 7,728 to 9,926 and the proportion of persons so afflicted per 100,000 of the population has risen from 96 to 107. This is the highest proportionate figure ever recorded in Assam for this infirmity and the only comparable figure is the 106 per 100,000 of the 1891 census.

But even so the proportion of blind persons in Assam is small compared with the proportion in India as a whole and the obvious explanation of this is that Assam in spite of its trying damp heat during the rains has, at any rate, the advantage of a background of fresh green scenery to delight the tired eye.

As in 1921 the Brahmaputra Valley has the lowest proportion of blindness. There has been an increase in blind persons in every district of this valley since 1921 but the proportionate increase has not been very high and the proportion of blind persons in this valley now stands at only 84 for every 100,000 of its population as against 79 in 1921. There has been a rather larger proportionate increase in the two plains districts of the Surma Valley and there are now 124 blind persons in every 100,000 persons in that valley against 102 in 1921. It is peculiar that at all censuses the Surma Valley should show a higher proportion of blind than the Assam Valley. The probable explanation of this is that the Assam Valley contains, on account of immigration, a larger proportion of people under 50 years of age than the Surma Valley, and, as we shall see in the next paragraph, over half the total number of blind in the province are over 50 years of age.

The hill districts—as at all previous censuses—have the highest proportion of blind. The Naga Hills and Manipur show an improvement since 1921 but all the other hill districts have deteriorated. The Garo Hills and the North Cachar Hills are particularly bad and the Lushai Hills exhibits a very sharp rise in the proportion of blind females. The explanation given in previous census reports for the high figure of blindness in the hills, namely, the absence of general cleanliness and ventilation seems to be extremely doubtful in view of the fact that the proportion of blind people has increased in districts like the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Lushai Hills where the people are rapidly becoming Christian and are adopting more sanitary methods of life. Nor would I consider, from my personal experience, that the huts of the hill men are more likely to produce blindness than the *bashas* of the plains dwellers. In truth, until a proper scientific investigation is made it is useless

to try and give reasons for the greater extent of blindness in the hills. It may merely be due to the fact that the hill enumerators, in their anxiety to leave nobody out, have recorded as totally blind people who are so dim-sighted that they are commonly considered to have lost their sight.

The number of operations for cataract performed in the hospitals and dispensaries of the province during the ten years 1921-30 was 2,664; in 1912-21 the corresponding figure was 3,214. The percentage of successful operations is reported to have been 91.6 per cent. which seems to be an extremely optimistic estimate in view of the fact that the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals reported in 1921 that 50 per cent. of such operations might be successful if performed with proper care but that failures may amount to 80 per cent. where the operation is of indifferent skill. It is peculiar that there has been such a fall in the number of operations. Apparently either fewer people are willing to undergo the operation or fewer surgeons are willing to operate.

Blindness
by age and
sex.

91. The number of blind men and women is roughly equal and this is an indication that the figures are, at any rate, fairly reliable. Women, according to our figures suffer from blindness more than men, there being 1,018 blind women to every thousand blind men. Distributed by age the figures show that up to the age of about 30 the proportion of blind men is higher than that of women but after that age women are in the majority. This is what is generally found in the census figures all through India and the reason usually ascribed is that Indian women spend a large part of their lives cooking over smoky fires and this eventually affects their eyes.

Blindness is essentially an infirmity of the old and our figures show that more than a half of the total number of blind persons in the province are over 50 and about a third over 60 years of age.

LEPROSY.

Value of
the statistics
of leprosy.

92. The census statistics for leprosy in Assam are entirely unreliable. Mr. Lloyd suggested in 1921 that the census figures for leprosy in that year might be as much as 100 per cent. too low, the figures for females being more unreliable than for males. He was unduly optimistic for there can now be no doubt that our figures represent, at a minimum, less than a third of the actual number of lepers in the province. We know this because a special leprosy survey consisting of four parties with a total staff of 4 Assistant Surgeons and 17 Sub-Assistant Surgeons made an extensive investigation in the districts of Sylhet, Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Sibsagar from September 1925 to February 1928 and the results are summed up in the following table:—

District.	Lepers found by the survey.	Lepers according to census of 1921.	Lepers according to census of 1931.
Sylhet	5,832	1,275	1,687
Goalpara	1,681	601	638
Kamrup	1,017	396	446
Darrang	953	277	419
Sibsagar	1,637	628	653
Total	11,720	3,177	3,843

Further comment seems needless. It is obviously impossible in the case of a disease like leprosy—which is difficult to diagnose in its early stages and from which most people would be ashamed to admit they suffered—for the census staff to get anything like accurate figures and now that a professional survey has been made in five districts it will, I hope, be found possible to drop this enquiry altogether in future censuses of Assam.

93. The exact number of lepers in this province in 1931 is thus a matter of conjecture but, as the result of the leprosy survey, we are now able to arrive at an estimate which bears at least some relation to the true facts. Had the census been taken in 1926 or 1927 when the leprosy survey was working the number of lepers disclosed by the census in the five districts covered by the survey would have been about 3,600 whereas 11,720 were actually found by the survey: in other words the census figure would have had to be multiplied by $3\frac{1}{4}$ to get it equal to the survey figure.

Estimate of the probable number of lepers in Assam.

There is no reason to suppose that there is less leprosy in the districts which have not been surveyed than in the districts which have and, therefore, if we multiply the present census figure for the total of lepers, viz., 5,420 by $3\frac{1}{4}$ we should get a reasonable estimate of the number of lepers in Assam. This works out at 17,615 or 190 per 100,000 of the population.

But even this estimate is probably too low as in Sibsagar (the only district for which the Medical Department have been able to furnish separate figures for the sexes) only 456 female lepers were discovered by the survey out of the total of 1,637 lepers detected there. It thus seems highly probable that a considerable proportion of female lepers managed to conceal their existence when the leprosy survey work was going on. Making allowance for this it seems probable that there are, at a minimum, 20,000 lepers in Assam which gives a proportion of 216 per hundred thousand of the population.

In view of the hopeless inaccuracy of our census statistics of leprosy it is useless to discuss the regional distribution of this disease in the province. The leprosy survey discloses the fact that the disease is proportionately more prevalent in Sylhet than in any of the other districts surveyed but until the remaining districts are done it would be unwise to draw any conclusions from this.

94. It is distressing to note how few of these lepers are receiving proper care and treatment. There are only two small leper asylums in British territory, one at Sylhet and the other at Kohima in the Naga Hills. On the night of the census there were 74 inmates in the Sylhet Asylum (67 men and 7 women) of whom 23 were born outside the province. In the Kohima Asylum—excluding a certain number of relatives in attendance—there were 25 inmates (13 men and 12 women) of whom all but three were born in the Naga Hills, the other three consisting of two Abors from Sadiya and one Mech from Goalpara. There are also two small leper colonies at Tura and Dhubri. The former, which had 43 patients in February 1931, is maintained by the Local Government and the latter by the Dhubri Municipal Board. Manipur State has two leper asylums, one at Kangpokpi and the other at Imphal. The former is controlled by the American Baptist Mission who deserve great credit for this branch of their work. The Rev. William Pettigrew has very kindly given me the following information regarding the Kangpokpi Asylum:—

Lepers in asylums and colonies.

"The leper asylum is a mission institute under the superintendence of the medical missionary. The State gives an annual grant-in-aid of Rs. 3,000 to the institution to help towards the provision of food and blankets. The Mission to Lepers has, also, generously subscribed for the erection of four cottages, a treatment room, and, as far as we know, will continue to grant a sum of £ 100 annually for the purchase of medicines and for the erection of other necessary buildings.

At the date of census there were approximately 100 lepers (males 70, females 30) in the colony; in 1930 there were 116. Discharged as "symptom free" reduced the number. New patients are coming in all the time. They are made up of patients from no less than 10 different tribes inhabiting the hills surrounding the valley. At present there are 53 Christian lepers and 23 non-Christian (animists) in the colony."

The Imphal Asylum is maintained by the State and is a much smaller institution. At the date of the census it had 24 inmates (15 males and 9 females) of whom 18 were Manipuris, 4 were Muslims and 2 Kabuis.

It will thus be seen that, except in Manipur State, the number of inmates in leper asylums is infinitesimal compared with the number of lepers. Thanks however to the efforts of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association a certain amount of progress

in the treatment of leprosy has been made of recent years in the province and I find that 1,898 lepers were treated in 1930 (1,656 out-patients and 242 in leper asylums) as against 1,760 in 1929 and 1,068 in 1928. Furthermore a scheme for building a commodious leper asylum at Jorhat in the Assam Valley has received sanction but its construction has had to be postponed temporarily owing to the financial situation.

Extension
of clinical
treatment

95. A few months ago the whole problem of leprosy in Assam was again examined by the Local Government and the following extract from their resolution No.1044M., dated the 3rd May 1932 indicates that strenuous efforts are about to be made to cope with this hideous disease.

"The leprosy problem has prominently occupied public attention in Assam since 1922, when it was admitted that the whole position in regard to this insidious disease was entirely unsatisfactory and that no real attempt had been made to grapple with a very urgent and menacing question. The census figures for 1921 had disclosed the existence of 4,464 lepers and it was believed on good grounds that the actual numbers were far higher and probably increasing. The two small leper asylums at Sylhet and Kohima scarcely touched the fringe of the problem, and it was becoming clear that the policy of segregation under the Act of 1898 was of only limited usefulness. The first step was to ascertain the actual facts as to prevalence.

Accordingly a survey was initiated in 1925 and continued until the pressure for economy and the realisation that mere collection of statistics was expensive and illusory, while funds could not be obtained to tackle the whole problem on comprehensive lines, brought operations to a close in 1928. By that time five districts had been surveyed with the result that 11,720 lepers had been diagnosed against 3,843 recorded at the census. The survey had cost Rs. 1,00,154.

Important facts emerging from the survey were, the wide diffusion of the disease amongst different classes of the population and the tendency of sufferers in the initial stages to conceal their complaint. When considered in relation to the proved efficacy of treatment in the early stages with hydnocarpus and chaulmoogra oil, etc., these facts necessitated an entire change of method, and indicated the prime need for a widespread organisation for treatment. This movement was facilitated by the inauguration of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, for which an Indian Council was formed in 1925 under the auspices of Lord Reading. The funds provided by the Council, supplemented by local subscriptions, and administered by a provincial committee has enabled a large number of doctors to be trained in the technique of leprosy treatment. Arrangements were made at all the sadr and subdivisional headquarter dispensaries for clinics to be opened, and it was hoped that in course of time all dispensaries in the province would be undertaking the cure of lepers.

Further steps were the opening of small colonies at Tura by the Local Government and at Dhubri by the municipal board with a provincial grant. A project for a hospital at Jorhat at which all varieties of early cases could be treated, and research undertaken into the facts of the disease as well as the training of doctors in method was also worked out in 1928, but unfortunately the set in of financial depression has indefinitely postponed the fulfilment of the scheme.

* * * * *

The present number of clinics is only 81. Government have now decided to make every *kala azar* dispensary and every out-centre a leprosy clinic as far as necessary and possible. When this is done the number of clinics should rise to 237. Government confidently expect that in this fight against a terrible scourge the local bodies will gladly come forward to take their share. If a treatment centre is opened in every local fund dispensary at which no centre now exists the total number of clinics should at once rise to well over 300."

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

NUMBER AFFLICTED PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION AT EACH OF THE LAST FIVE CENSUSES.

District and Natural Division.	Insane.										Deaf-mute.									
	Male.					Female.					Male.					Female.				
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
ASSAM	65	57	51	47	62	59	45	37	35	48	89	78	87	87	95	68	60	66	62	75
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	63	59	54	46	60	42	38	32	33	44	84	75	88	83	106	70	60	70	64	91
Goalpara	82	69	79	82	109	71	59	68	83	86	73	91	93	113	116	51	73	79	97	97
Kamrup	41	46	49	39	59	30	27	26	23	43	66	78	83	50	81	53	60	62	33	65
Darrang	165	152	114	74	81	64	60	33	37	49	107	60	83	100	149	86	54	77	82	139
Nowgong	42	31	30	4	28	30	32	25	13	27	114	78	91	130	102	90	68	71	77	87
Sibsagar	46	41	36	39	43	28	30	22	29	24	70	70	83	58	93	57	50	57	45	73
Lakhimpur	27	30	19	14	26	31	20	10	8	23	71	68	99	94	125	79	58	82	70	127
Sadiya	38	68	...	...	...	53	74	...	...	...	146	68	...	...	...	369	97	...	...	...
Balipara	Nil	39	...	...	...	52	...	...	...	...	62	...	...	...	...	209	...	...	...	...
SURMA VALLEY	61	41	48	45	63	52	37	34	30	52	83	68	78	83	77	65	46	50	50	53
Cachar Plains	69	42	49	47	54	67	44	50	44	60	83	57	75	88	54	62	45	63	40	43
Sylhet	59	41	48	45	65	49	35	31	28	49	83	71	78	83	81	66	40	47	51	55
HILLS	84	100	49	57	61	87	91	69	51	51	74	120	110	111	136	69	101	98	92	108
Garo Hills	56	58	37	40	62	47	47	40	41	66	15	79	66	83	119	13	63	66	60	126
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	35	28	30	34	60	48	40	33	38	44	43	65	68	63	115	29	40	41	16	68
North Cachar	87	...	21	48	230	97	...	69	45	208	61	...	49	62	118	109	...	23	67	83
Naga Hills	29	184	25	45	56	40	132	35	39	40	147	343	527	486	238	144	297	502	451	166
Lushai Hills	321	216	297	292	...	368	272	380	249	...	257	186	19	156	...	290	257	12	160	...
Manipur	88	102	13	21	...	66	80	15	12	...	42	63	12	18	...	23	35	8	12	...

District and Natural Division.	Blind.										Leprosy.									
	Male.					Female.					Male.					Female.				
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
1	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
ASSAM	101	97	94	97	107	114	96	87	91	105	83	80	90	125	182	39	25	39	30	60
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	83	80	81	85	76	86	78	78	76	74	81	87	98	129	175	38	33	41	42	65
Goalpara	115	101	100	126	134	122	105	94	140	147	101	116	137	210	287	40	37	38	63	90
Kamrup	82	94	106	125	72	78	76	82	80	61	61	71	78	137	97	29	31	31	28	36
Darrang	86	82	54	55	46	79	58	60	45	46	83	77	63	77	123	59	36	32	29	65
Nowgong	58	80	94	71	67	71	91	109	75	63	79	78	104	77	134	25	35	43	27	51
Sibsagar	82	69	67	47	54	89	72	64	51	55	93	104	114	128	225	43	45	62	51	82
Lakhimpur	59	63	59	71	66	67	59	68	65	61	72	66	75	102	180	35	26	43	42	85
Sadiya	119	100	...	...	...	93	88	...	...	...	52	14	...	...	...	8	6	...	...	...
Balipara	Nil	39	...	...	...	209	8	...	...	...	62	77	...	...	...	Nil	...	...	...	...
SURMA VALLEY	116	104	105	103	130	131	100	93	93	117	95	76	101	146	206	24	20	28	40	55
Cachar Plains	108	94	89	85	91	156	114	100	88	88	85	54	94	114	157	26	30	39	47	70
Sylhet	118	107	108	107	137	127	97	91	93	122	98	80	103	151	215	24	18	28	38	53
HILLS	137	142	102	116	152	165	151	100	131	196	58	64	31	48	91	28	34	18	24	60
Garo Hills	241	183	151	143	314	290	193	191	254	469	123	106	90	93	127	61	60	64	54	68
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	102	87	80	143	110	133	120	63	105	113	41	45	33	58	59	20	25	29	33	37
North Cachar	156	...	35	48	215	261	...	77	188	187	17	...	35	73	183	13	...	15	59	63
Naga Hills	92	160	209	172	103	137	209	238	252	145	37	102	31	35	124	24	50	19	18	69
Lushai Hills	155	146	128	122	...	298	180	98	166	...	...	9	7	13	...	3	4	...	2	...
Manipur	126	148	39	56	...	101	125	29	35	...	69	54	6	31	...	39	27	1	10	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II.

NUMBER AFFLICTED PER 100,000 PERSONS OF EACH AGE PERIOD AND NUMBER OF FEMALES AFFLICTED PER 1,000 MALES.

AGE.	Number afflicted per 100,000.								Number of females afflicted per 1,000 males.			
	Insane.		Deaf-mute.		Blind.		Lepers.		Insane.	Deaf-mute.	Blind.	Lepers.
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
ALL AGES ...	65	52	82	68	101	114	83	32	729	752	1,018	344
0-5 ...	4	4	37	33	23	19	2	2	879	934	830	1,000
5-10 ...	20	17	112	85	37	28	12	8	751	690	675	503
10-15 ...	29	31	125	102	43	33	21	13	550	732	685	573
15-20 ...	56	47	110	83	28	39	43	25	946	833	838	634
20-25 ...	67	48	99	68	51	41	56	25	782	740	870	451
25-30 ...	97	72	79	62	63	58	99	40	657	694	978	257
30-35 ...	111	88	72	64	54	74	124	63	634	714	1,067	335
35-40 ...	125	102	68	76	83	129	172	67	603	827	1,153	291
40-45 ...	123	112	66	76	113	177	105	76	638	818	1,145	285
45-50 ...	120	134	69	56	201	308	215	89	817	594	1,123	302
50-55 ...	124	133	69	51	280	380	233	95	810	562	1,109	319
55-60 ...	123	112	58	62	440	780	260	90	712	821	1,285	268
60 and over ...	104	102	53	56	961	1,209	216	79	800	844	1,023	260

SUBSIDIARY TABLE III.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE INFIRM BY AGE PER 10,000 OF EACH SEX.

AGE.	INSANE.									
	MALE.					FEMALE.				
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
TOTAL ...	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
0-5 ...	105	88	82	115	133	127	105	71	204	184
5-10 ...	424	483	375	399	530	437	482	447	621	483
10-15 ...	513	576	484	825	691	669	809	650	795	700
15-20 ...	714	631	685	908	645	927	693	925	1,077	879
20-25 ...	905	855	1,016	1,068	835	970	999	995	1,233	918
25-30 ...	1,329	1,476	1,516	1,295	1,289	1,197	1,104	1,246	892	1,136
30-35 ...	1,418	1,379	1,543	1,535	1,583	1,233	1,255	1,480	1,436	1,284
35-40 ...	1,252	1,091	1,196	1,021	1,043	1,036	941	980	795	889
40-45 ...	1,074	1,106	1,005	1,055	1,192	940	1,098	964	1,039	1,012
45-50 ...	730	656	609	457	627	817	686	588	417	498
50-55 ...	602	691	679	641	676	669	781	659	543	650
55-60 ...	376	311	223	277	201	307	233	200	213	218
60 and over ...	558	569	587	473	645	611	721	721	737	918

AGE.	DEAF-MUTE.									
	MALE.					FEMALE.				
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
1	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
TOTAL ...	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
0-5 ...	725	309	603	413	805	902	370	609	429	931
5-10 ...	1,810	1,456	1,624	1,791	2,136	1,690	1,576	1,487	1,911	2,137
10-15 ...	1,744	1,528	1,672	1,575	1,629	1,700	1,521	1,820	1,600	1,832
15-20 ...	1,114	965	1,159	1,234	1,118	1,236	1,059	1,237	1,307	1,080
20-25 ...	1,054	912	1,082	893	950	1,039	980	1,179	1,182	990
25-30 ...	861	1,089	1,114	919	761	795	803	1,061	792	791
30-35 ...	728	929	831	705	738	691	882	841	737	776
35-40 ...	537	557	615	602	526	501	499	507	431	491
40-45 ...	432	606	457	524	376	488	603	467	610	499
45-50 ...	331	513	247	223	199	264	319	218	199	125
50-55 ...	261	383	269	399	221	197	432	231	325	245
55-60 ...	141	193	83	146	119	154	202	129	98	60
60 and over ...	226	717	254	753	123	253	623	321	422	320

SUBSIDIARY TABLE III.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE INFIRM BY AGE PER 10,000 OF EACH SEX.

Age.	BLIND.									
	MALE.					FEMALE.				
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
1	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
TOTAL	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
0-5	370	271	363	371	373	301	200	318	302	282
5-10	495	589	547	607	528	327	370	348	465	443
10-15	484	576	509	559	518	325	351	394	483	393
15-20	427	425	412	368	426	351	405	364	439	386
20-25	410	420	413	515	440	375	362	401	358	428
25-30	462	527	486	511	419	443	432	488	494	435
30-35	444	579	639	614	495	473	554	522	523	518
35-40	531	533	530	460	439	601	545	521	535	425
40-45	602	678	679	794	788	676	743	732	804	778
45-50	783	561	591	578	425	862	616	572	571	460
50-55	806	980	925	925	815	876	1,056	1,050	1,088	1,003
55-60	863	524	509	407	432	1,087	529	562	417	398
60 and over	3,293	3,312	3,398	2,256	3,863	3,303	3,537	3,688	3,521	4,063

Age.	LEPERS.									
	MALE.					FEMALE.				
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
1	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
TOTAL	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
0-5	42	39	27	33	31	122	95	46	70	119
5-10	201	169	73	135	142	346	329	123	223	338
10-15	290	311	274	356	376	483	615	521	678	719
15-20	434	474	399	485	472	800	711	731	861	734
20-25	593	556	607	617	609	829	822	897	806	794
25-30	1,062	979	961	957	878	1,102	1,023	1,290	678	1,051
30-35	1,230	1,181	1,330	1,249	1,277	1,196	1,204	1,354	1,287	1,245
35-40	1,337	1,230	1,275	1,234	1,361	1,131	901	970	904	982
40-45	1,263	1,260	1,735	1,331	1,468	1,045	1,179	1,080	1,078	1,207
45-50	1,019	953	894	874	803	893	806	686	621	550
50-55	880	1,000	1,000	924	1,065	793	797	829	974	807
55-60	620	629	357	333	351	482	512	403	490	306
60 and over	1,030	1,245	1,163	1,402	1,168	778	1,196	1,025	1,096	1,133

CHAPTER VIII.

OCCUPATION.

96. At the Census of 1921 special attention was directed towards collecting information relating to the industrial and economic condition of the people and special enquiries additional to the ordinary census were instituted. There was, for example, a special enquiry into the position of the cottage industries of the province, and a special industrial census of all establishments employing 10 or more persons was taken.

On this occasion it was decided not to hold an industrial census but to collect information regarding the number of persons employed in organised industries by means of a special column in the ordinary census schedule. This was actually done but later on, in the interests of economy, the Imperial Table which was to have contained this information was abolished and the information which had actually been collected in the census schedules was not sorted for or tabulated.

The statistics dealing with the occupation of the people are based upon and have been compiled from columns 9, 10 and 11 of the general census schedule. In column 9 the enumerator entered "earner" or "dependant" against each person; if the person was an earner he put down in the next column (column 10) the earner's principal occupation and in column 11 he entered any subsidiary occupation which the earner might have in addition to his principal occupation.

If the person questioned was a dependant the enumerator wrote down dependant in column 9, left column 10 blank and wrote down in column 11 the occupation which the dependant had (if any). In 1921 the occupation of working dependants was not recorded but there was an additional column in which information regarding the means of subsistence of all dependants, whether working or non-working, was collected, the object being to ascertain the number of persons supported by each occupation, and in the 1921 census report the discussion was largely based upon the total number of persons who were supported by a certain occupation or industry—whether as earners or as dependants. At this census we have no information as to the numbers supported by any particular occupation; all we know is (1) the number of persons of each sex who earn their living by working at a particular occupation (2) the number of earners under each occupation who have subsidiary occupations, (3) the number of dependants who, though dependants, actually assist in the work of the family without earning wages, and (4) the number of non-working dependants.

97. The question as to whether a particular person was an earner or dependant gave rise to considerable difficulty. An adult male earner was not particularly defined in the census schedule and in the case of Hindu joint families this gave rise to confusion as the general idea of most enumerators was that the head of the family alone was the earner and all the rest dependants, and learned arguments based on Hindu law were not infrequently brought forward. In the case of women and children the definition of earner was made considerably narrower than in 1921 and the instructions laid down that only those women and children should be shown as earners who help to augment the family income by permanent and regular work for which a return was obtained in cash or kind. Thus a woman who looks after her husband's house and cooks his food is a dependant but a woman on a tea garden who goes out and plucks leaf and earns wages is an earner; a boy who sometimes looks after his father's cattle is a dependant but one who is a regular cowherd and earns wages as such is an earner. It was also laid down that dependants who assist in the work of the family and contribute to its support without actually earning wages should be shown as dependants but their occupation should be entered in column 11, i.e., as working dependants. At the last census there was no wage criterion and the instructions were that if women and children worked regularly they should be put down in the worker's column. As a result of this alteration in the definition of earner the number of women earners in Assam has decreased by nearly 600,000.

Again in the column for recording the occupation of working dependants, in which it was stated that only the most important occupation should be entered, considerable difficulties were experienced. The following extract from my Administrative Report on the Census in which I have referred in greater detail to the various difficulties experienced may be of interest :—

"Personally I would abolish altogether the column dealing with the occupation of dependants. A cultivator's wife in Assam has generally so many occupations that it is almost impossible to say which is her principal one : she helps her husband to transplant his rice seedling ; she helps him to reap his crop ; she looks after his house ; cooks his meals ; rears his children, and devotes her spare time to weaving. From the point of view of the future of the race her principal occupation would be "motherhood", from the agricultural point of view it would be "helps in cultivation" and from the point of view of an exponent of cottage industries it would be "weaving". From the enumerators' point of view it was generally a blank."

Hence it must be recognized that the actual statistics must be treated with a certain amount of caution and that differences between various districts are very often due more to the individual idiosyncrasies of the enumerators than to any real distinction.

References
to statistics
and
system of
classification.

98. The statistics relating to occupation are contained in Imperial Table X which is divided into two parts, the first part being a summary for the whole province and the second part giving the details for districts and states. At the end of this chapter are six subsidiary tables which will be referred to in detail later. But before discussing the figures in the tables it is necessary to mention the system of classification of occupations because it is upon this system that the whole of the statistics are based. The system of classification used was originally drawn up by M. Bertillon and recommended for general adoption by the International Statistical Institute. It was first introduced into India, with certain modifications, at the census of 1911 and has been used ever since. Under this classification scheme occupations are divided into four main classes and into twelve sub-classes as follows :—

Class.	Sub-classes.
A.—Production of raw materials	{ I.—Exploitation of animals and vegetation. II.—Exploitation of minerals.
B.—Preparation and supply of material substances.	{ III.—Industry. IV.—Transport. V.—Trade.
C.—Public administration and liberal arts	{ VI.—Public force. VII.—Public Administration. VIII.—Professions and liberal arts.
D.—Miscellaneous	{ IX.—Persons living on their incomes. X.—Domestic service. XI.—Insufficiently described occupations. XII.—Unproductive.

These classes and sub-classes have remained the same since 1911 but the orders and groups into which the sub-classes are divided have been modified from time to time. At the 1921 census there were altogether 56 orders and 191 groups but at this census the number of orders has been reduced by 1 to 55 by amalgamating the three 1921 orders of mines, quarries of hard rocks, and salt, etc., into the two orders of metallic and non-metallic minerals. The number of groups at this census has, however, been slightly increased and there are now 195 groups against 191 in 1921.

In the preceding paragraph I have mentioned certain difficulties experienced in filling up the occupation columns at the time of enumeration. Other and numerous difficulties were experienced at the time of sorting and compiling the occupation table which of all tables is the one which invariably gives most trouble. In the first place, in spite of special instructions to enumerators regarding the necessity of avoiding general and vague terms such as "shopkeeper" or "cooly", many such entries appeared in the schedules and these had to be classed in the unsatisfactory sub-class of *Insufficiently described occupations*. Under this head alone we have 27,089 male and 8,100 female earners—the great majority of whom are coolies of some kind.

Then the process of classification is by no means an easy one. True we had an index of occupations—and very valuable it was—but no index in the world could hope to cover the mass of curious occupations which are returned in the census schedules. Many doubtful cases were referred to me from the Central Compilation Office at Gauhati, where the work of classification should have been done for the entire province. It was not, however, done there entirely as, without my orders, the Sylhet sorting office at the time of sorting adopted a method not laid down in the code and posted the entries in the schedules direct against the group numbers which they wrote up in the sorters' tickets—in other words they not only sorted but classified as well.

But, on the whole, I think the results given in the occupation table are, for all practical purposes and subject to the interpretation given to them in this chapter, sufficiently accurate and represent the normal functional distribution of the population.

99. In Chapter II—Population of towns and villages—we have already seen that only 34 persons in every thousand persons in Assam live in towns and that many of the so-called towns are really nothing but large villages. We would, therefore, expect to find that the great mass of the people are employed in agricultural pursuits.

General
functional
distribu-
tion of the
population.

This is actually the case and a glance at the figures in the first part of Imperial Table X shows that, although the list of occupations tabulated is extremely numerous, most of them are followed by a very small number of people and that the vast majority of the inhabitants of Assam earn their livelihood from some form of agriculture. I have already explained that it is not possible on this occasion to ascertain what proportion of the total population is supported by any particular occupation. We can, however, tell the proportion of earners, of earners *plus* working dependants, and of non-workers (non-working dependants) in the total population and we can also tell the proportion which earners and earners *plus* working dependants in each occupation bears to the total number of earners and of earners *plus* working dependants in the province.

Looking at Subsidiary Table I(a) at the end of this chapter we see that out of every 1,000 people in the province 548 are non-working dependants and 452 are workers, *i.e.*, earners *plus* working dependants. Out of this figure of 452 as many as 373 or 826 out of every thousand workers are employed in some form of pasture and agriculture, the balance being distributed between Fishing (11 per mille), Mines (4 per mille), Industry (77 per mille), Transport (13 per mille), Trade (29 per mille), Public Administration and liberal arts (15 per mille) and Miscellaneous (25 per mille).

Looking at the figures for earners only and omitting working dependants the statistics show a similar result. In the table below the proportion per mille of earners and the proportion per mille of earners *plus* working dependants who are employed in the various occupations are set out side by side.

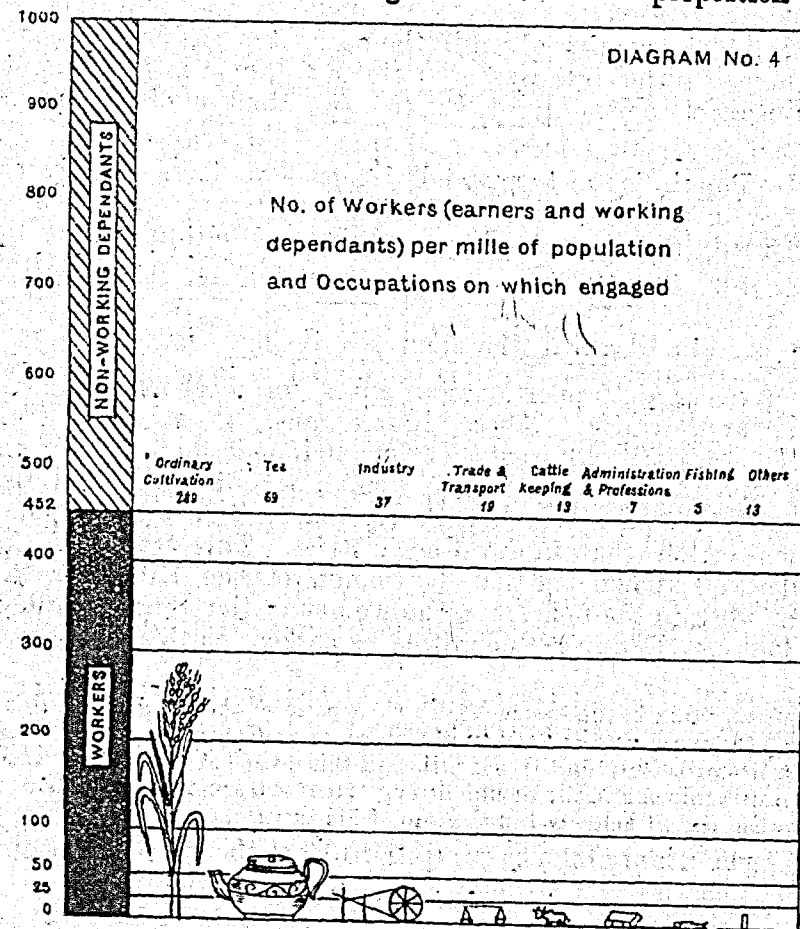
	Proportion per mille of earners <i>plus</i> working dependants with occupation.	Proportion per mille of earners only with occupation.
Pasture and Agriculture	826	850
Fishing	11	12
Mines	4	5
Industry	77	82
Transport	13	17
Trade	29	35
Administration and liberal arts	15	20
Miscellaneous	25	29
	1,000	1,000

It will be noticed that the main difference between these two sets of figures lies in the fact that the proportion of earners *plus* working dependants under Industry is

much higher than the proportion of earners alone. This is due to the large number of women dependants in the Assam Valley and Manipur whose occupation has been returned as weaving.

In 1921 it was found that nearly 89 per cent. of the whole population was supported by some form of agricultural or pastoral pursuit. Corresponding figures cannot be given on this occasion but it is clear from the figures given in the table above that the proportion of persons in the province who are supported by some form of pasture or agriculture must be well over 80 per cent.

The diagram in the margin illustrates the proportion of workers (earners *plus* working dependants) to non-workers in Assam and shows how the workers are distributed between the main occupations.



The size of the *charka*—which denotes Industry is particularly noticeable. This is due to the fact that nearly 209,000 women (of whom nearly 95,000 are in Kamrup district) have been returned as dependants with the occupation of "weaving." Practically every house-wife in the Assam Valley plies her loom but it is obvious from the figures that the enumerators in Kamrup plumped for "weaving" as the most important occupation of the females of that district while in other districts they

generally wrote down "helpers in cultivation." This can be seen from the fact that number of women who have been recorded as "helpers in cultivation" is very much less in Kamrup than in any other district of the Assam Valley. It is, however, a fact that the women in Kamrup do not work in the fields to the same extent as the women in Upper Assam. The little cow in the illustration which represents cattle and buffalo breeders and keepers appears to be too large. This is due to the fact that over 100,000 male dependants have been returned under this head, a large proportion of whom are probably small boys who look after the cattle of the family.

The tea-pot which denotes the proportion of workers in the tea industry is large because the number of female earners in that industry is very high—practically all cooly women on the gardens being earners.

100. The diagram given above shows also that the 45 per cent. of the population of the province consists of workers (earners *plus* working dependants) and that 55 per cent. are dependants who do not do any work which augments the family income. In 1921 the percentage of actual workers was 46 and in 1911 44 per cent. Hence it is clear that at this census the number of earners *plus* working dependants must correspond, at least roughly, with the number of earners (actual workers) at previous censuses. As already pointed out the definition of an earner in the case of women and children was altered at this census with the result that in place of the 1,145,711 women earners of 1921 we now get only 563,897.

The following table shows the proportion of earners, working dependants, and non-working dependants by sex for Assam and for some other provinces for which figures have been received.

		Assam.	Burma.	Central Provinces.	Punjab.	United Provinces.
Earners	Males	274	258	284	280	331
	Females	61	97	135	10	87
	Total	335	355	419	299	418
Working dependants	Males	46	32	29	36	11
	Females	71	37	80	33	68
	Total	117	69	109	69	69
Total workers		452	424	528	368	487
Non-working dependants	Males	203	220	187	230	183
	Females	345	356	285	402	330
	Total	548	576	472	632	513

Subsidiary Table I (a) gives certain proportionate figures for workers and non-workers by natural divisions and districts. These figures must be accepted with considerable caution as enumerators in different districts and, indeed, in the same district had different ideas on the subject of whether a woman or child did anything which could be called work but the figures bring out clearly that in Sylhet and Cachar there are far more women non-workers than in any other district. This was also the case in 1921 and confirms the well known fact that the women of the Hills and the Assam Valley do much more work in the fields than the women of the Surma Valley. The Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee remarked on this difference between the two Valleys.

"We have noticed," they wrote, "that in the Assam Valley the women of the indigenous Hindu cultivators regularly work in the fields except in the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup. In the Surma Valley no wife of a respectable cultivator is found in the fields, though this does not apply to certain of the lower castes like Namasudras, Patnis and Malis though among these, too, there is a tendency to restrict out-door labour of women nor does it hold good in the case of Manipuris and ex-coolies."

101. The category of Agriculture includes groups 1 to 16 of the classified scheme Agriculture.

(a) Cultivation—

1. Non-cultivating proprietors taking rent in money or kind.
2. Estate Agents and Managers of owners.
3. Estate Agents and Managers of Government.
4. Rent collectors, clerks, etc.
5. Cultivating owners.
6. Tenant cultivators.
7. Agricultural labourers.
- 7a. Helpers in agricultural work.
8. Cultivation of *jhum* and shifting areas.

(b) Cultivation of special crops—planters, managers, clerks and labourers—

9. Chinchona.
10. Coconut.
11. Coffee.
12. *Ganja*.
13. Pan-Vine,
14. Rubber.
15. Tea.
16. Market gardens, flower and fruit growers.

Of these groups Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14 are practically non-existent in Assam and group Nos. 2, 3, 4 are so small that they are not worth discussing and will not be

mentioned again. As regards group 7a this is a group which will probably be found in Assam only and was specially introduced by me to show the number of women who are technically dependants but who work in the fields helping their men-folk at the time of the transplantation and reaping of the rice crop.

The extent to which Assam is dependent upon agriculture—including in agriculture all the heads mentioned above—is clear from the following table in which the figures for earners only are given :—

	Total number of earners in Assam (000's omitted).	Total number of earners under head agriculture.	Proportion of earners under agriculture per mille of total earners.
Male	2,535	2,129	840
Female	564	484	858
Total	3,099	2,613	849

I now proceed to discuss the two main heads into which agriculture is divided, namely, ordinary cultivation and special cultivation, the latter of which includes Tea—the one great industry of Assam.

Ordinary Cultivation.

102. At this census the confusing term *rent payer* of previous censuses was abolished and a more logical scheme was adopted for collecting information regarding the number of people who live on the proceeds of cultivation. The outline of the scheme is apparent from the following instructions which were issued to census officers.

"Those who derive their means of livelihood from the land are principally (1) Ordinary cultivators who hold their land direct from Government. (2) Cultivators who hold their land as tenants and pay rent for it either in cash or kind to a landlord. (3) Those who do not cultivate themselves but who live on the rents received from their tenants. The occupation of persons in (1) should be described as "cultivating owners", that of persons in (2) as "cultivating tenants" and that of persons in (3) as "rent receivers". *Lakshirajdars* or holders of revenue free land should be entered as *Lakshirajdar*, cultivates his own land if they cultivate themselves, and as "rent receivers" if they let out their land to tenants. *Adhidars* or *Bargadars* who pay a produce rent should be entered as "Cultivating tenants". When a person cultivates part of his own land and sub-lets part, if he gets the greater part of his income from the land which he cultivates himself, he should be shown in column 10 as a "cultivating owner" and in column 11 as a "rent receiver", and *vice versa*. The occupation of agricultural labourers should be entered as such and should not be shown as cultivation. Gardeners and growers of special products, such as fruit, vegetables, betel, cocoanuts, etc., should be described as growers of these articles. The ordinary cultivator who has a few betel nut or fruit trees in his garden and does not grow such articles for the market should not be shown as the grower of a special product."

These instructions were, I think, logical and well suited to Assam. The only difficulty lay in selecting the vernacular terms to be used for them. Finally after consulting district officers the following were laid down as the vernacular words to be used for the various classes :—

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|---|---------------|
| (1) Non-cultivating proprietor | ... | <i>Khazana pai</i> (receives rent) | |
| (2) Cultivating owners | ... | Assamese-speaking districts. Bengali-speaking districts <i>Nij-Nijkhete</i> (his own cultivation). <i>jami chash kore</i> (cultivates his own lands). | |
| (3) Tenant cultivators | ... | <i>tolotia ryot</i> . | <i>ryot</i> . |
| (4) Agricultural labourers | ... | According to the word generally used, e.g., <i>haloa</i> in some of the Assam Valley districts. | |
| (5) Cultivators of <i>Jhum</i> | ... | <i>Jhum</i> . | |

On the whole these instructions were fairly well understood and we have, I think, a better idea of the distribution of the main body of the agricultural population than at any previous census. Taking earners and working dependants together but

omitting "helpers in agriculture" the table below shows the distribution of these five classes per mille of the population who live and work on the land. I give proportionate figures (1) for the whole province, (2) for the temporarily-settled districts of the Assam Valley and (3) for Sylhet.

Number per mille of working population living on cultivation distributed by groups.

	Province.	Assam Valley (less Goalpara).	Sylhet.
Non-cultivating owners	12	4	92
Cultivating owners	550	894	242
Tenant cultivators	285	56	696
Agricultural Labourers	34	41	33
Jhumiyas	119	5	...
Total	1,000	1,000	1,000

These figures show clearly that Assam is mainly a land of peasant proprietors and would be almost entirely so except for the two permanently settled districts of Sylhet and Goalpara. In fact out of the total of 613,584 tenants (earners) in the whole province 508,000 belong to these two districts—the numbers being 391,000 in Sylhet and 117,000 in Goalpara.

With a view to ascertaining how the proportion of tenancy in the Assam Valley (less Goalpara) agreed with the results of the recent resettlements I discussed the figures with the Director of Land Records and he has informed me that they are not inconsistent with the settlement figures. During resettlement the only figures for tenancy which were tabulated were figures of tenancy of over one year on fully assessed *khiraj* land; the figures for tenancy on *lakshiraj* (revenue free) and *nisf-khiraj* (half revenue free) lands were not tabulated. Hence the census figures for tenancy should be a good deal higher than the settlement figures as large areas of *lakshiraj* and *nisf-khiraj* lands, especially in Kamrup and Mangaldai, are held by tenants.

In Kamrup according to the Settlement Report (1930) 5.15 per cent. of *khiraj* land is sublet and the Settlement Officer of Sibsagar in the Settlement Report of that district (1929) has estimated that 2.75 per cent. of the total *khiraj* area is sublet. He states, however, that this figure should really be higher as landlords were often desirous of concealing the existence of subtenancies owing to the idea that, if recorded, they might result later in trouble over occupancy rights.

Unfortunately it is not possible to say whether the amount of tenancy has increased since 1921 as tenants and ordinary cultivators were lumped together at the last census under the head "ordinary cultivators". Non-cultivating owners, i.e., landlords are chiefly to be found in Sylhet—which has also the largest number of tenants. The reason why there are so few landlords in Goalpara is that the district is mostly owned by a few very great Zemindars, the Bijni Raj alone being over 1,000 square miles in area.

Assam is probably one of the few provinces in India in which the proportion of cultivators of *jhum* is fairly large. *Jhum* is the method of cultivation practised by many of the hill tribes and consists briefly in burning the trees on a hill side

and sowing seed among their ashes. It would be possible to write several volumes each larger than this report on the economic condition of the agricultural population of Assam and the various systems of land tenure. It is manifestly impossible in one chapter of the Census Report to do much more than to deal generally with the relative strength of each of the agricultural groups. Those who wish for detailed information regarding the conditions in each district should consult the Settlement Reports. Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong and Sibsagar have all been resettled since the last census and the resettlement of Lakhimpur is at present in progress. In the settlement and group reports of these districts will be found a mass of information dealing with every aspect of rural economy—from soil productivity to typical family budgets.

In subsidiary Table IV the proportionate figures of the number of earners *plus* working dependants at this census are compared with the proportionate figures of the number of actual workers at the two previous censuses. On account of the different method of grouping the agricultural heads I doubt whether it would be of any use to draw any conclusions from this comparison. The figures show that the proportionate figures of both landlords and agricultural labourers have declined. I doubt this and think that the figures of these groups were probably too high in 1921. I have so far only just mentioned the group "helpers in agriculture". This was introduced by me in order to distinguish those men and women who could not be called earners under the 1931 census definition of earner but who worked regularly in the fields. In the Brahmaputra Valley most Assamese women work as hard as the men at the time of the transplantation of the rice seedlings from the nurseries into the *pathars* or fields and also at the time of harvesting. These women cannot be called earners as they get no wages for their work; they are dependants and their principal occupation from the point of view of agriculture is "helpers in the fields" or "helpers in agriculture" or some such term. They cannot in my opinion be classed as agricultural labourers—a term which connotes something quite different—and as there was no other group in which they could go I devised a new one to meet their case.

Practically all the women who have been recorded under this group are in the Assam Valley. In the Surma Valley it is not generally considered respectable for women to work in the fields and one of the first steps in the social progress of a caste in that valley is to stop their women folk from helping at the time of transplanting and reaping the crop.

Tea. 103. Under special cultivation the only group worth discussing is Tea—the only thing for which Assam is known in most parts of the world. In fact, instead of the coat of arms of a Rhinoceros sable on a ground of a gold, a tea bush *verdant* supported by a planter *rampant* and a cooly *dormant* would have been a far more appropriate emblem for Assam.

In Chapter I of this report I have already given an account of the economic position of the Tea Industry during the decade and in chapter III I have discussed at some length the question of tea garden labour immigration. In the appendix to chapter XII the number of coolies and *ex-coolies* in the province is examined and in Provincial Table III the number of persons censused on tea gardens in every district is given. Moreover the whole position of Tea-garden labour was recently reviewed by the Royal Commission on Labour (1929) and a mass of information dealing with every aspect of the problem is given in Vol. VI (Evidence) of the Commission's Report.

It is therefore unnecessary for me to say much about Tea on this occasion. According to the census statistics tea cultivation forms the principal occupation of 334,000 men and 281,000 women. Including working dependants the total number of workers in this occupation comes to 338,000 men and 299,000 women against 233,000 men and 316,000 women in 1921. The small increase in male workers and the decrease in female workers seem peculiar in view of the fact that the total population censused on tea garden has increased from 922,000 to 980,000. Examining the figures by districts we find that it is the Surma Valley (Sylhet and Cachar plains) which is chiefly responsible for the decrease, the number of workers under tea in that valley having

decreased by 38,000 since 1921 although the number of persons censused on tea gardens has increased by 18,000. The only explanation I can think of to account for this is that a considerable number of persons living on garden lands in the Surma Valley must have returned their principal occupation as cultivation (tenants) instead of tea. This is possible as owing to the financial condition of the tea industry in that Valley at the time of the census actual work on the gardens was cut down to a minimum.

104. The figures under Forestry call for no comment so I pass on to discuss Pasture. Stock-raising.

According to the occupational statistics there are now only 16,000 persons in the province whose principal occupation is the breeding and keeping of cattle, buffaloes, and other animals compared with 35,000 in 1921 and 37,000 in 1911.

Little reliance, however, can be placed in these figures as the keeping and breeding of cattle is closely bound up with ordinary cultivation and many of the professional graziers—who are chiefly Nepalis—have their own cultivation in or near the grazing grounds. The large number of males—over 100,000—who have been returned as working dependants under this head are, I have no doubt, mainly the sons of ordinary cultivators who look after the village cattle when turned out to graze. According to the census of livestock taken in 1930, there were 6,429,000 animals in the plains districts, of which 5,096,000 were cattle, 565,000 were buffaloes, and the rest mostly goats. The cattle of the plains of Assam are a miserable race, ill-nourished and ill-bred, the average daily yield of the cows being between a quarter and half a seer a day.

105. Between 1911 and 1921 the number of persons who earned their living from fishing fell by 17,000 or 39 per cent. This was explained as being due to the desire to avoid returning an occupation which is traditionally considered to be rather a low way of earning one's livelihood. At this census the number of earners and working dependants classed under fishing has risen to 44,000 or by 64 per cent. and is now almost exactly the same as the 1911 figure. The increase is almost entirely due to an increase in the figures of fishermen in the Sylhet district. All that I need say is that the 1931 figures under this head are obviously much more accurate than those of 1921 but that it would be unwise to trust them too far.

106. The only groups of any importance in Assam in this sub-class are oil and coal. Correctly speaking only persons employed in the actual work of extracting mineral oil should have been classed under the group petroleum and those employed in the manufacture and refining of mineral oils should have gone under Industry. Exploitation of Minerals.

But although crude oil is refined in Assam before export no distinction between these classes was made by the Central Office at the time of compiling the table, presumably because the occupation of all employees in the oil industry were simply recorded in the census schedules as "Oil Company". Hence every person employed in the oil industry in Assam has been classed under the group 'petroleum'. In paragraph 10 of Chapter I of this report I have already referred to the great expansion of the oil industry of the province during the decade and have given statistics of the increase in the out-put of crude oil in the Digboi Oil Fields—namely, from 5 to 53 million gallons. Hence it is no surprise to find that the number of male earners in this industry has increased from 1,636 to 8,377; practically all of this increase is due to the great increase in Lakhimpur district (from 1,477 to 7,314) where the Assam Oil Company has its fields. The following extract from the written evidence given by the Manager of this Company before the Royal Commission on Labour (1929) describes briefly the activities of the oil industry in Lakhimpur.

"This company is engaged in the winning, refining and marketing of mineral oil and has been operating in this district for 30 years. Geographically it is not well situated owing to the long and expensive railway lead to markets, and until nine years ago development was consequently hampered. Dating from a change of management in 1920, and more particularly from 1926, its activities have increased very materially, not on account of the immediate profitability of the undertaking but because the new directors decided to find capital to develop the properties on a bigger scale with a view to eventual profitability....."

Plans are in hand for keeping pace with the growing population's requirements. The company now employs about 8,000 men, 300 women, and 200 boys.

Origin of labour—

Bengal	...	...	...	...	...	2,450
Assam	...	...	...	...	...	1,670
Nepal	...	...	...	...	...	1,000
United Provinces	...	...	...	...	...	1,200
Bihar and Orissa	...	...	...	...	...	150
Central Provinces	...	...	...	...	...	100
Chota Nagpur	...	...	...	...	...	140
Madras	...	...	...	...	...	20
Bombay	...	...	...	...	...	4
Punjab	...	...	...	...	...	350
Manipur	...	...	...	...	...	21
Darjeeling	...	...	...	...	...	32
China	...	...	...	...	...	2

These figures will, of course, vary somewhat from time to time. This shows the distribution of origins on our 1928 list.

It is estimated that about 50 per cent. of the Assamese and 25 per cent. of the Nepalis return to their villages every year in April and May. About 25 per cent. of the Chittagonians return yearly but at no fixed period.

The remainder of the men return to their homes for a few months every three or four years.

Applicants for work apply to the Labour Bureau; except in the case of a few skilled specialists men are not recruited from outside the oilfields."

Compared with the Digboi oil fields the oilfields in Cachar (Badarpur and Masimpur) are of small importance and employ less than a thousand men.

Coal like oil is chiefly found in Lakhimpur district where 5,387 males against 3,529 males in 1921 are now employed in the mines around Margherita. Outside Lakhimpur the only other coal field of any importance is at Borjan in the Naga Hills where nearly a thousand men are employed. In the whole province the number of male earners whose principal occupation is the extraction of coal is 6,376. In 1921 the number so engaged was 4,360.

Industry. 107. In their memorandum written for the Royal Commission on Labour in India (1929) the Government of Assam stated as follows:—

"Assam is not an industrial province. It is an agricultural province with no large towns or industrial centres. Its largest and most important industry, tea cultivation, is mainly agricultural. Apart from the tea industry, the only large labour concerns are the coal mines and oil fields and a match factory. There are a few scattered saw mills, rice mills, oil mills, engineering workshops and printing presses, but they are small and of little importance in this province. Secondly, as an agricultural province with land still available for settlement and no pressure of population, Assam has practically no indigenous industrial classes. There is, of course, some indigenous casual labour, both skilled and unskilled, in the small towns and villages to meet the ordinary needs of the people, viz., agricultural labourers, porters, carpenters, blacksmiths, etc., but for the industries of importance labour has to be imported from other parts of India. The main difficulty which industry in Assam has to face is the labour supply, and the labour employed is a heterogeneous mixture of races and creeds drawn from almost every part of India."

The Tea Industry, under the scheme of classification of occupations, falls under Agriculture and has been already dealt with and oil and coal—the only other organized industries in Assam of any importance—have been discussed under the head Exploitation of Minerals. Yet the census statistics show that excluding the tea, oil and coal industries 77 persons in every thousand workers in Assam are employed in some form of Industry. *Prima-facie* this seems absurd but the explanation will be at once apparent when it is seen that of the 328,949 people in Assam who have been classified under Industry as earners and working dependants 211,792 are female working dependants who supplement the family income by some form of weaving. Excluding working dependants the number of persons in Assam who actually earn their living by industry is only 98,702 of whom 71,240 are men and 27,462 women.

Of the men one-third are employed in the wood industry (sawyers, carpenters, basket makers, etc.); one-fifth come under the head of "industries of the dress and toilet" (i.e., tailors, barbers, dhobis, cobblers, etc.) and the only other orders which contain more than 3,000 male industrial earners are metals (5,330—principally blacksmiths), ceramics (3,867—principally potters), food industries (3,585—mostly sweetmeat makers), building industries (4,902) and Miscellaneous (9,543—principally jewellers).

Of the women who earn their living from industry over half are employed in weaving and spinning (and of these about a half are in Manipur State where practically all Manipuri women weave) and most of the rest are basket makers, rice pounders and huskers, potters (presumably assisting their husbands) and *methranis*.

It is thus clear that most of the persons in Assam who have been classed under Industry consist of two types:—

(1) Village artisans such as potters, blacksmiths cobblers, etc., who use primitive methods and aim at no more than meeting village requirements.

(2) Ordinary agriculturists and their wives who supplement their income from agriculture by the sale of articles made in their spare time. Of these cottage industries the principal is hand spinning and weaving; others are the making of baskets, mats, *jhapis*, etc. The whole subject of cottage industries in Assam was examined in detail by the Provincial Banking Committee in 1929 and the results of their enquiry are given in paragraphs 111 to 115 of their Report. Their general conclusion was that cottage industries were not progressing and that the chief obstacles to progress were innate conservatism, failure to adopt improved methods, and in certain cases e.g., the rearing of the *pat* worm which yields a very fine silk, social disapproval.

108. Under Transport we have a total of 52,000 male workers and 3,000 female Transport workers against 45,000 males and 4,000 females in 1921.

The only points worth commenting on in this sub-class are the large increase in the number of workers in the group "mechanically driven vehicles" (from 55 to 2,213) which indicates the rapid expansion of the "taxi" and motor-bus industry in Assam and also the large increase under the head "Transport by rail" (from 8,394 to 12,162). In Subsidiary Table V will be found a statement which has been compiled from the returns of the various railway authorities giving the number of persons employed on the railways of Assam by certain grades. The total number shown as directly employed in that statement is 12,903 which agrees fairly well with the census returns. Most of the coolies shown in the statement as indirectly employed were probably returned merely as coolies and have been classed under insufficiently described occupations.

The increase in the number of railway employees is undoubtedly due to the considerable number of new branch lines which have been opened during the decade.

Subsidiary Table V gives the departmental returns of the number of persons employed in Assam in the Posts and Telegraph Department. The total comes to 6,063 against a census total of 2,345 workers in this department. The census figure for 1931 is almost exactly the same as the census figure for 1921 so that a considerable number of persons included in the departmental returns under the head "road establishment—runners, boatmen, sycas, bearers, etc.," as well as under "Miscellaneous agents" and "postmen" are apparently more or less part time workers who merely supplement their income by departmental duties.

109. Under the scheme of classification the sub-class trade is divided into a large number of orders and groups very few of which are of the slightest importance in Assam where less than 3 per cent. of the total number of earners and working dependants are engaged in trade.

The absolute figures of workers (earners plus working dependants) under all categories of trade are 96,153 men and 24,595 women which may be compared with the figures of 93,949 men and 32,437 women who were returned as actual workers in 1921. Trade in Assam is mostly carried on in the local *hats* or rural markets, a very good description of which will be found in paragraphs 164 to 166 of the 1921 Census Report.

Trade.

About seven-ninths of the people who have been classified under trade are dealers in food-stuffs in which are included most kinds of agricultural produce, *e. g.*, rice and pulses, eggs, poultry, betel-nut, *gur*, vegetables, fruits, etc. A good deal of information about the marketing of crops and the organization of the internal trade of the province was collected in 1929 by the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee and is published in Chapters VII and VIII of their Report.

Public Administration and Liberal Arts.

110. There is little to comment upon in the figures under Public Administration and Liberal Arts. As we would expect, with the development of the province and the spread of education, the number of persons employed in occupations which come under this category has increased considerably, the actual increase being from 49,375 male earners and 1,883 female earners in 1921 to 59,319 male earners and 2,502 female earners in 1931.

Under Public Force the police show a slight increase only but the numbers in the Army have more than doubled owing to the presence in Shillong of an additional battalion of Gurkha Rifles on the census date. Under Public Administration the number of earners is nearly double that of 1921. Most of this increase, however, is not real as can be seen from the fact that the number of male "village officials and servants other than watchmen" has risen from 251 to 1,395. This merely indicates that in 1921 many of these people were classified in some other group. Under Law there are now 2,649 men in Assam who earn their living as lawyers or lawyers' clerks against 1,619 in 1921 and the great quantitative expansion of education is reflected in the increase (from 6,954 to 10,264) in the number of those who live by teaching.

The large reduction under the head Letters, Arts, Science, etc., must be due to more accurate classification. I refuse to believe that there is any other cause which has been responsible for the sudden reduction of "Architects, Surveyors, Engineers, etc. (not being State servants)" from 2,062 to 356.

The importance of the Press in Assam may be estimated from the fact that only 103 persons have been classed in the group "Authors, editors, journalists, and photographers".

Miscellaneous.

111. The happy class of capitalists who can afford to live on their own incomes appears to have survived or perhaps evaded the demands of the Income-tax Collector and remains practically the same (1,300) at this census as in 1921. Under domestic service there is a considerable reduction. The 69 males who have adopted motor-driving and cleaning as a subsidiary occupation, are, I suspect, Government chaps who add to their exiguous incomes by cleaning their masters' cars.

Under the category unproductive are classed inmates of jails and lunatic asylums and beggars, vagrants and other inhabitants of the under world. The number of people who earn their living by begging has fallen from 33,000 to 24,000. It is unfortunate that I cannot, owing to the slight difficulty of dates, attribute this drying up of the springs of charity to the recent 10 per cent. cut in the pay of Government servants.

Subsidiary Occupations.

112. We have seen that between 80 and 90 per cent. of the working population of Assam have returned some form of agriculture as their principal occupation. But many of those who have returned occupations other than agriculture as their principal source of income are also partially supported by agriculture and have returned it as their subsidiary occupation. Subsidiary Table I(b) shows that in every thousand persons in Assam 60 have some form of subsidiary occupation in addition to their principal occupation and that of this 60 as many as 33 have some form of agriculture as a subsidiary occupation. That is to say that 55 per cent. of the persons in Assam who have any subsidiary occupation at all have agriculture as a subsidiary occupation. The figures under the other heads are small; 7 out of the 60 or nearly 12 per cent. of those who have got a subsidiary occupation supplement their incomes by some form of industrial activity; these are mostly ordinary cultivators and their wives who employ their spare time in some form of cottage industry.

Figures showing the distribution by districts of earners who have got a subsidiary occupation will be found in Subsidiary Table II(b). It is at once obvious from the figures that in some districts the enumerators filled up the subsidiary occupation column much more lavishly than in others.

113. Subsidiary Table III gives the figures of the number of women workers (earners *plus* working dependants) in the province under various occupations and compares them with the number of male workers. It is only under "spinning and weaving" and "rice pounders and huskers" that the number of women workers is far in excess of the male workers. Under "tea", "helpers in agriculture", "Jhum cultivation", "potters", and "beggars" the proportion of the sexes is fairly even.

Occupation of females.

In view of the difficulty in the return of the occupation of women dependants which I have already mentioned, the figures of women workers in different occupations must be accepted with caution and it would be unwise in most cases to draw any conclusions from a comparison of the figures with the corresponding figures of the last census. There is, for example, no reason except the whim of the enumerator which can account for the rise in the percentage of female to male workers from 2,256 to 7,299 under "spinning and weaving".

Taking all occupations together the percentage of female workers to male workers which was 45 in 1921 has fallen to 41 at this census. This reduction is in accordance with the general tendency in the plains districts—a tendency which was commented on in the census report for 1921—to restrict women from working or trading outside the house.

114. So far in this chapter we have surveyed a scene which is pre-eminently rural—the peasant ploughing his fields with his patient oxen, his wife plying her loom, while the tea garden labourer busies himself with hoe and pruning knife among the tea bushes: all this would make a fitting subject for a new Georgic. *Sed nunc horrentia pacts*—or rather one of the horrors of peace—unemployment.

Problem of unemployment among the educated classes.

The problem of unemployment among the educated or at least partially educated classes of the community has become a matter of increasing importance during the decade. The following extract from a leading article in the *Times of Assam* dated the 16th May 1931 gives, I think, a very true account of the present position:—

"The problem of unemployment among the educated young men of the middle class even in this province is now getting increasingly acute. Until a few years ago the employment market in this province was wide enough to absorb the increasing numbers of young men that were turned out annually by the educational institutions. Times have, however, greatly changed, and the supply has now far exceeded the demands in the employment market. A single advertisement for a vacancy evokes hundreds of expectant and plaintive answers. But a post after all can provide livelihood for one person only and all but that one fortunate candidate are crushed with the depressing and disappointing reply 'vacancy filled up'. The economic depression has made things infinitely worse. The slump in tea which is one of the principal industries in Assam and with which is bound up the very existence, not to speak of the prosperity, of many small business, has had, as one of its disastrous consequences the throwing out of employment of a considerable number of men."

The problem in Assam is, admittedly, nothing like as serious as it is in Bengal, where it has been the fruitful cause of much of the present political discontent and trouble, but it is now getting to a stage where, if a solution is not forthcoming, an infinity of misery and disillusionment will be in store for the youth of the coming generation and future Governments will be faced with a perpetual source of embarrassment.

115. In view of the increasing importance of this problem all over India a special enquiry was conducted by the census staff in all provinces with a view to ascertaining the actual number of educated unemployed.

Nature of special enquiry held.

The method of enquiry adopted in Assam was as follows:—A special "unemployment schedule" was handed by the enumerators to all males who had passed the matriculation or some higher examination and who were known to be unemployed or who had informed the enumerators that they were unemployed. The form was filled up by the persons to whom it was given and then handed back to the enumerator.

116. The result of this enquiry is contained in Subsidiary Table VI at the end of this chapter the first part of which shows the amount of unemployment in each district by certain age groups and for certain classes of the community, while the second part shows the educational qualifications possessed by the unemployed.

Reference to Statistics.

The actual figures in this table which shows only 825 unemployed matriculates and upwards between the ages of 20-39 cannot be accepted as being in any way an accurate statement of the position and must be considered only as an indication of the *minimum* number of men in Assam who have passed the matriculation and higher examinations and who are without employment.

The figures cannot be accurate because the filling in of the form was a voluntary act on the part of the persons who did it and it is almost certain that most unemployed matriculates did not take the trouble to procure and fill in a form; it is also highly probable that many enumerators thought that they had done their duty sufficiently in recording the ordinary census entries and did not bother themselves unduly about this special enquiry.

The figures are, therefore, far too low and there can be no doubt that the real number of unemployed matriculates and upwards in Assam runs into thousands. Hence it must not be considered that my somewhat lengthy discussion of the unemployment problem in Assam is disproportionate to the facts as disclosed by the statistics. The statistics, as I have already explained, give the *minimum* figures only and do not reveal the real extent of the evil.

The causes of unemployment. 117. The problem of unemployment among the educated classes in Assam has only become a matter of importance during the last decade and is due to the simple economic fact that the supply of matriculates and graduates has exceeded the demand. Assam is purely an agricultural country and, unlike countries in Europe or America, offers few openings for educated men in commerce, industry or in the professions and the number who can be absorbed into Government service is naturally limited. The following extract from the supplementary note by Sir L. A. Selby-Bigge, K.C.B., to the report of the Education Committee appointed by the Indian Statutory Commission of 1929 (The Hartog Committee) will be endorsed by many:—

"From a wider political point of view a system of Higher Education certainly cannot justify itself if it takes little or no account of the social and economic structure of the country for whose benefit it exists, or of what is to become of those whom it has educated....."

And the very general complaint that the system of Higher Education in India is out of relation to the social and economic structure of the country and is leading nowhere (except to disappointment) cannot be regarded as a matter of no political significance. The non-selective indiscriminating character of higher education in India has social consequences which are more serious than waste of money, time and effort.....

And the following paragraph of the Hartog Committee's report which discloses the waste of time and money which is at present involved in the system of Higher Education is illuminating:—

"The universities are overcrowded with men who are not profiting either intellectually or materially by their university training. To many hundreds, the years of training mean a waste of money and of precious years of youth: nor is it only private money which is wasted. Each student in a university or college costs in every country far more than his fees, sometimes five or six times as much, and this money in India comes in part from endowments, but very largely from the public purse. If those students who now go to a university or a college without being really fitted for higher work were diverted in large numbers at an earlier stage to careers better suited to their capacity, money would be set free for more profitable educational uses, and the training of the best men could be appreciably improved. The overcrowding of universities and colleges by men of whom a large number fail and for whom there is no economic demand has vitally affected the quality of university education.".....

We have thus a system of higher education which the best authorities on the subject admit to be gravely defective and the standards of which are extremely low. To quote again the Hartog Committee's report:—

"By a careful investigation the Calcutta University Commission come to the conclusion that the standards of the Calcutta examinations were unsatisfactory in 1917. There is no evidence of any improvement in entrance standards between 1918-19 and 1924-25 yet the number of passes at the B.A., and B.Sc., degree examinations rose in those years from 50 per cent. to over 70 per cent. Clearly there must have been a lowering of an already low standard."

As for the standard of the matriculation examination I need only mention the opinion of the Government of Assam given in their memorandum on the working of the Reformed Constitution prepared for the Indian Statutory Committee. In chap.

ter VIII of this memorandum they point out that the standard of the matriculation of the University of Calcutta was so low at one time that 94 per cent. of the candidates from Government schools passed in one year.

Recently there has, I understand been a raising of the standards, but there is no doubt, I think, that had the standards of the university examinations not been extremely low the number of men who now call themselves graduates and matriculates would have been far smaller and the amount of unemployment among them would have been proportionately less. But it is necessary to dig still deeper at the root of the problem and to examine the social urge which drives impecunious cultivators to ruin themselves in sending their young hopefuls to High Schools and colleges; we must in fact examine the *cacoethes matriculandi*.

So far as Assam is concerned the best analysis I have read of the subject is contained in a note which Mr. Cunningham (for many years Director of Public Instruction in Assam) wrote in 1917 for the Calcutta University Commission. The following extracts seem to me to describe the position exactly and to be as true to-day as when they were written 15 years ago:—

"The first place amongst the collegiate population is taken by the classes known in this part of the world as the *bhadralog* and consisting mainly, so far as Bengali-speaking Hindus are concerned, of the Brahmin, the Vaidya and the Kayastha. This class of people or group of castes have had from of old a monopoly of professional and clerical employment and they look to the market and ultimately to the Government of the country to see that their requirements are satisfied. They have at the same time been, in the main, the leaders of the people, looked up to and respected. Failure to satisfy their needs becomes a political question and reacts upon the administration....."

It is by the *bhadralog* that the pinch of poverty is most severely felt and it is from them, in a combination of economic discontent and political idealism, that the agitation springs which purifies itself into progress. Progress so backed and so inspired is naturally a progress along lines congenial to the temperament and qualities of the class from which it springs. This class is by its traditions dissociated from industrial enterprise.....

It may be said that for half a century the literate have called out for technical education with a view to industrial advance. But the cry for technical institutions has been unsupported by useful action. It has in reality been a cry for industries and in its interpretation a cry for employment. The opportunities for employment of the old kind which a busy market would create. The spirit of commercial or industrial enterprise has been wanting or where it has been present, has manifested itself mainly in failure. There are many reasons to account for this—in part, I imagine, the tradition of the classes concerned; in part, probably, the system of early marriages and other aspects of the Hindu social organization; no eager spirit of enterprise can be expected on the part of those who have early in life given hostages to fortune. On the other hand it may be said that there is want of encouragement and opportunity and that the State has not moved as it should have done in this matter. Be this as it may, the fact remains that these classes call out for employment, that in the absence of other avenues they march along the road of the middle school and high school and press in a very mingled throng through the gates of the university.....

All will proceed in an atmosphere of opposition. There is a constant conflict in educational policy between the Government and people—the one desiring to improve the standard of education, the other crying on behalf of the hungry who are not fed, for the relaxation of standards and the wider spread of education, good or bad.....

I have already indicated certain difficulties which face the development of industries. The privileged classes do not take to commerce or industry, the unprivileged follow the lead of the privileged. It has been said that in these parts the social order is a despotism of caste tempered by matriculation. It is only by matriculating and taking the part in after-life which has been reserved for those who have matriculated that the lower caste can raise themselves to consideration. It is only so that they can raise a representation strong enough to fight for their social and political interests; and it is only by education that the privileged classes can qualify themselves to oppose effectively the conservatism of Government. On both hands this literary education is what every man desires.

And if new ways are opened which lead to profit, the best amongst the lower classes will still press forward, undiverted, to the university unless the new employment is socially esteemed, and certificated by the fact that the *bhadralog* compete for it."

118. I have had many most interesting opinions on this subject from the Indian gentlemen who were good enough to be my Honorary Correspondents. All admit that the unemployment question is getting serious in Assam and the solution advocated by the great majority is an extension of "technical education".

Opinions of
Honorary
Correspondents.

As pointed out by Mr. Cunningham this cry for technical education is merely a cry for the opportunities for employment of the old kind which a busy market would create. Technical education of itself obviously cannot create a demand where none exists and commerce and industry do not spring into being at the bidding of academies.

The Hartog Committee came to a similar conclusion :—

"We fully sympathise" they say "with the desire to develop technical training through we feel bound to point out that the training of technical experts only creates more unemployed, unless there are industries to absorb them."

I have received from Babu Dinesh Chandra Datta, M.A., Lecturer in Civics and Economics at the Murarichand College, Sylhet, a very interesting note on the whole subject of education and unemployment, from which the following extracts are taken :—

"The demand for education is not likely to diminish even among the— and they are no doubt the majority—who seek it primarily as a means of employment. The reasons are not far to seek. The so-called *bhadralok* classes—the Brahmins, the Vaidyas, the Kayasthas—have for hundreds of years derived their livelihood either from land as rentiers (or as some other class of middlemen) or from sedentary employments such as clerks, officers, doctors and the like. They have shunned manual labour and have developed an aversion for commercial and industrial employments. In spite of changed conditions the traditional outlook still continues.....

For reasons, partly historical and partly social, literary employments in this country carry with them an influence and respectability out of all proportion to their market value. Hence persons who desire to rise in the world naturally turn to callings which are regarded as the peculiar preserves of the *bhadraloks*.....

A *Babu*, even when he rises from a humble position and from a lower class, develops at once the peculiar middle class mentality and a general aversion to manual labour. His children are educated in the schools for employments suitable to the *Babus*, and his relatives follow in his wake, even though a *Babu* life is not very charming from the standpoint of material gains. Nay, the influence may go even further and affect the outlook of the whole community to which he belongs, especially when that community is fairly advanced educationally and economically.....

The magnitude of unemployment is measured indirectly by the fall in the market value of labour as also by the clamour for employment, together with its concomitant—social and political unrest. An attempt to measure the extent of unemployment directly is fraught with difficulties. There cannot be any question about the seriousness of this problem in Assam, though perhaps it is more serious in some of the other provinces. It is noticeable on all sides and is manifest in the persistent agitation and scramble for employment in the Press as well as in the Councils. The marginal demand price of graduates and under-graduates is also continually going down. I am told that in this town of Sylhet there are more than 150 graduates and under-graduates loitering in forced idleness without any useful occupation. The extent of unemployment, however differs with different communities. It is more acute among the Hindus than among the Muhammadans, more serious among the Bengalis than among the Assamese. It is more serious among matriculates and under-matriculates than among the graduates.

The problem of unemployment is one which appears to baffle solution. As it represents a maladjustment of demand and supply, two solutions are possible. The supply may be reduced or the demand increased or both may go together. *It is easier to hold back the rising tides of the sea than to check the rush of admissions into our schools and colleges.* Suggestions for stiffening examination standard have been offered, but that is not likely to solve the unemployment problem. At best it would simply increase the volume of under-matriculate unemployment.....

Law is already overcrowded, though it appears to be less so in the Assam Valley. In the Surma Valley, the average student drifts to law more in a spirit of despair than in a spirit of confidence. Medicine attracts a large number and, with the establishment of the medical school at Sylhet, a small portion of the rush for admission may be diverted to that direction. The increased demand for education has created a demand for teachers, and this demand is likely to increase in future. But the supply easily outstrips the demand, and not much relief can be expected from this direction.

During the last ten years many new appointments were created in Government departments, and but for the economic depression, a further expansion of Government departments might be expected. The present outlook is however depressing. The demand for private employments comes mainly from industrial and commercial establishments where the educated youths are employed as clerks, accountants, managers and the like. In the permanently-settled districts the zamindari establishments also absorb a few. Outside the tea gardens the industrial establishments in this province are limited in number. Commercial establishments which can absorb educated youths are still fewer. Again, while only a few educated young men of this province find private employment in other provinces, the competition of foreigners for local employment is very keen.

Tea-gardens have been a favourite resort of under-matriculates and the less successful youths. In recent years University youths are entering this field in larger number. Since 1918 the number of gardens started by Indians has increased, and this has opened out an opportunity for more responsible employment but the industry is now passing through a severe depression and several tea companies started by Indians have already gone into liquidation.

In railways, mines, private mills and workshops, insurance, banking, etc., the competition of foreigners is very keen; and in some cases, *e.g.*, the railways, they practically monopolise the field.....

Any one who gives his thoughtful consideration to this subject is convinced that any effective and lasting solution of this problem lies in opening out new avenues of employments attractive to the educated classes. It is also evident that such avenues must be sought in the direction of productive employments, for no expanding class can flourish permanently as 'parasites'. The productive employments may be agricultural, commercial, or industrial.

Agriculture is the premier industry of the province and supports 80 per cent. of its population. It is unfortunate that the educated classes are now practically divorced from this industry. In thinking of any possible avenues of employment one naturally turns first to agriculture. Assam is fortunate in having large areas of undeveloped land which, if properly exploited would bring wealth and employment and of late, the cry of "back to land" is gathering increasing force.

It must be admitted, however, that the ideal of "back to land" has at present no meaning to our average students. The classes from which they come have a traditional aversion for the plough, while capitalist farming, even on a small scale, is fraught with difficulties. In the greater part of the Surma Valley, the pressure on the land is already very great and the fragmented holdings hardly provide a living even to the agriculturists themselves. In fact, a part of the rush for literary employments comes from the people who are flying from the untenable conditions on the land. To advise them to go back to the land is to give them stone when they ask for bread.....

It is only when he finishes his school or College career that the average student feels helpless and is in a mood to appreciate practical ideas better. It is at such times he requires most care, help and guidance. At present, there is no public organisation to take charge of him at this stage and to bring him in touch with the employment markets. But such an organisation seems to be overdue.....

So far as farming is concerned such an organisation, besides keeping itself in close touch with the unemployed youths, should collect and disseminate information, should maintain a model training farm, should find out the necessary land and make a plan for its colonisation, should arrange for necessary finances and render such other help as might be necessary for the purpose. Such an organisation can, however only succeed with the necessary help and co-operation of the Government.....

Industrial and commercial employments are now attracting greater attention, and of late the outlook of our youngmen has definitely changed in this respect. Manual labour is still held in contempt but not so skilled labour. The few handicraft schools in the province are flooded with applications for admission every year. The number of those who seek technical training outside the province is also considerable. In every town one now meets with *bhadralok* youngmen who have settled down as Master-craftsmen and who have taken up a large variety of crafts such as shoe-making, suit-case manufacture, trunk manufacture, cycle and motor repair, carpentry and cabinet-making, soap-making, tailoring, weaving and so on. Scope for such employments is still great and it will expand further with the development of the province.

Many educated youths have also lately settled down as shop-keepers, agents, order-suppliers, canvassers, contractors, etc., and with the increase of population and production in the province, the commercial services including banking and insurance are likely to absorb a larger number. The collecting, distributing and financing business of the province—especially in the Brahmaputra Valley—is largely in the hands of foreigners. It may be expected that our educated youths, familiar with local conditions, will have an advantage if they enter this field. The difficulties at present are many—want of confidence, want of experience and practical training, lack of capital, competition of the old-established firms and so on. Experience can only come through trials, but if the promising youths are backed by organised finance and are encouraged by public opinion, there is no reason why they should not succeed.....

The difficulties at present are that the average student has no information about the possibilities of the development of industries, has no training and experience, and, above all has no capital to start any such business. The solution of these difficulties lies in a strong and active organisation which will give the youths the necessary guidance, will collect information for them, will arrange for their training and subsequently find out capital for them at cheaper rates. Such an organisation should be intimately in touch with our youngmen as also with the industries and commerce in the country."

119. Personally I can see little hope for a solution of the problem in the form of a Future Prospects of an organization of the kind recommended above. (Are not the Appointment Boards of venerable Universities occasionally referred to as Disappointment Boards?) and it seems to me certain that agriculture offers no prospect whatever to matriculates and graduates.

The educated man in Assam cannot possibly compete with the ryot in growing ordinary crops and special crops such as tea require a large capital outlay. The only prospect, therefore, for the average English educated youth in Assam, outside the limited circles of Government and private service, would appear to me to lie in the smaller industries—such as oil and rice-milling, motor-repairing, etc., and in acting as middlemen in the buying and selling transactions of the community.

This prospect however is by no means encouraging as the foreigner—particularly in the Assam Valley—has already a long start in these matters and a hereditary capacity for performing them. Meanwhile the demand for the type of education which has matriculation as its goal continues unabated. In the Annual Report on Public Instruction in Assam for 1929-30 I find the following:—

"The Surma Valley Inspector reports an eager demand for matriculation education everywhere; a large number of applicants had to be refused admission to the existing high schools and many middle English schools set themselves to advance to the high school standard. He writes:—

New high schools are springing up everywhere. High school classes have been started at Narsingpur and Barkhala in Silchar, at Chhatak in Sunamraaj, at Rajnagar in South Sylhet, at Chunarughat and Jagadishpur in Habiganj, at Mangalchandi, Rankely and Jhingabari in North Sylhet and in the Jail Road and St. Anthony's schools in Shillong. Within a few years they will apply for University recognition and the next step will be asking for grants-in-aid from the Department.

Nine similar cases are reported from the Assam Valley Division. And there are rumours of high schools in many other centres.

Where is the money to come from for all these new schools and where the employment that is to provide for the pupils elsewhere than in the fields? Here as elsewhere a definite policy is called for if we are not to drift in discontent without a purpose."

Summary.

120. It is not within my province as Provincial Superintendent of Census to attempt to propound a solution of the very difficult problem of unemployment among the matriculates and graduates of Assam. It is, however, my duty to give the facts of unemployment so far as I can ascertain them and to assign reasons for the growth of unemployment among these classes. I have already given the facts and the reasons are, I think, clear from the authorities I have already quoted. But it seems desirable to summarize them and, as they appear to me, they are as follows:—

(1) The immediate cause of the unemployment among graduates and matriculates is due to overproduction—to the flooding of the market by possessors of certificates and degrees who cannot obtain suitable "posts" for themselves.

(2) This overproduction is due to the growth of a system of higher education which is out of relation to the economic structure of the country and has been facilitated by the low examination standards of the University of Calcutta—particularly the low standard of matriculation.

(3) The popularity of the system, which shows no signs of waning, is due to the general social feeling that it is only by education—by matriculation and a college career—that a boy can rise in the world and bring credit to his family by securing a respectable post, preferably in Government service. This feeling has permeated all classes of society and the lower classes, in their desire for a place in the sun, have followed the example of the *bhadralog*, and now compete with them for jobs which carry with them the honorary title of *Babu*.

Matriculation has in fact assumed much the same importance in the social sphere as a public school education has done in England. The ambition to "make a gentleman" of their son is not confined to the parents of the lower classes of any one country and in Assam this takes the form of matriculation and a job which does not involve manual labour. The respectability of a community in Assam, can, in fact, be generally measured by the number of persons belonging to that community who are in Government service.

I cannot conclude this paragraph without mentioning two priceless suggestions which I have received: one—from an official—is that a law should be made compelling all persons who employ paid clerks and *gomosthas* to employ only matriculates or graduates in those positions under pain of their business being closed down. The other—from a non-official—is that the only solution of the problem is to remove the

fatal attraction for Government service which at present exists by reducing the pay of Government clerks and servants to such an extent that they would be compelled to live in very poor style and that hence there would be no attraction whatever for boys to try and rise above the occupation of their fathers.

121. It is usual in the Occupation chapter of the Census Report to refer briefly to the economic condition of the people. The subject comes within the scope of the Census in so far as it bears on the standard of life of the people which is one factor in determining population. In chapter I of this volume I have already given a brief synopsis of the conditions of the decade and their effect upon the growth of the population and I find that I can add very little. The present world economic crisis has come so suddenly and the future is so uncertain that it seems to me to be useless to attempt to draw any conclusions from, e.g., an examination of typical family budgets of to-day. Such an examination would merely show that owing to the recent great drop in the price of agricultural produce the cash received by the cultivator for his produce is much less than it was 10 years ago. Whether the general standard of living has risen during the last ten years is a matter which is extremely difficult to tell. Ten years is too short a period for observing differences of this nature and superficial changes such as the possession of electric torches and riding in buses are not, I think, valid arguments but merely indicate that the *ryot* of the present day is indulging in little luxuries which were not on the market in the days of his father (who possibly would have indulged in them also). Twenty years is a better period than ten years for observing differences in the standard of living and the Settlement Officers of both Sibsagar and Kamrup are of opinion that there has been a distinct rise in the general standard of living during the last twenty years.

Economic condition of the people.

In the Settlement Report of Sibsagar (1929) which was, of course, written before the recent slump Mr. Rhodes writes as follows:—

"It is difficult to generalize regarding the economic condition of a district population numbering nearly a million souls and composed of widely differing races, or to speak dogmatically regarding changes discernible in the comparatively short period of 20 years. People are not wanting who say that the position of the *raiya* is now worse than it was 20 years ago. With such I join issue, for reasons which, set out in detail below, amount in substance to the statement that while the average *raiya* is now no better off as regards actual cash in hand, he is now living on a definitely higher level of comfort and, thanks to the greatly increased prices obtainable for surplus produce, is able to enjoy regularly things which 20 years ago were regarded as sheer luxuries. My experience of the district extends over the last 14 years only, but even in that time visible signs are wanting to bear out this contention. The average villager is now better clothed, he wears a shirt and coat, he carries an umbrella, he smokes cigarettes, he drinks tea, he often has a tin-roofed house, he travels frequently in trains, and motor omnibuses, and in general enjoys a higher standard of living than of yore. His children, too, are better educated, and if the new generation can overcome the hereditary apathy and tendency to opium which has been the curse of so many peasant homes, a goodly heritage awaits them."

And Mr. Desai in the Settlement Report of Kamrup (1928) gives the following as his opinion:—

"Hitherto the ideal of the villagers has been one of self-sufficiency. In housing, feeding, as well as clothing the aim of the villager has been as far as possible to satisfy his needs himself. He builds his own house and repairs it; the material necessary for construction as well as repairs, namely bamboos, cane, *ikra* and thatch are partly grown in homesteads and partly procured from Government waste land. ... As regards clothing cotton yarn is purchased and weaving is generally done by the women at home. *Eri* and *muga* silk is prepared in several houses but the bulk of the *muga* cloth is meant for sale. With the introduction of the railway and the subsequent economic development the ideal of self-sufficiency is undergoing a change. The local produce is fetching better prices and owing to the resulting cash in hand there is a greater readiness to purchase things made elsewhere—whether necessary or unnecessary. Loin cloths are retiring in favour of *dhoties* when off work; shirts and coats are taking the place of the old wrappers; hair-oil and soaps are in increasing demand; the consumption of tea is advancing rapidly; the smoking of cheap cigarettes is rampant among the old as well as the young in spite of the Assam Juvenile Smoking Act. Umbrellas are replacing the bamboo *jhapis*; hurricane lanterns have penetrated far and wide into the interior. Those who are in a position to compare the present conditions with those prevailing 20 years ago say that more jewellery is in evidence now. It is perhaps unnecessary to add to these facts to show how variety is being introduced into the villager's life and how the level of comfort is gradually rising."

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I(a).

[EARNERS (PRINCIPAL OCCUPATION) AND WORKING DEPENDANTS.]

Class, sub-class and order.	Number per 10,000 of total population.	Class, sub-class and order.	Number per 10,000 of total population.
1	2	1	2
Total	10,000	V.—TRADE	181
NON-WORKING DEPENDANTS ...	5,479	23. Banks, exchange, insurance, etc. ...	9
Earners and working dependants of all occupations.	4,521	24. Brokerage commission and export ...	7
A.—PRODUCTION OF RAW MATERIALS.	3,799	25. Trade in textile	2
I.—EXPLOITATION OF ANIMALS AND VEGETATION.	3,781	26. Trade in skins, leather and furs ...	3
1. Pasture and Agriculture	3,733	27. Trade in wood	1
(a) Cultivation	2,888	28. Trade in metals	1
(b) Special crops	707	29. Trade in pottery, bricks and tiles ...	1
(c) Forestry	4	30. Trade in chemical products	2
(d) Stock raising	133	31. Trade in hotels, cafes, etc.	79
(e) Raising of small animals and insects.	1	32. Other trade in food-stuffs	8
2. Fishing and hunting	48	33. Trade in clothing and toilet articles ...	4
II.—EXPLOITATION OF MINERALS ...	18	34. Trade in furniture	1
3. Metallic minerals	...	35. Trade in building materials	1
4. Non-metallic minerals	18	36. Trade in means of transport	2
B.—PREPARATION AND SUPPLY OF MATERIAL SUBSTANCES.	540	37. Trade in fuel	8
III.—INDUSTRY	350	38. Trade in articles of luxury and those pertaining to Letters and the Arts and Sciences	9
5. Textiles	250	39. Trade of other sorts	70
6. Hides, skins, etc., from the animal kingdom.	1	C.—PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND LIBERAL ARTS.	70
7. Wood	32	VI.—PUBLIC FORCE	12
8. Metals	6	40. Army	2
9. Ceramics	9	41. Navy	...
10. Chemical products properly so-called, etc.	1	42. Air Force	...
11. Food industries	13	43. Police	10
12. Industries of dress, and the toilet ...	19	VII.—PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	11
13. Furniture industries	...	44. Public Administration	11
14. Building industries	6	VIII.—PROFESSIONS AND LIBERAL ARTS	47
15. Construction of means of transport ...	1	45. Religion	20
16. Production and transmission of physical force.	...	46. Law	3
17. Miscellaneous and undefined industries	12	47. Medicine	8
IV.—TRANSPORT	59	48. Instruction	12
18. Transport by air	...	49. Letters, Arts and Sciences (other than 44)	4
19. Ditto water	14	D.—MISCELLANEOUS	112
20. Ditto road	29	IX.—PERSONS LIVING ON THEIR INCOME	2
21. Ditto rail	13	50. Persons living principally on their income.	2
22. Post Office, Telegraph and Telephone Services.	3	X.—DOMESTIC SERVICE	36
		51. Domestic service	36
		XI.—INSUFFICIENTLY DESCRIBED OCCUPATIONS.	41
		52. General terms which do not indicate a definite occupation.	41
		XII.—UNPRODUCTIVE	33
		53. Inmates of Jails, etc.	3
		54. Beggars, vagrants, prostitutes	30
		55. Other unclassified non-productive industries.	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I(b).

[EARNERS AS SUBSIDIARY OCCUPATION.]

Class, sub-class and order.	Number per 10,000 of total population.	Class, sub-class and order.	Number per 10,000 of total population.
1	2	1	2
ALL OCCUPATIONS	603	V.—TRADE	64
(Earners as Subsidiary occupation.)		23. Banks, Exchange, etc.	2
A.—PRODUCTION OF RAW MATERIALS.	391	24. Brokerage, Commission, etc.	...
I.—EXPLOITATION OF ANIMALS AND VEGETATION.	390	25. Trade in textiles	2
1. Pasture and Agriculture	346	26. Trade in skins, leather, furs	1
(a) Cultivation	270	27. Trade in wood	8
(b) Special crops	59	28. Trade in metals	...
(c) Forestry	5	29. Trade in pottery, bricks, etc.	...
(d) Stock raising	8	30. Trade in chemical products	...
(e) Raising of small animals, insects, etc.	4	31. Trade in hotels, cafes, etc.	...
2. Fishing and hunting	44	32. Other trade in food-stuffs	38
II.—EXPLOITATION OF MINERALS ...	1	33. Trade in clothing and toilet articles ...	1
3. Metallic minerals	...	34. Trade in furniture	2
4. Non-metallic minerals	1	35. Trade in building materials	...
B.—PREPARATION AND SUPPLY OF MATERIAL SUBSTANCES.	166	36. Trade in means of transport	2
III.—INDUSTRY	72	37. Trade in fuel	3
5. Textiles	25	38. Trade in articles of luxury and those pertaining to Letters, Arts, etc. ...	2
6. Hides, skins, etc.	...	39. Trade of other sorts	3
7. Wood	24	C.—PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND LIBERAL ARTS.	24
8. Metals	3	VI.—PUBLIC FORCE	3
9. Ceramics	3	40. Army	...
10. Chemical products, so-called, etc. ...	1	41. Navy	...
11. Food industries	2	42. Air Force	...
12. Industries of dress and the toilet ...	7	43. Police	3
13. Furniture industries	2	VII.—PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	4
14. Building industries	2	44. Public administration	4
15. Construction of means of transport ...	1	VIII.—PROFESSIONS AND LIBERAL ARTS	17
16. Production and transmission of physical force.	...	45. Religion	8
17. Miscellaneous and undefined industries...	4	46. Law	1
IV.—TRANSPORT	29	47. Medicine	3
18. Transport by air	...	48. Instruction	3
19. Transport by water	8	49. Letters, Arts, etc. (other than 44) ...	2
20. Transport by road	20	D.—MISCELLANEOUS	23
21. Transport by rails	1	IX.—PERSONS LIVING ON THEIR INCOME	1
22. Post Office, Telegraph and Telephone Services.	...	50. Persons living on their income ...	1
		X.—DOMESTIC SERVICE	3
		51. Domestic service	3
		XI.—INSUFFICIENTLY DESCRIBED OCCUPATIONS.	16
		52. General terms, which do not indicate a definite occupation.	16
		XII.—UNPRODUCTIVE	3
		53. Inmates of Jails, etc.	...
		54. Beggars, vagrants, etc.	3
		55. Other unclassified non-productive industries.	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II(a).

DISTRIBUTION BY SUB-CLASSES IN NATURAL DIVISIONS AND DISTRICTS.

(a) Earners (principal occupation) and working dependants.

DISTRICT AND NATURAL DIVISION.	TOTAL 1,000.		NUMBER PER MILE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION OCCUPIED AS EARNERS (PRINCIPAL OCCUPATION) AND WORKING DEPENDANTS IN—												
	Non-working dependants.	Working dependants.	Earners (principal occupation).	Sub-class I.—Exploitation of animals and vegetation.	Sub-class II.—Exploitation of minerals.	Sub-class III.—Industry.	Sub-class IV.—Transport.	Sub-class V.—Trade.	Sub-class VI.—Public Force.	Sub-class VII.—Public Administration.	Sub-class VIII.—Professions and Liberal Arts.	Sub-class IX.—Persons living on their income.	Sub-class X.—Domestic service.	Sub-class XI.—Insufficiently described occupations.	Sub-class XII.—Unproductive.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
ASSAM	548	117	335	378	2	35	6	13	1	1	5	...	4	4	3
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	494	150	356	414	3	50	7	15	1	1	4	...	4	3	4
Goalpara	503	140	258	336	...	31	7	16	1	1	3	...	4	4	4
Kamrup	532	168	300	304	...	116	8	17	1	1	7	...	5	3	6
Darrang	412	175	413	516	...	31	8	14	1	1	3	...	5	5	4
Nowgong	538	148	314	380	...	48	7	12	1	1	2	...	4	5	2
Sibsagar	465	151	384	470	...	25	5	13	1	1	4	...	3	2	2
Lakhimpur	305	115	400	514	10	32	8	16	1	1	3	...	5	4	2
Sadiya Frontier Tract	423	87	401	480	1	37	12	11	15	7	3	1	5	4	2
Dalipara Frontier Tract	335	140	516	374	...	80	15	8	83	57	4	...	12	21	2
SURMA VALLEY	651	50	299	303	...	14	4	11	1	1	6	...	2	3	4
Cachar Plains	600	59	341	312	2	19	4	13	2	1	5	...	3	5	4
Sylhet	661	48	291	205	...	13	4	11	1	1	6	...	2	2	4
HILLS	485	166	349	438	1	34	6	11	3	2	4	...	6	9	1
Garo Hills	473	212	313	499	...	11	2	5	1	1	2	...	2	1	1
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	417	80	473	431	...	31	12	14	7	5	4	1	12	36	...
North Cachar Hills	504	81	412	376	...	44	50	8	1	...	3	...	3	8	1
Naga Hills	416	265	319	552	6	9	2	2	4	1	1	1	3	2	1
Lushai Hills	480	19	405	470	...	7	3	6	4	2	3	1	17	1	...
Manipur	510	200	251	365	1	62	2	17	2	2	6	...	1	1	1

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II (b).

DISTRIBUTION BY SUB-CLASSES IN NATURAL DIVISIONS AND DISTRICTS.

(b) Earners (Subsidiary Occupation).

DISTRICT AND NATURAL DIVISION,		NUMBER PER MILE OF TOTAL POPULATION, OF EARNERS HAVING A SUBSIDIARY OCCUPATION IN—											
		Sub-class I.—Exploitation of animals and vegetation.	Sub-class II.—Exploitation of minerals.	Sub-class III.—Industry.	Sub-class IV.—Transport.	Sub-class V.—Trade.	Sub-class VI.—Public Force.	Sub-class VII.—Public Administration.	Sub-class VIII.—Professions and Liberal Arts.	Sub-class IX.—Persons living on their income.	Sub-class X.—Domestic Service.	Sub-class XI.—Insufficiently described occupations.	Sub-class XII.—Unproductive.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
ASSAM	...	39	...	7	3	6	...	1	2	...	2	...	
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	...	34	...	6	2	4	...	1	1	...	1	...	
Goalpara	...	9	...	4	2	3	1	...	1	...	3	...	
Kamrup	...	10	...	6	2	5	...	1	3	...	1	...	
Darrang	...	39	...	3	2	4	...	1	1	...	1	...	
Nowgong	...	14	...	6	1	5	...	...	1	...	1	...	
Sibsagar	...	64	...	7	2	5	...	1	1	...	1	...	
Lakhimpur	...	72	...	6	1	3	...	1	1	...	1	...	
Sadiya Frontier Tract	...	16	...	82	4	3	...	2	...	1	3	...	
Balipara Frontier Tract	...	26	...	25	...	1	...	1	...	1	24	...	
SURMA VALLEY	...	48	...	9	4	10	1	...	3	...	1	1	
Sylhet	...	45	...	9	5	10	1	...	3	...	1	1	
Cachar plains	...	66	...	5	2	8	1	...	2	...	2	...	
HILLS	...	33	...	7	3	6	...	1	1	...	3	...	
Garo Hills	...	8	...	4	1	9	...	1	...	...	...	...	
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	...	93	...	10	9	13	...	...	...	...	14	...	
North Cachar Hills	...	16	...	25	...	1	...	...	...	4	2	...	
Naga Hills	...	23	...	5	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	
Lushai Hills	...	5	...	6	6	1	1	...	2	...	1	...	
Manipur	...	18	...	7	1	5	...	...	1	...	...	...	

SUBSIDIARY TABLE III.

OCCUPATIONS OF FEMALES BY SUB-CLASSES AND SELECTED GROUPS.

Group No.	Occupation.	Number of actual workers and working dependants.		Number of females per 1,000 males.
		Males.	Females.	
1	2	3	4	5
	ALL OCCUPATIONS ...	2,963,942	1,216,767	411
	I.—EXPLOITATION OF ANIMALS AND VEGETATION ...	2,589,354	906,992	350
5	Cultivating owners ...	1,029,696	180,005	175
6	Tenant cultivators ...	590,180	36,787	62
7	Agricultural labourers ...	61,158	13,150	215
7A	Helpers in agricultural work ...	230,900	238,131	1,031
8	Cultivators of <i>jhum</i> , etc. ...	142,631	119,007	834
13	Pan-vine ...	5,039	1,826	362
15	Tea ...	338,458	298,413	882
16	Market gardeners, flower and fruit growers... ..	6,115	4,425	724
21	Cattle and buffalo breeders and keepers ...	115,437	6,791	59
27	Fishing and pearling ...	41,102	3,005	73
	II.—EXPLOITATION OF MINERALS ...	15,368	1,159	75
35	Coal ...	6,613	712	108
36	Petroleum ...	8,564	268	31
	III.—INDUSTRY ...	77,658	246,291	3,171
43	Cotton spinning, seizing and weaving ...	3,048	222,486	72,994
47	Silk spinning and weaving ...	204	1,117	5,475
56	Basket makers and other industries of woody materials, etc. ...	6,850	3,137	458
63	Potters and makers of earthenware ...	2,390	4,177	1,748
71	Rice pounders and huskers and flour grinders ...	500	5,820	11,640
83	Tailors, milliners, dress makers, etc. ...	7,030	1,032	147
	IV.—TRANSPORT ...	52,090	2,834	55
	V.—TRADE ...	96,153	24,595	256
117	Trade in piece goods, wool, cotton, silk, hair and other textiles. ...	4,299	1,773	412
129	Grain and pulse dealers ...	9,473	5,171	546
134	Dealers in other food stuffs ...	36,882	11,719	318
	VI.—PUBLIC FORCE ...	11,095	...	...
	VII.—PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ...	10,597	122	12
	VIII.—PROFESSIONS AND LIBERAL ARTS ...	40,309	2,800	69
174	Professors and teachers of all kinds ...	9,836	725	74
	IX.—PERSONS LIVING ON THEIR INCOME ...	1,356	216	159
	X.—DOMESTIC SERVICE ...	26,519	7,218	272
187	Other domestic service (other than that of private motor-drivers and cleaners). ...	25,834	7,218	279
	XI.—INSUFFICIENTLY DESCRIBED OCCUPATIONS ...	28,401	9,199	324
191	Labourers and workmen otherwise unspecified ...	21,045	9,076	431
	XII.—UNPRODUCTIVE ...	15,044	15,291	1,016
193	Beggars and vagrants ...	11,964	14,710	1,230

SUBSIDIARY TABLE IV.

SELECTED OCCUPATIONS, 1911, 1921 AND 1931.

Group No.	Occupation.	* Actual workers.			Percentage of variation.	
		1931.	1921.	1911.	1921-31.	1911-21.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	ALL OCCUPATIONS ...	4,180,709	3,686,798	3,212,670	+13.4	+14.8
	1.—Pasture and Agriculture ...	3,452,006	3,201,922	2,692,994	+7.3	+13.9
	(a) Cultivation ...	2,670,832	2,495,179	2,168,402	+7.0	+15.1
1	Non-cultivating proprietors taking rent in money or kind. ...	26,124	31,093	22,481	-16.0	+38.3
5	Cultivating owners... ..	2,567,287	2,378,100	2,092,210	+8.0	+13.7
6	Tenant cultivators ...					
7A	Helpers in agriculture ...					
8	Cultivators of <i>jhum</i> , etc. ...	74,306	82,395	50,612	-9.8	+62.8
7	Agricultural labourers ...					
	(b) Cultivation of special crops, fruit, etc. ...	654,309	668,511	484,423	-2.1	+38.0
15	Tea ...	636,871	651,753	468,650	-2.3	+39.1
21	Cattle and buffalo breeders and keepers. ...	122,228	8,345	10,683	+262.6	-10.0
23	Herdsmen, shepherds and breeders of other animals. ...	464	25,488	26,892		
27	Fishing and pearling ...	44,107	26,895	44,175	+64.0	-39.1
35	Coal ...	7,325	5,314	3,940	+37.8	+89.6
36	Petroleum ...	8,832	2,157		+309.5	
43	Cotton spinning, seizing and weaving. ...	225,534	39,366	45,486	+472.0	-13.5
47	Silk spinning and weaving ...	1,321	577	1,125	+123.9	-48.7
	7.—Wood ...	29,945	20,538	19,623	+45.4	+4.9
54	Sawyers ...	6,864	4,311	9,877	+59.2	+19.0
55	Carpenters, turners and joiners, etc. ...	13,094	7,438		+76.0	
56	Basket makers and other industries of woody materials including leaves and thatchers and builders working with bamboo reeds or similar materials. ...	9,937	8,839	9,746	+13.0	-9.0
59	Blacksmiths, other workers in iron and makers of implements. ...	3,667	3,311	3,257	+10.8	+1.7
60	Workers in brass, copper and bell metal. ...	1,786	864	1,688	+108.7	-48.8
	9.—Ceramics ...	8,562	8,676	9,928	-1.3	-12.6
	11.—Food Industries ...	11,648	13,131	12,274	-11.3	+7.0
	12.—Industries of dress and the toilet. ...	17,180	15,702	16,623	+9.4	-5.5
	14.—Building industries ...	5,146	2,562	4,996	+100.9	-48.7
	19.—Transport by water ...	12,947	10,184	13,433	+27.1	-24.2
	20.—Transport by road ...	27,299	23,075	23,845	-2.8	+17.7
	21.—Transport by rail ...	12,153	3,394	9,099	+45.1	-7.7

* The 1931 figures include working dependants.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE IV—*concl'd.*SELECTED OCCUPATIONS, 1911, 1921 AND 1931—*concl'd.*

Group No.	Occupation.	Actual works.			Percentage of variation.	
		1931.	1921.	1911.	1921-31.	1911-21.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	V.—TRADE ...	120,748	126,386	113,834	— 4.5	+ 11.0
	23.—Banks, establishment of credit exchange and insurance.	2,611	1,920	2,131	+ 36.0	— 9.9
	25.—Trade in textiles ...	6,072	12,749	8,988	— 52.4	+ 41.8
	27.—Trade in wood ...	3,008	3,206	1,627	— 6.2	+ 97.0
	32.—Other trade in food-stuffs...	73,259	83,172	71,899	— 11.9	+ 15.7
129	Grain and pulse dealers ...	14,644	12,270	13,320	+ 19.3	— 7.9
	33.—Trade in clothing and toilet articles.	7,542	433	1,132	+ 1,641.8	— 61.7
	34.—Trade in furniture ...	3,264	2,748	2,181	+ 18.8	+ 26.0
	37.—Trade in fuel... ..	2,160	765	1,091	+ 132.4	— 29.9
	38.—Trade in articles of luxury and those pertaining to letters and the Art and Sciences.	7,338	3,769	5,167	+ 92.0	— 27.1
	39.—Trade of other sorts ...	8,150	9,115	8,901	— 10.6	+ 2.4
	VI.—PUBLIC FORCE ...	11,095	9,110	9,383	+ 21.8	— 2.9
	40.—Army... ..	1,932	572	2,170	+ 237.8	— 73.6
	43.—Police... ..	9,163	8,538	7,213	+ 7.3	+ 18.4
	44.—Public Administration ...	10,719	5,615	4,744	+ 90.9	+ 18.4
	VIII.—PROFESSIONS AND LIBERAL ARTS.	43,109	36,533	34,641	+ 18.0	+ 5.5
	45.—Religion	18,428	18,017	19,293	+ 2.3	— 6.6
	46.—Law	2,698	1,619	1,323	+ 66.6	+ 22.4
	47.—Medicine	7,384	4,913	4,256	+ 50.3	+ 15.4
	48.—Instruction	11,165	7,156	5,585	+ 56.0	+ 28.1
	51.—Domestic Service ...	33,737	36,892	27,583	— 8.6	+ 33.7
193	Beggars and vagrants ...	26,674	38,316	*	— 30.4	...

* Separate figures not available.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE V.

(a) NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED ON THE 26TH FEBRUARY 1931 ON THE RAILWAYS IN ASSAM.

Class of persons employed.	Europeans and Anglo-Indians.	Indians.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4
TOTAL PERSONS EMPLOYED ...	132	20,914	
Persons directly employed ...	132	12,771	
Officers ...	33	6	
Subordinates drawing more than Rs. 75 per mensem.	58	404	
Subordinates drawing from Rs. 20 to Rs. 75 per mensem.	33	3,132	
Subordinates drawing under Rs. 20 per mensem.	3	9,229	
Persons indirectly employed ...	...	8,143	
Contractors ...	...	149	
Contractors' regular employes ...	...	281	
Coolies ...	...	7,713	

(b) NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED ON THE 26TH FEBRUARY 1931 IN THE POST OFFICE AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT IN ASSAM.

Class of persons employed.	Post Office.		Telegraph Department.		Remarks.
	Europeans and Anglo-Indians.	Indians.	Europeans and Anglo-Indians.	Indians.	
1	2	3	4	5	6
TOTAL PERSONS EMPLOYED	9	5,723	26	305	
(1) Post and Telegraphs.					
Supervising officers (including Probationary Superintendents and Inspectors of Post offices and Assistant and Deputy Superintendents of Telegraphs and all officers of higher rank than those).	3	25	5	1	
Postmasters, including Deputy, Assistant, Sub and Branch Postmasters.	...	509	...	...	
Signalling establishment including warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, military telegraphists and other employes.	...	...	21	30	
Miscellaneous agents, School masters, Station masters, etc.	...	732	...	...	
Clerks of all kinds ...	6	654	...	23	
Postmen ...	...	1,388	...	...	
Skilled labour establishment including foremen, instrument makers, carpenters, blacksmiths, mechanics, sub-inspectors, linemen and line riders and other employes.	...	...	...	171	

(b) NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED ON THE 26TH FEBRUARY 1931 IN THE POST OFFICE AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT IN ASSAM.—*concl'd.*

Class of persons employed.	Post Office.		Telegraph Department.		Remarks.
	Europeans and Anglo-Indians.	Indians.	Europeans and Anglo-Indians.	Indians.	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Unskilled labour establishment including line coolies, cable guards, battery-men telegraph messengers, peons, and other employees.	...	306	...	80	
Road establishment consisting of overseers, runners, clerks, and booking agents, boatmen, syces, coachmen, bearers and others.	...	1,558	...	...	
(2) <i>Railway Mail Service.</i>					
Supervising officers (including Superintendents and Inspectors of sorting).	...	4	...	...	
Clerks of all kinds ...	...	1	...	...	
Sorters ...	...	85	...	...	
Mail guards, mail agents, van peons, porters, etc.	...	97	...	...	
(3) <i>Combined officers.</i>					
Signallers ...	...	57	...	...	
Messengers and other servants	...	812	...	...	

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VI(a).

EDUCATED UNEMPLOYMENT BY CLASS AND DISTRICTS.

Class and districts in which found.	Total unemployed.	Aged 20-24.		Aged 25-29.		Aged 30-34.		Aged 35-39.	
		Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.	Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.	Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.	Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ASSAM	825	120	247	40	245	15	116	4	33
Brahmans ...	177	30	61	9	46	1	23	...	8
Depressed Hindus ...	41	3	11	3	15	1	7	...	1
Other Hindus ...	493	68	148	21	147	11	71	4	23
Muslims ...	91	16	18	6	29	2	14	...	6
Anglo-Indians ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
All other classes ...	23	3	9	1	8	...	2	...	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VI(a)—*cont'd.*

EDUCATED UNEMPLOYMENT BY CLASS AND DISTRICTS.

Class and districts in which found.	Total unemployed.	Aged 20-24.		Aged 25-29.		Aged 30-34.		Aged 35-39.	
		Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.	Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.	Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.	Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SURMA VALLEY AND HILL DIVISION.	465	66	138	18	146	6	70	1	20
Brahmans ...	101	16	34	6	25	1	15	...	4
Depressed Hindus ...	36	3	10	...	15	1	7	...	...
Other Hindus ...	251	32	74	7	79	4	41	1	13
Muslims ...	55	12	11	4	19	...	6	...	3
Anglo-Indians ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
All other classes ...	22	3	9	1	8	...	1	...	...
CACHAR ...	66	12	20	2	19	...	10	...	3
Brahmans ...	14	4	2	...	5	...	2	...	1
Depressed Hindus ...	14	...	5	...	5	...	4	...	...
Other Hindus ...	23	3	10	...	5	...	4	...	1
Muslims ...	15	5	3	2	4	...	...	...	1
Anglo-Indians ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
All other classes ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
SYLHET ...	366	49	102	15	118	6	58	1	17
Brahmans ...	83	11	29	6	20	1	13	...	3
Depressed Hindus ...	22	3	5	...	10	1	3	...	...
Other Hindus ...	221	28	60	7	73	4	36	1	12
Muslims ...	40	7	8	2	15	...	6	...	2
Anglo-Indians ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
All other classes ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS ...	27	5	12	1	8	...	1	...	...
Brahmans ...	4	1	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Depressed Hindus ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other Hindus ...	4	1	2	...	...	...	1	...	...
Muslims ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Anglo-Indians ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other classes ...	19	3	7	1	8	...	...	...	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VI(a)—*concl'd.*

EDUCATED UNEMPLOYMENT BY CLASS AND DISTRICTS.

Class and districts in which found.	Total unemployed.	Aged 20—24.		Aged 25—29.		Aged 30—34.		Aged 35—39.	
		Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.	Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.	Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.	Unemployed for less than one year.	Unemployed for one year or more.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
LAKHIMPUR ...	36	4	9	2	11	2	6	...	2
Brahmans ...	6	...	...	...	5	...	1	...	...
Depressed Hindus ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other Hindus ...	28	4	9	2	6	1	4	...	2
Muslims ...	2	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...
Anglo-Indians ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
All other classes ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
GARO HILLS ...	...	...	...	Nil.		...	...	...	...
SADIYA FRONTIER TRACT ...	3	...	1	...	2	...	...	...	...
Brahmans ...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Depressed Hindus ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other Hindus ...	2	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
Muslims ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Anglo-Indians ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
All other classes ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
BALIPARA FRONTIER TRACT ...	...	...	...	Nil.		...	...	...	...
MANIPUR STATE ...	18	4	7	...	6	1	...	...	...
Brahmans ...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Depressed Hindus ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other Hindus ...	17	4	7	...	5	1	...	...	...
Muslims ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Anglo-Indians ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
All other classes ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VI (b).

EDUCATED UNEMPLOYMENT BY DEGREE.

Degree.	Total unemployed.	Aged 20—24.	Aged 25—29.	Aged 30—34.	Aged 35—39.
1	2	3	4	5	6
ASSAM	825	367	285	131	42
British degrees ...	1	...	1	...	...
Indian degrees—	...	...	...	...	...
Medical ...	13	3	7	3	...
Commerce ...	1	1	...	...	...
M.A. ...	2	...	2	...	...
M. Sc. ...	2	2	...	...	...
B. A. ...	82	39	25	12	6
B. Sc. ...	15	11	3	1	...
B. Eng. or L.C.E. ...	3	...	1	2	...
I. A. or I. Sc. ...	98	42	34	14	8
Matriculation ...	608	269	212	99	28

CHAPTER IX.

LITERACY.

The meaning of the statistics.

122. A person was defined as a literate for census purposes if he or she could write a letter to a friend and read the reply. This was also the definition of literacy at the census of 1911 and 1921 so that our statistics are directly comparable with the figures of those censuses. For censuses prior to that of 1911 there is, however, some difficulty. In 1881 and 1891 the population was divided in respect of education into three categories—*learning*; i.e., those under instruction, *literate* and *illiterate* but it was found that this system was unsatisfactory and caused much confusion. Accordingly in 1901 this triple classification was abandoned and the population was divided into two classes of literate and illiterate but no definite orders were issued as regards the degree of proficiency in reading and writing required to satisfy the test of literacy. This was remedied in 1911 by the issue of a clear instruction that only those should be considered literate who could write a letter to a friend and read the reply and this definition has remained the same at every census since 1911.

It is a definition which is easily understood and as the enumerators were themselves literate at least up to the census standard they were in a far better position to judge literacy and illiteracy than to estimate ages or to ascertain the correct mother tongue of ex-garden coolies. We can therefore claim a fairly high standard of accuracy for the record of literacy and it is fortunate that this is so in view of the importance of ascertaining the degree of progress made during the last decade. The Report of the Simon Commission's Auxiliary Committee on the Growth of Education was published in 1929 and contains a masterly review of the whole position of education in India. The following extract from this Report shows how important the Census is for the purpose of judging the rate of progress of literacy or, what is the same thing, of judging the effectiveness of primary education.

"Primary education is ineffective unless it at least produces literacy, and the only definite material for ascertaining the prevalence of literacy in India is that provided by the Census. Unfortunately for our purposes this Census was taken as far back as 1921 and therefore it is not possible to estimate with any accuracy the effect which the large quantitative expansion of education during the last 7 years has had on illiteracy."

From the materials before them, however, the Committee came to the general conclusion that the large quantitative expansion of primary education had not produced a commensurate increase in literacy and that the whole system of primary education was wasteful and ineffective.

This chapter will therefore supply, so far as Assam is concerned, material for judging with more accuracy than was possible for the Hartog Committee the effect which the large quantitative expansion of education during the last ten years has had upon the progress of literacy.

Reference to Statistics.

123. The statistics of literacy are contained in Imperial Tables XIII and XIV and Provincial Table II. Table XIII shows the number of literate and illiterate persons of each sex and religion classified under the age groups 5-10, 10-15, 15-20 and 20 and over and Tables XIV shows the amount of literacy among certain selected castes.

Provincial Table II gives figures of literacy by religion for thanas and throws some light on the extent of literacy among the so-called "depressed" classes.

In addition there are eight Subsidiary Tables at the end of this chapter six of which give proportionate figures deduced from the two Imperial Tables mentioned above; the seventh gives the number of literates at certain crude age groups and the eighth is a summary of the Education Department's returns of institutions and pupils.

In dealing with the proportionate statistics of literacy the system adopted has been to exclude altogether all children under 5 years of age both from the figures of literacy and from the population on which the proportion of literacy has been calculated. This system, which follows that adopted in European countries, has the advantage of showing the actual proportion of literates to the proportion of persons capable of attaining literacy. In Imperial Table XIII, therefore, the infant prodigies under 5 years of age who were returned by fond parents as literate (they numbered 2,822 in all) have been tabulated as illiterate and all through this chapter, unless specially mentioned, the whole of the age group 0-5 has been excluded from the total population in calculating the proportion of literacy.

124. The number of persons in Assam 5 years of age and over who were recorded as literate at the 1931 census amounts to 697,498 of whom 616,365 were males and 81,133 females. The proportion of literates is therefore 91 per mille compared with 72 per mille in 1921, literate males numbering 152 per mille as against 124 in 1921, and females 23 as against the 1921 figure of 14. There has, therefore, been a substantial increase in literacy since 1921, though the proportion compared with European standards is still ridiculously low. The following diagram compares the proportion of literates per mille in Assam with the proportion in some other provinces in India.

LITERATES PER MILLE AGED 5 AND OVER

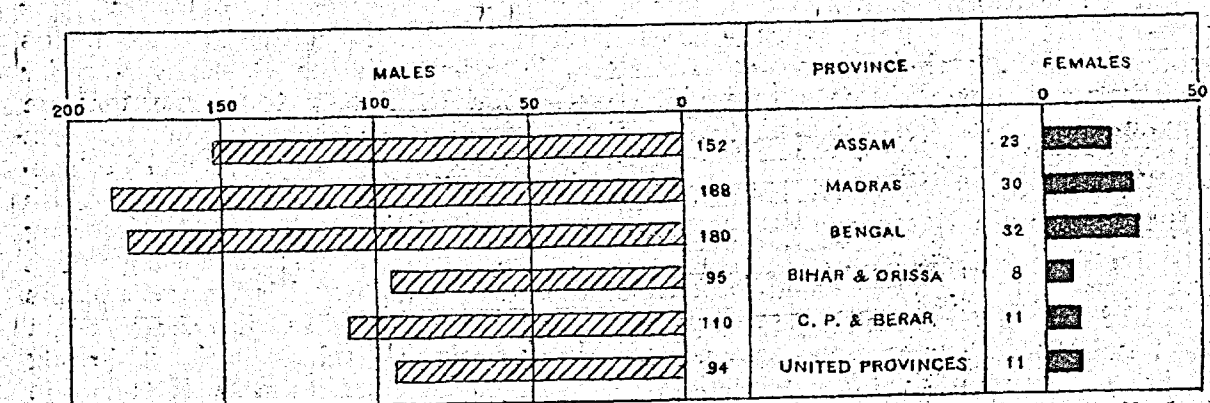


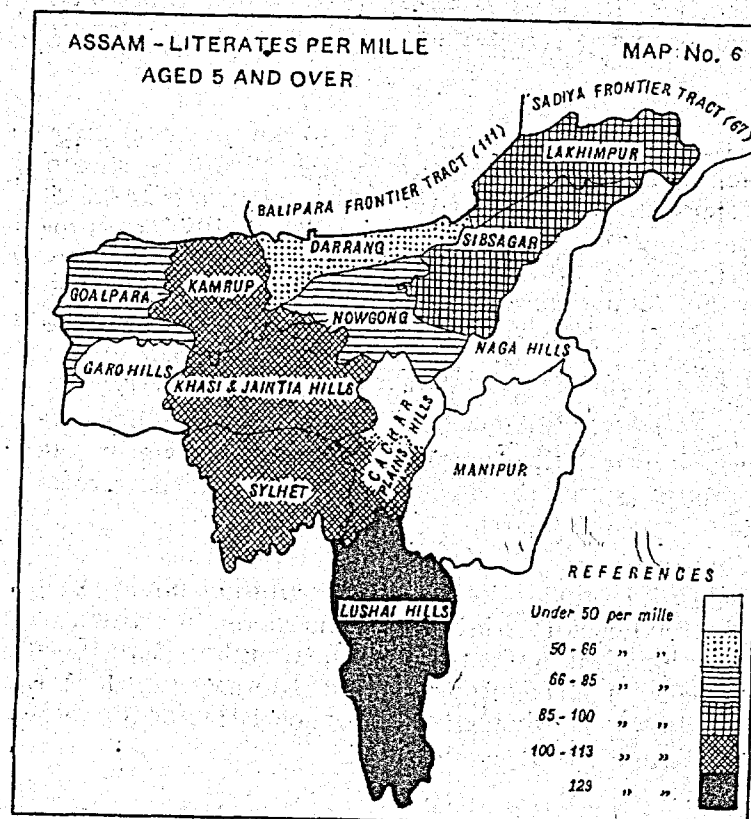
Diagram No. 5

It will be seen that Assam has no reason to be ashamed of itself.

Of the natural divisions the Surma Valley stands an easy first in the proportion of literacy; there being 110 literates in every 1,000 persons in that Valley aged 5 and over. As might be expected, in view of its large number of immigrants and backward tribes, the Assam Valley with 85 literates in every 1,000 of its population over the age of 5 is a good deal behind the Surma Valley.

The hills is the worst natural division from the point of view of literacy, the proportion of literates being only 62 per mille, but it is entirely due to missionary effort that it is so high and as we shall see, the two leading districts in the province from the point of view of literacy are hill districts.

The proportionate figures of literacy in each district for both sexes, for all ages 5 and over and for certain age groups will be found in Subsidiary Table II at the end of this chapter, but a glance at the map in the margin will show us at once the proportionate distribution of literacy (for both sexes together) in every district in the province.



Taking the individual districts in order of merit the Lushai Hills carries off the palm on this occasion with 129 literates in every 1,000 persons aged 5 and over. The proportion of male literacy (242 per mille) in this district is far the highest in the whole of Assam and that of female literacy (28 per mille) is only beaten by the figures of Sylhet and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

Next to the Lushai Hills comes the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District (including the Khasi States) which has 113 literates per mille—151 males and 73 females. The proportion of female literates in the Khasi Hills is the highest in the province and is more than double that of any other district. Leaving out the Balipara Frontier Tract whose tiny population owes its high proportion of literacy to the fact that an Assam Rifles battalion was stationed there on the date of the census, the next best districts are Cachar plains and Sylhet which almost dead heat with 112 and 110 literates per mille. Then comes Kamrup—the best district in the Assam Valley—with 80 literates per mille followed by Sibsagar with 94 and Lakhimpur with 87; Nowgong with 80 and Goalpara with 76 literates per mille are not far behind; then come Sadiya and Darrang, the latter of which has only 65 literates per mille and is the worst plains district in the province from the point of view of literacy. It was also the worst in 1921 and 1911. The apparent reason for the long continued backwardness of Darrang is that a large proportion of its inhabitants belong to cooly castes and, in addition it possesses a large indigenous Kachari population among whom—as Imperial Table XIV shows—literacy is almost negligible; Manipur State has a poor record for literacy (40 per mille), and occupies the lowest place in the whole of Assam for female literacy (4 per mille); the Garo Hills is worse with a total of only 33 literates per mille and last of all comes the Naga Hills with only 22 literates per mille which qualifies it to retain or rather—in view of the fact that it obtained the same distinction in 1911 and 1921—to win outright the wooden spoon for total and male literacy.

It is interesting to observe that Manipur, the Garo Hills and the Naga Hills have maintained the same order of precedence since 1911.

125. Turning to the age groups in Subsidiary Table II we find that the proportion of literacy is highest in almost all districts in the age group 15-20 both for males and females. Taking males as an example we find that in the age group 5-10 63 per mille are literate; the proportion rises to 113 in the age group 10-15 and to 189 in the age group 15-20 and then drops to 179 in the age group 20 and over. In the 1911 and 1921 censuses the age group 15-20 was also found to contain the highest proportion of literates.

With a steady spread of education this is exactly what we would expect. There are now-a-days many more opportunities for children to acquire literacy than formerly and hence the proportion in the age group 15-20 which represents persons who have recently passed the ordinary school-going age should be larger than among older people.

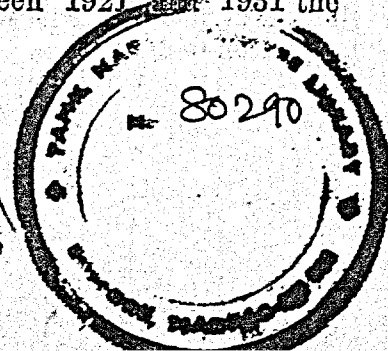
Looking at the age groups by natural divisions we find that literacy is apparently not acquired in the hills until a much later age than in the plains. This is shown by the fact that in the plains the proportion of male literates in the age group 15-20 is roughly only three times that in the age group 5-10 whereas in the hills the proportion in the age group 15-20 is five times that in the age group 5-10. The difference is interesting and agrees with the usually accepted opinion that hill boys are generally not as sharp as boys in the plains. The boys of Sylhet—judged by the same principle—are the smartest in the province. Subsidiary Table VII which shows the extent of literacy in the age groups 7-13, 14-16, 17-23 and 24 and over may also be consulted. The age group figures given in this table are the crude ages as actually returned whereas the figures in the quinquennial age groups given in the other tables are the crude age groups smoothed in accordance with the procedure explained in chapter IV—Age.

126. Subsidiary Table VI gives full details of the progress of literacy since 1881. It must be remembered that in this table account has only been taken of literates aged 10 and over and hence the proportionate figures are a good deal higher than those in all the other Subsidiary Tables, which give the proportion of literates aged five and over. The following abstract shows the progress made since 1911 for the province as a whole and for its natural divisions:—

NUMBER OF LITERATES PER MILLE AT CERTAIN AGE PERIODS FROM 1911 TO 1931.

Natural Division,	All ages 10 and over.						15-20.						20 and over.						
	Males.			Females.			Males.			Females.			Males.			Females.			
	1931	1921	1911	1931	1921	1911	1931	1921	1911	1931	1921	1911	1931	1921	1911	1931	1921	1911	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Provinces ...	...	169	114	117	23	15	8	189	164	126	33	23	12	179	150	121	20	13	7
Brahmaputra Valley ...	...	161	140	116	16	12	6	185	161	129	22	20	10	169	143	119	13	10	5
Surma Valley ...	...	203	169	135	33	18	9	214	191	143	44	25	11	213	176	139	27	15	7
Hills ...	...	115	91	65	25	18	11	138	101	73	41	28	18	124	96	69	23	16	10

It must, however, be remembered the age group figures of 1931 have been smoothed whereas those of previous censuses have not and hence the figures of 1931 are not strictly comparable with those of previous censuses. But in the case of "all ages 10 and over" and "20 and over" the proportions worked out on the smoothed age figures and the crude age figures could not give very different results and we are justified in concluding that there has been a steady progress of literacy in all three natural divisions since 1911 and that the progress has been much more rapid in the Hills and the Surma Valley than in the Assam Valley. The explanation of this lies in the fact that during the last twenty years a horde of illiterate immigrants has poured into the Assam Valley. Substantial as the progress of literacy has been during the decade it is peculiar that it has not been as great as in the decade 1911-21. This is shown by the fact that between 1911 and 1921 the total number of literates in the province increased by 50 per cent., whereas between 1921 and 1931 the increase has only been about 41 per cent.



This slowing down in the rate of progress is specially noteworthy when we remember the continual interest taken in educational matters by the reformed Legislative Council and the large increase in the expenditure on public instruction during the past decade. In 1921-22 the total expenditure on Public Instruction, including the expenditure of local bodies, was Rs. 34,84,000. In 1929-30 it was Rs. 53,59,000 and in 1930-31 Rs. 52,62,000. Most of this increased expenditure has been spent on secondary and collegiate education but primary education has by no means been neglected as will be seen from the fact that the total expenditure on primary education rose from 8.27 lakhs in 1920-21 to 13.62 lakhs in 1930-31 and the number of primary school pupils rose from 179,754 to 266,346. The great majority of these pupils never, of course, attain literacy on account of the fact that they are withdrawn from school after a year or so and before they have had time to attain literacy. This is technically called "wastage" and the amount of wastage is appalling. The Hartog Committee calculated that taking British India as a whole the present system of primary education produced in 1925-26 only 18 potential literates out of every 100 who joined the lowest class in 1922-23. On this subject Mr. J. R. Cunningham, C.I.E., who recently retired from the post of Director of Public Instruction, Assam, after 19 years' experience in that post remarked as follows in the last report which he wrote (1929-30):—

"The Hartog Committee have declared themselves appalled by the waste of money and effort in the present 'voluntary and haphazard system,' estimating the wastage at about 60 per cent. of the expenditure. This subject of wastage has engaged constant attention from Sir Bampfylde Fuller's time until to-day and must continue to engage attention until compulsion is universally applied—and after. But for my part I am less disposed to be impressed by its importance than I was when it was new to me. It is true that there is wastage—there is wastage in all human effort—but it is not I think present in any horrifying degree in the village school system. A very large proportion of the children who attend primary schools do not stay long enough to become literate. The number of literates in the province is none the less rapidly increasing; and we are getting them cheap. According to my estimate, the cost of adding each unit to the roll of literates by means of education in a vernacular school cannot be more than Rs. 50 or some Rs. 10 per head per year over the five years of the village school course. If my calculations are not altogether out—they are based on the total cost of primary schools—there would seem to be no great waste of money. And as regards effort, we may properly regard the effort spent on the schooling of those who leave before they are literate as an agriculturist would look on the work of preparing the ground for the seed-clearing and ploughing and harrowing. In due course with a better tilth we shall get a better crop."

We should be getting a better crop but the fact is that we are not and the ordinary layman cannot help wondering why in spite of all this harrowing and clearing, in spite of all this digging in of illiterate manure for the last 30 years the field of literacy does not appear to be yielding a better harvest. "Progress" says Mr. Cunningham in the same report "is slow enough; but it is positive and with the general advance of education should be an accelerating process".

The census statistics support most but not all of this statement. Positive progress there has been—positive and definite—and the progress has been slow, but of any accelerating process there is—except in a few hill districts—no apparent sign.

Why, therefore, are the actual facts at variance with what we might reasonably have expected? The reason is to be found, I think, in the economic and political disturbances of the decade.

A study of the figures of enrolment in primary schools shows that although the closing down of village schools was not a part of the official programme of the leaders of the non-co-operation movement enrolment did fall off quite considerably in 1920-21. The educational reports show also that in these years non-co-operators devoted much of their attention to closing down village schools, particularly in the backward areas of the Assam Valley.

But with the restoration of normal political conditions in 1922-23 the general equilibrium in the primary schools was at once restored; hence it appears that the non-co-operation movement did not affect the primary schools to any very great extent. If so what was it that did affect them? The clue is to be found in the enrolment figures for the 3rd and 4th year classes which in Assam are called class I and II. It is in these classes that literacy is achieved and from the point of view of the production of literates the enrolment figures in the first and second year classes (known as A and B) can be entirely neglected. Now we find that although the total number of pupils in classes A and B in vernacular schools continued to increase right up to 1921 the number of pupils in class I and II continued to increase only up to 1916-17. In that year the total number enrolled in these two classes was nearly 57,000. In 1917-18 there was a slight drop to 55,000 but in the following two years the numbers declined rapidly to 50,000 and 47,000 and it was not until 1925-26 that the figures of enrolment in these classes again exceeded the figures for 1916-17.

The original cause of this decline, which began in 1917, is thus clearly not due to the non-co-operation movement which did not come into prominence until 1921 and must, I consider, be due to the economic difficulties of the period. It was about 1917 that the effect of high prices began to be felt in India and it is from the third year class onward that education in primary schools, although free, begins to cost parents an appreciable sum in providing school materials.

Moreover by the time a boy has reached these classes he is old enough to be useful to his parents and to have an employable value. Nor must we forget the effect of the influenza epidemic of 1918 though it appears to have had no effect on the enrolment in classes A and B which went on increasing up to 1921. But there can, I think, be no doubt that the non-co-operation movement had a considerable effect on the enrolment in classes I and II between 1922 and 1924. This is shown by the fact that the enrolment in classes A and B declined considerably during the years 1920-22 and it was not till 1923-24 that the enrolment in class A exceeded the enrolment in the same class in 1919-20. This decline in the numbers in class A, which was directly due to the activities of the non-co-operation party, was, of course, carried on into classes I and II in subsequent years. It therefore appears that partly owing to economic and partly owing to political causes not only was there no accelerating progress in turning out more literates between 1918 to 1926 but that there was a definite set-back to the previous rate of progress. From 1925-26 to 1930-31 there was a rapid expansion of pupils in the 3rd year and 4th year classes—viz., from 35,000 to 48,000 in the 3rd year class and from 25,500 to 36,500 in the 4th year class but this rapid expansion could not apparently make up for the ground already lost.

These considerations seem to me to furnish a reasonable explanation for the slowing down in the rate of progress of literacy in the decade 1921-31. It cannot be ascribed to what would at first seem to be an obvious cause—namely to an increase in the number of illiterate immigrants because, as shown in Chapter I, the increase in the number of immigrants into the province was far higher in 1911-21 than in 1921-31. As regards future progress there seems to me to be no reason to expect that the acquisition of literacy will progress at any greater rate during the next ten years; economically the position of the country is at present much worse than it has been for years and the efficiency of primary schools is certainly not improving. Furthermore with an increasing population the minimum annual output of literates required to maintain even the existing percentage of literacy will gradually rise.

Facts must be faced and the facts are that in spite of the enormous increase in the number of educational institutions and scholars since 1901 (figures will be found in Subsidiary Table VIII) our educational system has been increasing the proportion of literates in every hundred of the population aged 5 and over by only about two units in each decade. At the present rate of progress it will therefore take another 20 decades or 200 years before even half the population of Assam over the age of 5 is literate.

That the magnitude of the problem has been realized by the leaders of public opinion in Assam is shown by the passing of the Assam Primary Education Act of 1926. Under this Act a local authority can introduce free compulsory education in

any part of its jurisdiction, two-thirds of the cost of any scheme being met by Government and one-third by the local authority. It was hoped when the Act was passed that municipalities, at least, would take speedy advantage of it and introduce schemes of compulsory education within municipal limits but this hope has remained unfulfilled and the Act must be regarded as the expression of a pious aspiration rather than a practical measure of educational reform.

The hard unpleasant truth is that the public of Assam are not prepared to tax themselves for the primary education of the rising generation and that, owing to excessive devolution to local bodies, the Educational Department is unable adequately to direct, control or improve the existing haphazard and ineffectual system of primary education. The Hartog Committee in Chapter XVII of their report have recommended that the relations between provincial Governments and local bodies in matters educational need further adjustment. "We are of opinion" they have written, "that (the responsibilities of Ministers) have been reduced too much already by a devolution on local bodies which has taken the control of primary education to a large extent out of their hands, with unfortunate results".

Female literacy.

127. Female literacy has been dealt with to a certain extent in previous paragraphs; it is, however, a matter of such great importance that it seems to merit a special paragraph to itself. The actual number of female literates 5 years of age and over has increased during the decade by about 80 per cent to a total of 81,133, and the proportion per mille from 14 to 23. This is a much more rapid rise than in the case of males and for that very reason is a matter for satisfaction. The ever-increasing disparity in literacy between men and women in India has been commented on by the Hartog Committee who have recommended that, in order to redress the balance, priority should now be given to the claims of girls' education in every scheme of expansion. The disparity in literacy between the sexes in Assam has of course increased still further in the last decade and is bound to increase every decade until there are as many girls reading in primary schools as boys but the rate of increase in the disparity has not been as great as in 1911-21.

Looking at the figures of literacy by districts in Subsidiary Table II we find that the Khasi and Jaintia Hills easily heads the list with a proportion of 73 female literates per mille aged five and over. Then comes Sylhet with 33 per mille, the Lushai Hills with 28 and Cachar plains with 25. No other district has more than 17 per mille, the average of the Assam Valley being only 15. Female literacy is practically non-existent in Manipur State and the Naga Hills district. In the Naga Hills only 5 women in every thousand can read and write and in Manipur State only 4.

The progress of female literacy during the last 20 years (see Subsidiary Table VI) has been most rapid in the Lushai Hills where it has been phenomenal. In 1911 the proportion of female literates in the Lushai Hills was nearly the lowest in Assam; in 1931 it is far ahead of all plains districts except Sylhet. Next to the Lushai Hills the most rapid progress has been made by Sylhet which is showing signs of a very great advance in female literacy, though it will take many years before it can even challenge the undisputed supremacy of the Khasi Hills which, of course, had a long start and which, since 1911, has been making quiet and steady progress. The increase in the proportion of female literates has been extremely small in the Assam Valley districts and the condition of female primary education in that Valley would seem to call for special attention from the Educational Authorities.

The obstacles in the way of progress of female education lie in the very structure of Indian Society. Early marriage and the difficulty of procuring women teachers are two notable obstacles but the greatest is the general spirit of social conservatism which regards the education of women as a dangerous Western innovation which is liable to transform a dutiful affectionate girl into a discontented shrew of a woman.

This spirit is still very widespread and several of my correspondents have no hesitation in affirming that education—particularly higher education—is not a good thing for Indian women. Others consider that the present system of female education is radically unsound and unfits their daughters for the domestic duties of home life. All, however, admit that female education has made considerable progress in the last ten years—chiefly among the middle classes in the towns—and there is a regular

chorus of testimony that the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements have brought about a considerable change in the traditional attitude of women in Assam, particularly women of the *bhadralog* classes. No longer are they content with the duties of wife and mother; they too must be educated like their brothers and husbands; they too must have their societies and organizations and they too must plunge into the van of the struggle for freedom.

This spirit of emancipation is, as yet, confined to a mere handful of women; whether it will develop or whether it will gradually disappear when the province becomes self-governing will be very interesting to observe. It is a movement which is certainly not approved by a large number of Indians and is not likely to receive much encouragement from a conservative Indian Government of the future.

128. Subsidiary Table III gives the proportionate statistics for literacy for each of the main religions by sex and district. The figures in the margin show at a glance the changes in the figures since 1921.

Literacy by religion.

Religion.	Number of literates per mille aged 5 and over.			
	1931.		1921.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
All religions ...	152	23	124	14
Hindu ...	186	25	167	18
Muslim ...	115	16	85	5
Christian ...	277	114	293	136
Indian Christians ...	259	105	269	130
Other Christians ...	993	939	966	966
Tribal Religions ...	31	4	19	2
Buddhist ...	201	8	130	8
Other Religions ...	598	148	650	201

mos form a small but very highly educated community.

Christians come next in order of merit; among Christians, however, are included Europeans and Americans and in examining the figures it is better to exclude them altogether and confine ourselves to the figures of Indian Christians only. In this community the proportion of literates, though still very high, has fallen somewhat since 1921—due presumably to the large number of conversions of adult illiterates made during the decade.

Buddhists, who are a very small community in Assam, ranked just below Hindus in 1921 but have now gone ahead of them with a large proportionate increase in male literates. They have, however, made no progress at all in female literacy.

Next to Buddhists come Hindus who do not show as large an increase as we would have expected. This must be due to the fact that in the Assam Valley some hundreds of thousands of illiterate persons who in 1921 would have given their religion as tribal returned themselves as Hindus in 1931. Why they did so has been described in Chapter XI—Religion. That this explanation is correct is shown by comparing the figures in Subsidiary Table III with the corresponding figures in the same table for 1921. Thus Kamrup, for example, had 206 male Hindu literates per mille aged 5 and over in 1921 whereas in 1931 there are only 201 per mille, the reason being that about 80,000 illiterate Kacharis who would have returned themselves as Animists in 1921 gave their religion as Hinduism in 1931.

In the plains districts of the Surma Valley where there was no question as to who was a Hindu and who was an Animist the proportion of literate Hindus has risen considerably, namely, males from 212 to 255 per mille and females from 29 to 48 per mille—the advance in Cachar plains being particularly good.

Next to Hindus, but a long way behind them, come Muslims. Their proportionate increase (male 85 to 115 per mille, female 5 to 16 per mille) is decidedly satisfactory, especially in view of the fact that their numbers have been considerably augmented by the advent of a large number of illiterate Bengali immigrants. How

the arrival of these immigrants affected the Muslim proportion is clearly seen from the fact that the proportion of literate Muslims in the Assam Valley has only risen from 85 males per mille to 105 and from 9 females per mille to 11 whereas in the Surma Valley the increase has been from 85 literate males per mille to 120 and from 4 literate females per mille to 19.

Among Assamese Muslims—as is shown by the figures of literacy among Muslims in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur—the proportion of literacy is very high and the Muslim community of the Assam Valley is, in fact, only backward in those districts where immigrants from Bengal have settled.

Sylheti Muslims are considerably more backward in literacy than Sylheti Hindus but they have made remarkable progress during the last ten years and, if they maintain it, the next generation of Sylheti Muslims should be very nearly as literate as the next generation of Hindus.

This satisfactory increase in literacy among Muslims is especially note-worthy when we remember that this community made very little progress in 1911-21. Discussing the figures of Muslim literacy for that decade Mr. Lloyd remarked as follows :—

“The figures show clearly that with the present conditions and apathetic attitude of Muhammadans in Assam they will never catch up the other communities in education : indeed they are receding further from them.” This apathetic attitude is now a thing of the past and, especially for the last six years, Muslims have been taking a very keen interest in the progress of education.

The credit for this startling change is, in my opinion, entirely due to the efforts of the leaders of the Muslim community in Assam to advance the education of their co-religionists. It is true that Government have devoted special attention to the cause of Muslim education during the decade but such efforts would have produced little results had they not had behind them the full weight and support of Muslim educated opinion.

Last of all—and a bad last—come the followers of tribal religions. Their proportion of literates (males 31 per mille, females 4 per mille) has increased considerably since 1921 but it is still ridiculously small.

There are, of course, very considerable difficulties in the way of introducing literacy among the Animists living in the hill districts but it must be acknowledged that Government has done very little to attempt to overcome them. For all practical purposes the education of the followers of tribal religions in the Assam Hills has been handed over to the Missions. Under the circumstances this was, perhaps, inevitable but, as a policy, it stands in direct contradiction to the principle of secular education which has been established in Europe for over fifty years.

Literacy in English.

129. Literacy in English is practically confined to males. The number of females literate in English in the whole of the province is only 5,446 and of these about a thousand are non-Indians. Among Indian women, therefore, only one in a thousand is literate in English and the proportion is so small that the subject of female literacy in English is hardly worth discussing further.

Among males the proportion of literates in English aged 5 and over has risen from 19 to 22 per mille, the actual number now literate being 89,389—an increase of about 31 per cent. since 1921, which is very small compared with the 100 per cent. increase in 1911-21. This 31 per cent. increase represents roughly the advance in secondary education during the decade and it must be confessed that judged by the increase in the expenditure on secondary education the result is disappointing.

The reasons for this are, I think, the same as the reasons given in paragraph 126 to explain the slowing down in the rate of progress in vernacular literacy. It is significant that the rate of progress in English literacy has slowed down much more than that of general literacy and this is, I think, natural. In the first place, the middle classes—the chief seekers after English education—were economically much harder hit by the general rise of living than the ordinary cultivators : moreover

one of the professed objects of the non-co-operation movement was the withdrawal of boys from colleges and high schools and the setting up of “national” institutions.

The figures of enrolment in high schools—which are the chief factories of literacy in English—show that in 1920 the enrolment figure of male pupils was 13,300. In 1921 the number fell to 12,372, and in 1922 to 10,952, and it was not till 1926 that the number again exceeded the figure for 1920. From 1926 to 1930 there was a rapid expansion—from 14,422 to 18,725 but in 1931, as the result of an attempt by Government to exclude politics from the schools, the number fell abruptly to 16,494. These figures show clearly that for the first five years of the decade English education made no progress in the recognized high schools of the province. As for the “national” institutions which were intended to take their place they proved a hopeless failure and gradually faded into oblivion.

Excluding “other religions” with its number of well-educated Brahmos and also excluding Christians who are not Indians with their almost cent. per cent. proportion of literacy we find that Indian Christians with 25 literates per mille (41 male and 10 female) are the most advanced community so far as English literacy is concerned. The proportion per mille of Indian Christians who are literate in English is, however, lower than it was in 1921, the fall being due, presumably, to the numerous conversions of illiterate adults which have been made during the decade. Next to Indian Christians come Hindus who have increased their proportion of English literacy for both sexes together from 14 to 16 per mille. This small increase as already explained in a previous paragraph is largely due to the “conversion” of a large number of Animists to Hinduism.

The proportion per mille of Muslims literate in English has risen slightly—from 6 to 7. The increase would have been larger but for the addition to the ranks of Muslims of a large number of Bengali immigrants ignorant of English.

The followers of tribal religions remain in exactly the same position as they were in 1921 with one person literate in English in every thousand over the age of five.

Proportionate figures of literacy in English for natural divisions and districts are given in Subsidiary Table IV. It will be seen that the Assam Valley and the Surma Valley have practically the same proportion of literates in English. Of the individual districts Lakhimpur leads in male literacy in English with 336 literates in every 10,000 males, closely followed by the Khasi and Jaintia Hills with 322 and Sibsagar with 304. These three districts were also the leading districts in English literacy in 1921 and 1911. Their predominance is easily explained by the fact that Lakhimpur and Sibsagar are the two largest tea districts in Assam and the numerous gardens there afford employment to a large literate Indian staff. As for the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, it contains Shillong—the capital of the province, with a host of Government departments—and is, moreover, a district in which Mission activity has been widespread. The Lushai Hills and Manipur State show very great increases in the proportion of male literacy in English but the absolute figures are still very small, there being only 776 males in the Lushai Hills who are literate in English and 2,021 in Manipur State. The Naga Hills has only 490 males who can read and write English but most of these are foreigners to the district.

In female literacy in English the Khasi and Jaintia Hills is an easy winner with 86 literate females in every 10,000. There has, however, been very little progress in female literacy in this district since 1921. No other district has more than 23 women in every 10,000 who can read and write English and most have much less.

130. Owing to the imperative need for economy Imperial Table XIV, which gives the number of literates in certain selected castes and tribes, had to be cut down to a minimum. It will be observed that the population figures for the various castes given in this table refer to persons 7 years of age and over and that the proportionate figures for 1931 given in Subsidiary Table V at the end of this Chapter deal also with persons 7 years of age and over whereas the proportionate figures for 1921 which are also given deal with persons aged 5 and over. Hence the figures for

Literacy by Caste or tribe.

1931 in Subsidiary Table V are not strictly comparable with those for 1921. Looking at the 1931 figures in this table we see at once that Baidyas and Brahmans show a long lead over all other Hindu castes in the matter of literacy, just as they did in 1921. Among Baidyas 86.8 per cent. of males and 65.9 per cent. of females of the age of 7 and upwards are literate—a truly remarkable figure. The percentage for Brahmans is 72.1 for males of the age of 7 and over and 19.4 for females. Compared with these figures the percentage of literates in the other castes and tribes which appear in the table is very low except in the case of Khasi and Lushai Christians. Among Khasi Christians 42.1 per cent. of males over 7 years and 31.5 per cent. of females are literate and among Lushai Christians 33.3 per cent. of males but only 5.3 per cent. of females. The extent to which the missionaries are responsible for the high figures of literacy among these tribes can be judged from the fact that among Khasis and Lushais who are not Christians the male percentages of literacy are only 6.5 and 14.5 respectively and in the case of female only 2 and 0.4.

Among Ahoms 24.6 per cent. of their males over the age of 7 are literate but only 1.4 per cent. of their females can read and write.

The Baniyas (Brittial-Baniyas), a progressive "exterior caste" of the Assam Valley, are ahead of the Ahoms in literacy and 30.8 per cent. of their males and 6.8 of their females over 7 years of age are literate whereas the Namasudras—an "exterior caste" of the Surma Valley—have only 10 male literates in every hundred males over the age of 7 and only 5 literate females *in every thousand*. The backward tribes of the Assam Valley have been well designated backward. Among Kacharis (tribal) the percentage of male literates is only 6.2 and the proportion of female literacy is only 3 in every thousand. But some of the castes and tribes sink to even lower depths than this and the Mikirs—for whose education Government have done practically nothing—have only 13 literate males in every thousand males over the age of 7 and as for female literacy there are only five Mikir women out of the 26,000 Mikir women in the Sibsagar and Nowgong Mikir Hills who can read and write. Even a typical tea garden caste like the Tantis can show a better figure than this though their proportion of literacy is only 38 *per mille* for males and 2 for females.

In Provincial Table II figures of literacy for Brahmans, other Hindus and depressed classes will be found for every subdivision and thana. It must be remembered that the figures in that table give the total strength of each community mentioned and not the population aged 7 and over as in the case of Imperial Table XIV and that for the reasons given in the flyleaf of the table the figures must be accepted with caution. Still they give a very good idea of the great difference between the extent of literacy among the Brahmans and the "depressed" classes. It will be seen that according to Provincial Table II Brahmans have 594 male literates in every thousand males of all ages and 158 literate females whereas the depressed classes have only 55 literate males in every thousand males of all ages and only 4 literate females. In other words literacy is ten times greater among male Brahmans than among the males of the depressed castes and among female Brahmans it is 40 times greater than among the females of the depressed castes.

Turning to the proportionate figures of literacy in English in Subsidiary Table V the differences are even more striking. Among Baidyas over 50 per cent. of males and 8 per cent. of females aged 7 and over are literate in English; among Brahmans the corresponding figures are 19 and 1.

But except in the case of the Khasi and Lushai Christians (who have to thank the missions for their proficiency in English) there is no other caste or tribe in the table which has five per cent. of its males over the age of 7 literate in English and in the case of some tribes the proportion is so low that it can only be expressed as fraction of 10,000. Among the Mikirs and tribal Garos, for example, only 6 men in every 10,000 over the age of 7 are literate in English and, as regards females, the Mikirs have not got a single female literate in English, the tribal Garos have only 4 out of over 50,000 women and the Hindu Kacharis of the Assam Valley have only 10 out of 75,000 women. Looking at these figures it must, I think, be acknowledged that the large sums spent by Government on secondary education (in 1930-31 the

cost per pupil in Government High Schools was Rs. 67 per pupil of which Government paid Rs. 50) have not been of much advantage to many of the backward and depressed communities in the province.

131. At the census of 1921 a special table was prepared to show the extent of literacy on tea gardens. This table (Provincial Table VII) showed that only 5,858 coolies out of a total of 922,000 persons censused on tea gardens were literate. Unfortunately for reasons of economy it was not possible to prepare a similar table at this census but there is no reason to believe that the proportion of literate coolies has increased since 1921.

Literacy among tea garden labourers.

The following extract from the memorandum submitted by the Government of Assam to the Royal Commission on Labour in India (1929) summarizes the whole position of the education of tea garden labourers. I give it because no chapter on literacy in the Assam Census Report could be considered complete without a reference to the abysmal ignorance of the tea garden population of the province—a population which amounts to about a tenth of the whole population of Assam.

"Little progress has been made in the direction of the education of the labourers or their children.

In 1908 the Government introduced a scheme to encourage the education of the children of tea garden labourers. Schools were to be divided into three classes, (A) schools maintained and controlled by Government, (B) schools owned and controlled by the estate authorities but, in return for a grant-in-aid, subject to inspection by officers of the Education Department who would hold examinations, on the result of which the amount of the grant-in-aid would depend, and (C) schools owned and controlled by the estate/authorities, receiving no grant-in-aid and open only to informal visits from the district or subdivisional officer.

In 1910 it was estimated that there would be 46 (A) class, 85 (B) class and 230 (C) class schools but that the opening of these schools would be spread over a period of years. Later, it was decided to abolish the proportion of schools between the three classes. In 1916-17 there were 13 A class, with a total enrolment of 361; 40 B class with an enrolment of 1,094 and 96 C class with an enrolment of 1,172. The numbers have steadily declined until in 1926-27 there were only 9 A class, 23 B class and 33 C class, the total enrolment of all three kinds of schools being only* 1,798. The results can only be described as disappointing. The ordinary public schools are of course open to the children of the labour force employed, but it is unlikely that any large number of the children is sent to such schools. The reasons for the failure of the special schools are not far to seek. The labour force is generally either apathetic or actually hostile to the scheme. They do not appreciate the ultimate advantages which their children would derive, but they do appreciate the more immediate result, *viz.*, the reduction of the wage-earning capacity of their children. Most of the children of school-going age supplement the family earnings and the loss of this additional income, necessitating perhaps a little more work on their own part, condemns the scheme in the eyes of a large majority. The managers with a few exceptions, do not actively interest themselves in the question, more from the fear of upsetting their labour force than from any antagonism to the principle of the scheme. This policy may be short-sighted but so long as labour is so scarce, it would be too much to expect employers to risk the loss of labour by any attempt to insist on the education of the children, and little improvement can be expected until the supply of labour increases. The Government of Assam, however, recognize that education is essential for the general uplift of the condition of the labouring classes and if, as they hope, compulsory primary education is actually introduced in the province generally in the near future it will be possible to apply it to the children of parents employed in industrial undertakings.

* In 1930-31 there were 9 A class schools, 52 B class schools and 48 C class schools with a total enrolment of 3,188.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

LITERACY BY AGE, SEX AND RELIGION.

Religion.	Number per mille who are literate.										Number per mille who are literate in English (all ages, 5 and over).			
	All ages 5 and over.			5-10.		10-15.		15-20.		20 and over.				
	Total.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
ALL RELIGIONS ...	91	152	23	63	18	113	30	189	33	179	20	12	22	2
Hindu ...	111	186	25	80	21	144	35	234	37	213	21	16	23	1
Muslim ...	69	115	16	49	16	84	23	133	22	149	13	7	13	1
Christian ...	195	277	114	83	51	177	107	366	182	314	118	42	64	20
Total { Indian Christian ...	181	259	105	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	25	41	10
{ Other Christians ...	955	963	937	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	950	950	936
Tribal religion ...	17	31	4	9	2	20	4	47	7	33	4	1	2	...
Buddhist ...	121	201	8	56	4	115	4	215	11	237	9	10	17	1
Others ...	477	598	145	253	65	453	145	673	197	637	154	71	77	57

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II.

LITERACY BY AGE, SEX AND LOCALITY.

District and Natural Division.				Number per mille who are literate.										
				For all ages 5 and over.			5-10		10-15		15-20		20 and over.	
				Total.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
ASSAM	91	152	23	63	18	113	30	189	33	179	20			
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY ...	85	144	15	57	12	107	20	185	22	169	13			
Goalpara	76	129	14	51	13	91	20	156	19	156	12			
Kamrup	101	174	17	74	13	136	22	228	25	204	15			
Darrang	65	109	11	41	9	79	15	141	18	126	10			
Nowgong	80	135	15	53	12	99	21	162	22	162	13			
Sibsagar	94	159	17	63	14	123	24	209	25	185	14			
Lakhimpur	87	143	15	54	11	98	18	185	24	165	14			
Sadiya	67	113	11	34	9	61	14	130	20	138	9			
Balipara	111	163	16	29	13	77	21	212	31	183	13			
SURMA VALLEY	110	181	32	83	30	139	45	214	44	213	27			
Cachar plains	112	188	25	73	22	130	35	223	36	226	21			
Sylhet	110	180	33	86	32	141	47	212	46	210	28			
HILLS	62	101	23	27	11	60	24	138	41	124	23			
Garohills	33	54	11	12	4	28	12	71	19	68	11			
Khasi and Jaintia Hills ...	113	151	73	49	37	87	77	189	117	181	72			
North Cachar	46	75	12	14	7	27	14	70	20	99	12			
Naga Hills	22	38	5	14	3	26	6	60	12	44	5			
Lushai Hills	129	212	28	42	9	119	23	342	60	314	29			
Manipur	40	78	4	23	3	48	4	105	6	97	3			

SUBSIDIARY TABLE III.

LITERACY BY RELIGION, SEX AND LOCALITY.

Aged 5 and over.

District and Natural Division.	Number per mille who are literate.							
	Hindu.		Muslim.		Christian.		Tribal.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
ASSAM ...	186	25	115	16	227	114	31	4
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY ...	161	16	105	11	209	86	34	2
Goalpara ...	187	19	76	7	180	69	72	5
Kamrup ...	201	18	98	9	501	294	41	3
Darrang ...	118	13	102	6	116	30	12	1
Nowgong ...	176	17	89	12	185	127	16	...
Sibsagar ...	156	15	286	48	217	84	21	1
Lakhimpur ...	134	13	283	51	228	69	11	1
Sadiya ...	174	19	276	55	337	229	1	...
Balipara ...	178	12	391	200	179	93	5	...
SURMA VALLEY ...	255	48	120	19	400	200	28	2
Cachar Plains ...	217	33	140	10	356	151	18	1
Sylhet ...	267	52	117	20	438	245	41	4
HILLS ...	138	11	130	18	306	122	30	4
Garohills ...	95	6	76	3	306	118	9	1
Khasi and Jaintia Hills ...	335	110	285	194	367	249	44	13
North Cachar ...	71	8	253	32	221	96	4	...
Naga Hills ...	330	48	273	61	83	26	11	...
Lushai Hills ...	319	49	273	250	359	51	133	4
Manipur ...	109	3	109	13	234	40	10	1

SUBSIDIARY TABLE IV.

ENGLISH LITERACY BY AGE, SEX AND LOCALITY.

DISTRICT.		Literate in English per 10,000.																			
		1931.								1931.		1921.		1911.		1901.					
		5-10.		10-15.		15-20.		20 and over.		All ages 5 and over.		All ages 5 and over.		All ages 5 and over.		All ages 5 and over.					
		Male.		Female.		Male.		Female.		Male.		Female.		Male.		Female.		Male.		Female.	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
ASSAM	...	...	...	38	8	117	18	346	25	272	14	220	15	189	11	111	5	71	5		
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	...	...	...	37	8	116	16	360	21	282	13	228	14	205	11	127	5	88	7		
Goalpara	...	...	...	20	8	99	17	242	18	191	7	154	10	129	7	78	2	54	2		
Kamrup	...	...	...	43	7	138	16	423	23	265	11	221	12	203	9	105	4	65	2		
Darrang	...	...	...	20	5	69	10	255	13	210	12	169	11	147	6	92	4	77	4		
Nowgong	...	...	...	21	5	69	10	217	15	203	8	155	9	159	10	111	4	60	2		
Sibsagar	...	...	...	53	9	176	19	495	23	368	17	334	17	287	13	177	6	118	16		
Lakhimpur	...	...	...	43	9	121	20	459	36	421	24	336	23	268	19	186	10	140	10		
Sadiya	...	...	...	9	10	29	12	144	16	116	13	92	13	215	10	*	*	*	*		
Balipara	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	129	52	164	...	132	6	132	19	*	*	*	*		
SURMA VALLEY	...	...	...	44	8	134	18	377	23	284	11	233	13	193	7	103	2	56	1		
Cachar Plains	...	...	...	41	9	127	19	353	25	294	15	237	16	185	11	127	6	37	5		
Sylhet	...	...	...	45	8	135	18	392	23	282	11	233	13	194	6	99	2	59	1		
HILLS	...	...	...	25	11	74	25	211	39	197	24	154	24	122	22	51	13	70	12		
Garohills	...	...	...	4	2	4	6	60	13	63	10	67	9	49	5	23	1	15	4		
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	...	...	...	66	43	164	97	389	126	405	65	322	86	313	82	234	51	192	41		
North Cachar	...	...	...	30	15	75	23	153	29	254	24	192	23	105	41	119	7	134	16		
Naga Hills	...	...	...	5	3	14	3	68	11	91	5	64	5	60	6	27	2	32	2		
Lushai Hills	...	...	...	8	3	43	8	267	23	214	14	159	13	79	4	47	3	53	2		
Manipur	...	...	...	20	1	65	2	186	4	141	3	115	3	68	1	38	1	14	1		

SUBSIDIARY TABLE V.

LITERACY BY CASTE.

CASTE OR RACE.	Number per 1,000 aged 7 years and over who are literate.			Number per 1,000 aged 5 years and over who are literate.			Number per 10,000 aged 7 years and over who are literate in English.			Number per 10,000 aged 5 years and over who are literate in English.		
	1931.			1921.			1931.			1921.		
	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Ahom (Hindu) ...	136	246	14	109	107	11	241	451	7	224	420	7
Baidya (Ditto) ...	772	868	659	704	817	570	3,104	5,013	839	3,075	5,038	667
Brahman (Ditto) ...	489	721	194	438	721	114	1,132	1,940	99	914	1,661	58
(Brittial-Baniya) (Ditto) ...	197	308	68	150	232	58	275	468	51	307	569	16
Garo (Tribal) ...	6	10	1	6	11	1	4	6	1	11	23	...
Kachari (Hindu) ...	41	75	3	42	78	4	57	108	1	60	114	2
Kachari (Tribal) ...	33	62	3	11	21	...	28	54	...	6	13	...
Khasi (Ditto) ...	42	65	20	32	54	11	41	76	8	47	91	6
Khasi (Christian) ...	365	421	315	...	...	...	473	726	244	...	...	...
Lushai (Tribal) ...	74	145	4	...	...	...	18	35	...	...	...	...
Lushai (Christian) ...	198	383	53	...	...	...	138	232	17	...	...	...
Manipuri (Hindu) ...	54	110	3	...	...	...	62	129	2	...	...	...
Mikir (Tribal) ...	7	13	...	4	7	...	3	6	...	2	4	...
Nadial (Kaibartta) (Hindu) ...	105	183	17	41	73	4	104	189	7	34	63	1
Namasudra (Hindu) ...	55	100	5	36	67	4	15	29	...	21	40	1
Tanti (Hindu) ...	21	39	2	10	19	1	9	15	1	12	20	2
Yogi (Ditto) ...	153	268	26	98	178	13	60	112	2	53	101	2

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VI.

PROGRESS OF LITERACY SINCE 1881.

District and Natural Division.	Number of literacy per mille.															
	All ages, 10 and over.												15-20.			
	Male.						Female.						Male.			
	1881.	1901.	1911.	1921.	1931.	1941.	1881.	1901.	1911.	1921.	1931.	1941.	1881.	1901.	1911.	1921.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
ASSAM ...	169	144	117	89	83	36	23	15	8	6	3	1	189	164	126	92
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	161	140	116	79	71	34	16	12	6	4	2	1	185	161	129	85
Goalpara ...	145	112	103	68	66	30	15	10	5	3	2	1	156	117	94	63
Kamrup ...	195	188	145	97	66	33	18	15	7	3	1	...	228	224	172	116
Darrang ...	121	104	83	63	60	30	12	8	4	4	2	1	141	120	89	72
Nowgong ...	152	135	132	74	65	27	16	13	7	2	2	...	162	146	141	72
Sibsagar ...	178	160	122	79	81	39	18	14	7	6	2	1	269	190	143	88
Lakhimpur ...	158	119	107	80	90	42	16	12	7	6	3	2	185	137	121	85
Sadiya ...	127	138	...	...	...	...	12	10	...	...	...	...	130	134	...	...
Balipara ...	178	247	...	...	...	...	17	18	...	...	...	...	212	205	...	...
SURMA VALLEY	203	169	135	110	104	60	33	18	9	5	3	1	214	191	142	108
Cachar Plains ...	210	174	147	110	127	59	26	17	9	5	3	1	223	203	157	117
Sylhet ...	198	168	132	108	100	60	34	18	8	5	3	1	212	189	139	106
HILLS ...	115	91	65	54	38	20	28	18	11	12	8	3	138	101	73	59
Garó Hills ...	62	43	30	21	19	8	13	8	3	3	2	...	71	52	40	21
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	169	149	118	108	63	34	89	65	41	44	17	8	169	165	117	122
North Cachar Hills ...	86	87	63	67	17	1	13	8	5	6	...	...	70	60	38	57
Naga Hills ...	43	35	22	34	22	14	6	5	1	2	1	...	60	52	24	39
Lushai Hills ...	283	168	110	71	...	...	32	12	4	2	...	...	342	185	119	80
Manipur ...	90	85	58	27	...	...	4	2	2	1	...	...	105	62	66	22

District and Natural Division.	Number of literacy per mille.											
	15-20.				20 and over.							
	Female.				Male.				Female.			
	1881.	1901.	1911.	1921.	1881.	1901.	1911.	1921.	1881.	1901.	1911.	1921.
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
ASSAM ...	33	23	12	8	179	150	121	94	20	13	7	5
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	22	20	10	6	169	143	119	82	13	10	5	4
Goalpara ...	19	14	8	3	156	118	111	73	12	8	5	3
Kamrup ...	25	24	12	5	204	189	144	100	15	12	5	3
Darrang ...	18	14	7	6	126	109	87	72	10	6	3	3
Nowgong ...	22	21	11	3	162	140	135	79	13	11	5	2
Sibsagar ...	25	24	12	8	185	163	123	81	14	12	6	5
Lakhimpur ...	24	21	11	0	165	125	109	84	14	10	6	6
Sadiya ...	20	21	...	...	138	143	...	...	9	8	...	...
Balipara ...	31	40	...	...	183	263	...	...	13	12	...	...
SURMA VALLEY	44	25	11	6	213	176	139	118	27	15	7	5
Cachar Plains ...	36	28	13	6	226	184	151	130	21	14	8	4
Sylhet ...	46	25	11	6	210	175	136	115	28	15	7	6
HILLS ...	41	28	18	20	124	96	69	57	23	16	10	10
Garó Hills ...	19	13	5	5	68	46	31	24	11	6	3	2
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	117	96	65	60	181	146	119	110	72	56	34	35
North Cachar Hills ...	20	5	8	5	99	104	77	66	12	7	5	7
Naga Hills ...	12	11	2	3	44	34	24	36	5	4	1	2
Lushai Hills ...	60	18	7	2	314	190	124	78	29	10	3	1
Manipur ...	6	3	2	1	97	94	60	31	3	2	3	1

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VII.

NUMBER OF LITERATES AT CERTAIN AGES.

Age group.	Total population in various age groups.			Total literate in various age groups.			Total literate in English in various age groups.		
	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ASSAM (BRITISH TERRITORY).									
7-13 years ...	1,462,163	786,905	675,363	94,853	75,965	18,888	5,476	4,622	854
14-16 " ...	510,871	254,515	256,359	54,094	44,037	9,157	8,410	7,663	742
17-23 " ...	1,071,394	496,069	574,435	118,184	100,235	17,949	19,938	18,759	1,153
24 years and over ...	3,658,098	2,046,527	1,611,571	396,469	369,754	27,706	55,743	53,797	1,956
MANIPUR STATE.									
7-13 years ...	73,517	37,323	36,194	1,415	1,236	129	121	117	4
14-16 " ...	26,315	12,651	13,664	1,232	1,136	96	213	200	4
17-23 " ...	56,305	25,851	30,454	3,056	2,908	148	519	507	12
24 years and over ...	186,453	89,213	97,240	8,753	8,448	305	1,219	1,188	31
KHASI STATES.									
7-13 years ...	28,918	14,759	14,159	2,075	1,173	902	226	135	91
14-16 " ...	11,764	5,791	5,973	1,797	1,001	796	386	267	119
17-23 " ...	24,678	11,395	13,283	3,789	2,155	1,634	668	407	171
24 years and over ...	73,981	39,145	34,836	9,006	6,529	2,477	1,880	1,530	294

SUBSIDIARY TABLE VIII.

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS AND PUPILS ACCORDING TO THE RETURNS OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.
FOUR CENSUSES.

CLASS OF INSTITUTION.	1931.		1921.		1911.		1901.	
	Number of—		Number of—		Number of—		Number of—	
	Institutions.	Scholars.	Institutions.	Scholars.	Institutions.	Scholars.	Institutions.	Scholars.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
ALL KINDS	7,114	364,774	5,095	231,591	4,118	168,250	3,458	109,800
RECOGNIZED INSTITUTIONS	6,513	340,348	4,844	223,523	3,939	162,193	3,196	104,308
Arts Colleges ...	3*	1,181	2	846	2	230	1	49
Law College ...	1	68	1	60	...	...	...	...
Secondary Schools ...	496	67,912†	335	40,088	157	120,836	150	13,980
Primary " ...	5,864	266,346	4,407	179,754	3,658	136,527	3,006	89,050
Training " ...	11	381	11	447	9	361	22	880
Other Special " ...	138	4,460	88	2,328	113	4,239	17	849
UNRECOGNIZED INSTITUTIONS.	601	24,426	251	8,068	179	6,057	262	5,492
Advanced ...	Details not available		24	920	19	710	89	2,431
Elementary ...			40	1,520	25	354	1	18
Teaching the Koran only ...			98	2,817	117	3,957	166	12,916
Other schools not conforming to the departmental standard.			89	2,811	18	1,036	6	127

* Includes the Sanskrit college, Sylhet, with 30 scholars.

† Including 39,563 in the primary stages.

ASSAM - LINGUISTIC MAP

Scale of Map 24 Miles = 1 Inch
Scale of rectangles 1 sq inch = 500,000 Persons

REFERENCES

Bengali	[Diagonal lines]
Assamese	[Horizontal lines]
Tibeto - Burmese	[Dotted pattern]
Khasi - Synteng	[Cross-hatch pattern]

The map displays the following regions and districts:

- SADIYA FRONTIER TRACT
- LAKHIMPUR
- BALIPARA FRONTIER TRACT
- DARRANG
- SIBSAGAR
- GOALPARA
- KAMRUP
- NOWGONG
- GARO HILLS
- KHASI & JAINTIA HILLS
- NORTH CACHAR HILLS
- NAGA HILLS
- SYLHET
- CACHAR PLAINS
- MANIPUR
- LUSHAI HILLS

[illegible]

ASSAM - LINGUISTIC MAP

Scale of Map 24 Miles = 1 Inch
Scale of rectangles 1 sq inch = 500,000 Persons

REFERENCES

Bengali	[Diagonal Lines]
Assamese	[Horizontal Lines]
Tibeto - Burmese	[Dotted Pattern]
Khasi - Synteng	[Cross-Hatch Pattern]

The map displays the following regions and districts:

- DISTRICTS AND REGIONS:** GOALPARA, GARO HILLS, KAMRUP, KHASI & JAINTIA HILLS, SYLHET, DARRANG, BALIPARA FRONTIER TRACT, NOWGONG, NORTH CACHAR HILLS, CACHAR PLAINS, MANIPUR, NAGA HILLS, SIBSAGAR, LAKHIMPUR, SADIYA FRONTIER TRACT, LUSHAI HILLS.
- CITIES AND TOWNS:** Numerous locations are marked throughout the state, including Guwahati, Tezpur, Jorhat, and others.
- GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES:** The map highlights major hill ranges and plains, providing a clear view of the state's diverse terrain.
- LINGUISTIC DISTRIBUTION:** Shaded areas indicate the concentration of Bengali, Assamese, Tibeto-Burmese, and Khasi-Synteng populations across the state.

ASSAM - LINGUISTIC MAP

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- KHASI & JAINTIA HILLS
- NORTH CACHAR HILLS
- NAGA HILLS
- SYLHET
- CACHAR PLAINS
- MANIPUR
- LUSHAI HILLS

ASSAM - LINGUISTIC MAP

Scale of Map 24 Miles = 1 Inch
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REFERENCES

Bengali	[Diagonal Lines]
Assamese	[Horizontal Lines]
Tibeto - Burmese	[Dotted Pattern]
Khasi - Synteng	[Cross-Hatch Pattern]

The map displays the following regions and districts:

- SADIYA FRONTIER TRACT
- LAKHIMPUR
- BALIPARA FRONTIER TRACT
- DARRANG
- SIBSAGAR
- GOALPARA
- KAMRUP
- NOWGONG
- GARO HILLS
- KHASI & JAINTIA HILLS
- NORTH CACHAR HILLS
- NAGA HILLS
- SYLHET
- CACHAR PLAINS
- MANIPUR
- LUSHAI HILLS

CHAPTER X.

LANGUAGE.

132. Assam, a small province with a population of nine and a quarter million people, should be a philologist's paradise for it is a veritable Babel, as will be seen from the statistics of language in Imperial Table XV. In that table languages have been classified under (1) Vernaculars of Assam, (2) Vernaculars of India outside Assam, (3) Vernaculars of Asiatic countries outside India, and (4) European languages. Introductory.

Under (1) I have given details of over 60 languages indigenous to the province; under (2) 42 languages have been recorded; under (3) I have given particulars of 7 languages and under (4) of 11. Several new languages appear at this census for the first time, *e.g.*, Kalyo-kengngu—the language of a tribe most of whom live beyond the Naga Hills frontier. Mr. Mills informs me that this language has never been properly examined but that it is probably a central Naga language and I have classed it accordingly. Sangtam which did not appear at all in the 1921 census tables but which is probably the same as the Singtam of 1911 (when 171 speakers were recorded) now blossoms forth as a language spoken by over 4,000 persons in the Naga Hills. This sudden increase is due largely to the incorporation of some previously unadministered territory into the British district of the Naga Hills. Yachami (the Sema name for the tribe, which calls itself Yimsungr) and Phom which did not appear in the 1921 tables are also to be found. Among the old Kuki dialects Hrangkhoh, Biete (Bete) and Khelma (Sachip) which are mostly spoken in the North Cachar Hills and which were all apparently classified under Kuki (unspecified) in 1921 appear now under separate heads. A great deal of trouble has been taken at this census to reduce unspecified entries of Naga and Kuki to the minimum and to record and classify the various dialects and, on the whole, I think that the 1931 statistics of hill languages are an improvement on those of previous censuses.

In part II of Table XV will be found a table headed Bilingualism. This table gives the results of an attempt made at this census to ascertain the number of persons who speak another language or languages in addition to their own mother tongue. The languages of Assam are so numerous that it was found necessary to divide them into four groups for the purpose of this table, *viz.*, (1) Assamese, (2) Bengali, (3) all Tibeto-Burmese languages, and (4) Khasi-Synteng. In the case of languages which were not indigenous to the province, most of which are spoken by tea garden coolies, it was found impossible—in view of the necessity for economy—to cope with them and they have been left out of account altogether. Part II of Table XV shows, therefore, only the number of persons whose mother tongue is Assamese, Bengali, Khasi, or one of the numerous Tibeto-Burmese languages who also speak another language belonging to one of the other groups, *e.g.*, it gives the number of persons in every district whose mother tongue is Assamese and shows how many of them are fluent speakers of Bengali or of one of the Tibeto-Burmese languages or of Khasi-Synteng. The standard which was laid down as regards the degree of fluency in another language was high. The following instruction was printed on the cover of the enumeration books:—

“Enter (in column 15) the language or languages fluently and habitually spoken by each person in addition to his mother tongue” and this was supplemented by a special instruction to supervisors to the following effect:—

“The object of column 15 is to get as far as possible statistics of the extent of bilingualism in the province. The words *habitually and fluently spoken* are not intended to cover the case of a man who speaks imperfect Hindustani to his servants or imperfect Assamese to his coolies. In this column should be included only the language or languages (other than the man's mother tongue) which he speaks quite fluently, *e.g.*, a Bengali shopkeeper settled in Assam who speaks Assamese as a matter of course.”

Linguistic
map
of
Assam.

133. At the beginning of this chapter will be found a linguistic map of Assam which, I hope, will prove of some interest. This map is on the same scale as the social map of Assam at the beginning of this volume, the district rectangles being drawn to a scale of 1 square inch=500,000 persons. The references on the map indicate the distinctive hatching or shading used for the various languages (all Tibeto-Burmese languages being grouped together). *The areas in the rectangles which are not shaded represent the number of persons whose mother tongue is a language which is foreign to the province.*

This map shows not only the number of persons in each district whose mother tongue is Assamese or Bengali or Khasi or one of the numerous Tibeto-Burmese languages but also the extent of bilingualism. To take an example:—In Kamrup we notice that nearly seven-tenths of the whole rectangle is occupied by persons whose mother tongue is Assamese, about one-fifth by persons whose mother tongue is Bengali, about one-tenth by persons whose mother tongue is a Tibeto-Burmese language and the balance by persons who speak a language which is foreign to the province. This shows us the distribution of the languages spoken as mother tongues. Now to ascertain the extent of bilingualism it is necessary to look at the section of the rectangle which represents each mother tongue.

Looking at the Assamese section we notice, in the bottom left hand corner, the distinctive Bengali shading superimposed upon the Assamese shading: this represents the number of persons whose mother tongue is Assamese who are also bilingual in Bengali. Proceeding upwards to the Bengali mother tongue section of the district rectangle we see, in the bottom left hand corner of that section, a small space in which the Assamese shading has been superimposed on the Bengali shading. This represents the number of persons whose mother tongue is Bengali and who speak Assamese as fluently as their own language. Next look at the section with dots: this represents the number of persons whose mother tongue is a Tibeto-Burmese language. (In Kamrup mostly Kachari speakers.) It will be seen that about a third of this dotted section has straight horizontal lines (the symbol for Assamese) superimposed on it. This represents the number of speakers of a Tibeto-Burmese language who speak Assamese fluently and habitually. Having looked at the map, look now at the figures which the map represents: they are to be found in Part II of Imperial Table XV. It will be seen from this table that in Kamrup the number of persons with Assamese as a mother tongue is about 650,000 of whom less than 3,000 speak fluent Bengali and less than 500 can speak a Tibeto-Burmese language. The latter figure is so small that it cannot be represented on the map.

Similarly the number of persons in Kamrup whose mother tongue is Bengali amounts to about 170,000 of whom about 4,000 can also speak Assamese, and the number of speakers of a Tibeto-Burmese language is 112,000 of whom as many as 33,000 can speak fluent Assamese and only 12 fluent Bengali. The latter figure again is impossible to show on the map.

Under Khasi-Synteng the number of speakers in Kamrup is only about 600 which is too small to show on the map which takes no account of any figure less than 2,000.

The meaning of the map is now, I hope, sufficiently clear. An interesting comparison can be made between this map and the social map. I have already explained that the blank spaces on the linguistic map represent persons speaking languages which are foreign to the province. As most of the persons in Assam who speak languages foreign to the province are coolies and *ex-coolies* the blank spaces in the rectangles of the linguistic map should correspond, at least roughly, with the light blue hachured colour in the rectangles of the social map. It will be seen that in some districts, *e.g.*, Sylhet they correspond almost exactly. In others, *e.g.*, Sibsagar they do not correspond so well. In the case of Sibsagar this is due to the large number of coolies who have been returned as speaking Bengali. Unfortunately in Upper Assam the word *Bangla* means anybody who is not an Assamese and there is a well-known tendency for Assamese enumerators to write down a speaker of any foreign tongue as *Bangla* (which simply means something foreign). In fact a European in the more unsophisticated Assamese villages is sometimes known as a *Boga Bangla*—a white Bengali. For

this reason the statistics of the speakers of Bengali in the Upper Assam districts are unreliable. This will be seen from the fact that the number of persons born in Bengal and censused in Sibsagar is only 11,700 whereas the number of speakers of Bengali is given as 73,000. As there are no immigrant Eastern Bengal settlers in this district it is obvious that most of the Bengali-speaking section of the Sibsagar rectangle are not really Bengali speakers but speakers of languages foreign to the province and it will be seen that if the unshaded and the Bengali sections of the Sibsagar rectangle are added together they agree quite well with the light blue hachured colour, *i.e.*, with the coolie castes on the social map.

Interesting comparisons can also be made between the Tibeto-Burmese or Khasi sections of the rectangles and the red and pink sections on the social map.

Taking the Khasi and Jaintia Hills as a simple example it will be seen that the combined red and pink sections in the social map (tribal religions and tribal Christians) agree exactly with the combined sections of the Khasi and Tibeto-Burmese languages in the linguistic map. Of course, in some districts, persons belonging to tribal communities, *i.e.*, the Kacharis of Upper Assam have lost their old Tibeto-Burmese language and speak Assamese. In such cases the two maps will not be in complete agreement.

134. It is impossible to arrive at any conclusions from the study of the statistics of the various languages until we know how far we can rely on them. At all previous censuses reference has been made to the inaccuracy of the returns of language in Assam—an inaccuracy which is absolutely inevitable in view of the large foreign population of tea garden coolies and *ex-coolies*. Imagine the difficulty which an ordinary Assamese enumerator has in ascertaining the language of an *ex-garden* coolie born outside Assam who is, for example, a Khond by caste. The enumerator would not know it but, if I was there, I could tell the enumerator that that particular Khond's mother tongue may be either Khondi, Telugu or Oriya. The Khond himself would not be able to tell the name of his mother tongue and even if he were asked to translate certain simple words into his mother tongue the enumerator (who knows no language but his own) would not be able to place the language. Probably the enumerator, if he were an Assamese, would write down *Khondi* or *Bangla* or *Parsi* as the man's mother tongue and pass on. The recording of the mother tongues of *ex-coolies* in Assam is in fact a hopeless task. In the case of coolies in the gardens it is easier because many managers know some of the various coolie languages but even on gardens the matter is very difficult especially in the case of coolies born in Assam many of whom have been brought up to speak a *patois* composed partly of their tribal tongue and partly of the language of the district in which the tea garden is situated.

Commenting on the difficulty of the language returns in the 1921 Census Report Mr. Lloyd remarked:—

"Our returns are certainly vitiated by the real impossibility of diagnosing the language of tea garden coolies. In Sibsagar Mr. Mullan, the Subdivisional Officer, gave much personal attention to the problem and proved again that the difficulty was a very real one. After close questioning of many coolies, and with literate Assamese and Bengali helpers he was still unable properly to place the ordinary *coolie-bat* or mixture of Hindustani, Bengali and Assamese. He was however, able to eliminate the common error of entering Bengali in many cases."

These difficulties were also experienced at this census but, as far as I can judge, the language returns in the case of coolies has improved considerably. This is shown by the fact that only 73,000 persons in Sibsagar district have been returned as speakers of Bengali (a word which the Assamese will continue to use for any foreign language) against 131,000 in 1921 and 77,000 in Lakhimpur against 105,000 in 1921. These large decreases do not signify a reduction in the total number of Bengali speakers. They merely mean that the general tendency for Assamese enumerators to use the word Bengali for any language which is not Assamese has been kept under stricter control than at the last census.

In the case of Assamese, Kachari, Miri, and the other indigenous languages of the Assam Valley the language statistics can be accepted as very accurate, and in Sylhet and Cachar plains, where Bengali is the local vernacular, the accuracy of the language statistics should be distinctly good though there, too, the figures for tea garden coolie languages must contain many doubtful entries.

Accuracy
of the
statistics.

In the hills the language statistics should be very accurate indeed except in the case of some of the minor Kuki languages some of the speakers of which have probably gone under Kuki (unspecified). It is satisfactory to note that the number of speakers of unspecified Kuki languages has been reduced at this census from over 18,000 to 6,000 and of unclassified and unspecified Naga languages from 22,000 to 3,600.

For what I regard as a considerable improvement in this respect I am indebted to Mr. Mills, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, who pointed out that my original compilation figures for the Kuki languages in the North Cachar Hills gave no details of the Hrangkol, Biete, Khelma and Changsen languages but lumped them all together as Kuki (unspecified).

I thought, at first, that this was due to the fault of the local authorities but when the census schedules of the North Cachar Hills were brought to Shillong they were found to be mostly excellently written up with full details of the various languages and the error was then traced to the Central Census office at Sylhet which had apparently lumped all these languages together as Kuki (unspecified) simply because this had been done in 1921!

Scheme of
classification.

135. The general scheme of classification of languages is based on the Linguistic Survey of India—*monumentum aere perennius*—all the volumes of which have now been published. Various addenda and corrigenda have, however, appeared since the volumes of this Survey which deal with the Naga, Bodo and Kuki-Chin groups of Assam were first published and the actual classification of the languages at this census has been carried out in accordance with an index of languages based on the classification of the last census but with one or two minor corrections suggested by or approved by Sir George Grierson. This index was entitled *Revised scheme of classification of Indian Languages* and will be referred to in this chapter by that title. But even in this index there appear to be a few items which are, at least, doubtful and I have not hesitated to alter the classification in cases where I can produce good grounds for so doing.

For example in the Bodo group there is a language designated Tsakchip (Tipura, "Mrung") said to be spoken in Assam and Bengal. This Tsakchip is apparently Sachip or Khelma, an old Kuki dialect spoken in the North Cachar Hills, and as for Tipura (or Tipra as it is written by enumerators) spoken in Sylhet this is also an old Kuki language and apparently corresponds to the Hallam of the Linguistic Survey. In the appendix at the end of this chapter I have given specimens of both these languages. Kachha Naga which appears as such in the revised scheme of classification of languages and which appeared in previous census reports as Empeo or Kachha Naga is shown in Imperial Table XV under three adjoining heads, *viz.*, Kachha Naga, Lyengmai and Zemi. It will be noticed that Kachha Naga appears in Manipur only, Lyengmai in the Naga Hills only and Zemi in both the Naga Hills and the North Cachar Hills. Mr. J. P. Mills, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, tells me that Kachha Naga (though a term which is in common use) is a meaningless expression and that about half the Nagas of Manipur are Lyengmai and half Zemi. As, however, the Kachha Nagas of Manipur were returned as such in the census schedules I have kept that name for them but these three terms, *viz.*, Kachha, Lyengmai and Zemi should be bracketted together for comparison with the Empeo or Kachha Naga language figures of previous censuses. Dr. J. H. Hutton, C.I.E., I.C.S., Census Commissioner for India, has subsequently informed me that he is not sure that he agrees with Mr. Mills' views regarding these Kachha Nagas. He writes as follows:—

"I know three Naga words translated by Kachha Naga, *viz.*, Nzemi or Ngaymai, Lyengmai and Nruongmai and I suspect them of being merely dialectic variations of the same word, though those speaking the northern (Nzemi) dialect have been so much influenced by the Angamis as to differ socially as well from the others."

A volume on the Kachha Nagas, with a chapter on their language, would be a very valuable addition to the Assam series of monographs on the hill tribes of Assam; very little seems to be known about these people who have recently given a considerable amount of trouble in Manipur State and the North Cachar Hills.

Linguistic
distribution : general.

136. Practically all languages in Assam fall into one of four great families—known as the Austric, the Tibeto-Chinese, the Dravidian and the Indo-European. There are a few speakers of other families; for example there are 14 speakers of

Hebrew which belongs to the Semitic family of languages but the number of speakers of languages not belonging to the one of four great families mentioned above is so small that they can be neglected. Under each family there are numerous sub-families, branches, sub-branches, groups and sub-groups which will be discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

The table in the margin shows the number of speakers of each of the four great families of languages per 1,000 of the population for the last three censuses. Proportionate figures for each sub-family and group will be found in Subsidiary Table I at the end of this chapter. It would not, however, be wise to draw any

conclusions from a comparison of the figures given in the table above. As already explained the language returns of coolies and particularly of *ex-coolies* are not accurate in Assam and the decrease in the proportion of speakers of Indo-European languages at this census and the increases in the Austric and Dravidian families are probably due to a greater elimination of the return of Bengali (meaning a foreign language) in the case of coolies and *ex-coolies* than to any other cause.

It will be seen that the proportion of speakers of the very numerous Tibeto-Chinese languages found in Assam is very small—only 17.6 per cent. of the population—and that 75 per cent. of the inhabitants of Assam speak an Indo-Aryan language. But what most readers of this report will wish to know is the proportion of speakers of Assamese and Bengali. This will be dealt with later but I may mention here that 42.9 per cent. of the population of Assam speak Bengali and 21.6 per cent. Assamese.

In Subsidiary Table I will be found the number of speakers of each language at this census and in 1921. It will be seen that with the growth of the population of the province the number of speakers of practically every language has increased; in certain cases, however, there are peculiar differences between the figures: these will be explained later.

137. This family consists of two sub-families, the *Austro-Nesian* (which is not represented in Assam) and the *Austro-Asiatic*: the latter has two branches, the *Mon-Khmer* and the *Munda* both of which are found in this province. Of the *Mon-Khmer* branch Khasi (including Synteng) is the only representative in Assam and forms a separate group. Khasi, as will be seen from the linguistic map, forms a kind of island of speech in the centre of the province surrounded on all sides by speakers of other families of languages. The number of speakers of Khasi has grown with the natural increase in the numbers of the tribe from 204,000 in 1921 to 234,000 in 1931. Khasi shows no sign whatever of disappearing and thanks to the efforts of the missionaries it has now quite a literature of its own. The number of Khasis and Syntengs (Pnars) according to the caste and tribal table (Imperial Table XVII) is 233,000—practically the same as the number of speakers of the language.

The Munda branch contains 321,000 speakers against 262,000 in 1921 of whom 159,000 speak Mundari and 102,000 Santali, the balance being composed of speakers of Savara, Kurku, Kharia and other Munda languages. Practically all the speakers of this branch, with the exception of the Santali settlers in Goalpara, are coolies or *ex-coolies*.

138. This family contains far the largest number of languages in the province but many of them are spoken by only a small number of people. The total number of speakers of this family of languages is 1,628,000 or 17.6 per cent. of the entire population. The Tibeto-Chinese family consists of two sub-families, *viz.*, (1) the *Tibeto-Burman*, and (2) the *Tai-Chinese*. The latter, so far as Assam is concerned, consists only of Khamti and Shan (including Aitonla and Phakial) which belong to the Tai group of this sub-family and which have only about 6,000 speakers between them, practically all of whom are to be found in Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and the Sadiya Frontier Tract. The Ahom language which is now extinct belonged to this group. The Khamtis are great elephant hunters and the 16 speakers of Khamti censused in the

North Cachar Hills were employed there on the date of the census in *Khedda* operations. The combined total of Khamti and Shan speakers has increased by 900 since the last census. The number of speakers of the *Tibeto-Burman sub-family* has increased from 1,423,000 in 1921 to 1,622,000 at this census. This sub-family has numerous branches. The first is the *Tibeto-Himalayan branch* which includes Bhotia of Tibet, Magari, Limbu, and many other languages spoken in Nepal and Sikkim. The total number of speakers of this branch censused in Assam amounts to only 7,000 against 11,000 in 1921. This apparent reduction is due to the fact that the Naipali language (Khas-kura) belongs to another family of languages—the Indo-European—and to the ordinary enumerator any Nepali, be he a Magar, a Gurung or a Limbu, would be normally written down as a speaker of 'Nepali'. No reliance can be placed on the figures in this Tibeto-Himalayan branch. The *North Assam branch* of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family consists of the Abor, Miri, Aka, Dafia and Mishmi languages. The number of speakers of this branch has increased from 80,000 to 99,000 of whom 81,000 are speakers of Miri and 14,000 are speakers of Abor; Mishmi speakers number only 2,285 and speakers of Dafia 1,644. The main Dafia tribe lives beyond the administered area of the Balipara Frontier Tract and but there are a certain number of Dafia villages in North Lakhimpur, Darrang, and the administered portion of the Balipara Frontier Tract. The Akas live outside British India, beyond the limits of administration, and only 33 speakers of this language have been returned: they are probably cold weather visitors to the plains.

Next comes the *Assam-Burmese branch* which contains a host of languages and is divided in many groups and sub-groups. The first is the *Bodo group* which comprises the Garo, Rabha, Chutiya, Koch, Bara or Bodo (Kachari), Dimasa (Hill Kachari) and Lalung languages. The total number of speakers of this group has increased from 485,000 to 531,000 or by 9.5 per cent. All languages in this group except Lalung and Koch show an increase—a peculiar contrast to 1921 when all languages in this group except Garo, Koch and Chutiya showed a decrease.

Speakers of Garo have increased; with the increase in the tribe, by 11.3 per cent. to 192,480 and Rabha speakers now number 27,000 against 22,000 in 1921. In 1911 the number of Rabha speakers numbered 23,000 so that the 1921 census figures for this language were apparently too low. Chutiya speakers who now number 4,315 show a slight increase over the 1921 figure. The Chutiya language is now spoken only by the Deori section of the Chutiyas most of whom are to be found in Lakhimpur. The Deoris are a very independent people and are well able to stand up for themselves. Their language is probably the original language of Upper Assam. The decrease in the speakers of Koch (from nearly 5,000 to 1,370) is probably due to the fact that a few thousand speakers of Koch were returned as speakers of Garo. Koch is principally spoken in the Garo Hills and, according to the Linguistic Survey, it is a kind of mongrel Garo. Bara, Bodo, Mech or Plains Kachari which showed a slight decrease in 1921 shows a considerable increase at this census in the number of its speakers—from 260,000 to 283,000. Mr. Lloyd in commenting upon the decrease in the speakers of this language in 1921 remarked that the number of speakers of the Kachari language had probably not really decreased but that the apparent decrease was due to the fact that a great number of Kacharis were bi-lingual and had returned Assamese as their mother tongue.

Dimasa or Hill Kachari which exhibited a peculiar fall from 16,483 to 11,072 speakers in 1911-21 shows a sharp rise and the number of the speakers of this language now stands at 14,680. In the 1921 Census Report Mr. Lloyd in discussing the sudden decrease in the number of speakers of Dimasa in the North Cachar Hills stated:—

"There has been a social movement probably not untimed with political import which has caused the Hill Kacharis to return their race or caste as Kshatriya. This social movement combined with the move to Hinduism has probably caused many bi-lingual hillmen or interested enumerators to return the language as Bengali. I doubt if 5,000 of them have really lost their mother tongue in 10 years".

Personally I would be more inclined to attribute the sudden decrease in 1911-21 to bad sorting than to any other cause. The slips of the North Cachar Hills were certainly very badly dealt with in the Sylhet central office on this occasion and it was more or less due to an accident that I was able to detect it.

The speakers of Lalung have declined still further since 1921 and now number only 9,000 out of a total tribal population of over 42,000. The speakers of this language have decreased at each successive census since 1891. In that year the strength of the tribe was 50,000 of whom 10,000 were recorded as speakers of the tribal language. It was stated in the Census Report of that year that the Lalungs living north of the Kalang river had lost their own language and spoke Assamese. During 1891-1901 the Lalungs suffered dreadfully from the *kala azar* epidemic which by 1901 had reduced their numbers to 35,500 of whom only 16,500 were speakers of Lalung and, since then, the number of speakers of this language has gradually decreased at each census though the numbers of the tribe have gradually increased.

It is interesting to observe that the 3,500 Lalungs who live in the Khasi Hills have all been returned as speakers of Lalung whereas of the 38,000 Lalungs in Nowgong less than 5,000 have claimed Lalung as a mother tongue.

The language certainly seems to be dying out in Nowgong—the home of the vast bulk of the tribe—but it is difficult to say with any certainty whether the census figure represents the real number of speakers. Most of the Lalungs of Nowgong returned themselves as Hindus on this occasion and they may have considered that Assamese (in which they would be bi-lingual) was a more respectable language and more in accordance with their pretensions to Hinduism than their own language.

Between the Bodo and the Kuki-Chin groups of the Assam-Burmese branch comes *Mikir* which forms a connecting group between the two. The total number of speakers of Mikir which was classed in the Naga-Kuki sub-group in 1921 has increased by 16 per cent. to a total of 126,457. The great majority of Mikir speakers live in the Mikir Hills of Sibsagar and Nowgong districts (89,000) but there are nearly 20,000 speakers in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills (including the Khasi States) and 9,000 in Kamrup.

The *Naga group* is one of the most interesting groups of the Assam-Burmese branch. The number of speakers of this group has increased from 227,000 to 265,000 but about 13,000 of this increase is due to the incorporation within British India of previously unadministered territory in the Naga Hills and in the Sadiya Frontier Tract. A considerable improvement has been effected since 1921 in the statistics of this group by the reduction of the number of persons speaking an unspecified Naga language from over 22,000 to 3,627. As a result, some of the figures of the individual languages show considerable increases. Thus Kachha Naga (including Lyengmai and Nzemi) which showed a decrease of 5,000 speakers in 1911-21 has now increased from 3,339 to 19,754. Mr. Lloyd in 1921 suggested that the decrease was due partly to inaccuracy in 1911 and partly to some speakers of this language having been returned in 1921 under Angami and Naga (unspecified). As a matter of fact the decrease in 1921 was more probably due to greater inaccuracy in 1921. In that year a few thousand speakers of this language were possibly returned under Angami as Mr. Lloyd suspected but the great majority of the tribe must have been returned under Naga (unspecified). This is shown by the fact that we now get over 5,000 speakers of Kachha Naga in the North Cachar Hills whereas in 1921 and 1911 they were all classed under Naga (unspecified) and in the Naga Hills there are now 7,259 speakers of this language against only 1,931 in 1921 and 6,868 in 1911. It is obvious that the 1921 figure was far too low. Speakers of Kabui, who decreased slightly in 1911-21 (owing to the influenza epidemic), have increased by nearly 3,000 to 18,475 but speakers of Angami, Kezhama, and Lhota have remained almost stationary. Sema, Rengma and Ao all show an increase in the number of their speakers; so, also, do Tangkhul and Memi. Sangtam, Kalyo-Kengngu, Yachami, Rangpang and Phom appear for the first time prominently in our tables. Rangpang—itsself an inaccurate word—covers all Naga speakers of the Sadiya and Lakhimpur Frontier Tracts.

The *Kuki-Chin group* includes Manipuri and all the numerous Old and New Kuki languages spoken in Manipur State and the North Cachar Hills, as well as the various Lushei-Kuki dialects of the Lushai Hills. Numerically it is the most important group in Assam of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family and contains 591,000 speakers, an increase of 17 per cent. since 1921.

The most important language in the group is Manipuri or Meithei which has 368,000 speakers, an increase of 13.5 per cent. since 1921. The Manipuri language is confined to Manipur State (279,000 speakers), Cachar plains (55,500 speakers) and Sylhet (29,000 speakers), the few speakers who were enumerated in other districts being mostly Manipuri cold weather visitors to the plains—traders and *rajmistris* (brick-makers). The Manipuris have a strong national spirit and even those who have been settled in Cachar and Sylhet for generations show no signs of losing their mother tongue.

Maring—a language spoken by a very small tribe of about 4,000 persons in Manipur State, which was formerly classed under the Naga-Kuki sub-group, appears now as an independent sub-group.

The *Old Kuki sub-group* contains many interesting languages some of which are spoken by only a few villages. Hmar or Mhar, a language spoken in the Lushai Hills and in the south-west of Manipur State, contains nearly half the total number of speakers in the whole sub-group. The number of speakers of Hmar which is given in the Linguistic Survey as 2,000 has risen from 5,430 in 1911 to 8,586 in 1921 and now stands at 21,583. It will be seen later that the numbers of speakers of Paite and Ralte which are also spoken in the Lushai Hills have increased enormously and that the speakers of Lushei or Dulien show a very great decrease. The increase in the speakers of Hmar must therefore be due to the fact that most of the Hmars at this census returned their language as Hmar instead of Lushei. The Hmar language has been very closely influenced by Lushei or Dulien and appears to be a dialect of that language more than anything else. I remember when I visited some Christian Hmar villages in the south-west of Manipur State about 9 years ago that I found the hymn books in use were all written in Lushei which the people found no difficulty in understanding.

The number of persons belonging to the Hmar tribe according to the Caste and Tribe Table is 5,768 in Manipur and 19,089 in the Lushai Hills which corresponds fairly closely with the 5,643 speakers of Hmar in Manipur and the 15,940 speakers of Hmar in the Lushai Hills. Anal and Kom have about the same number of speakers as in 1921 but Vaiphei, the language of an Old Kuki clan of Manipur State, shows a considerable increase in the number of speakers—from 2,882 to 4,624. Gangte appears for the first time in the census tables; how it was classed at previous censuses I cannot trace nor can I trace it in the Linguistic Survey. Yet the Gangtes are a well-known clan in Manipur. They are closely connected with the Vaipheis and it is said that the Vaiphei (or Waiphe) and the Gangte clans are descended from two brothers. In his monograph on the Lushei-Kuki clans Colonel Shakespear refers to this clan as the Rangte (page 146). Apparently he did so because he heard the name of the clan pronounced as such by Lushais and in the Lushai language R very often takes the place of G in Thado. When I was serving in Manipur State the clan was known to me as "Gangte" and Mr. Mills tells me that that is the name by which he knows it. The language is probably the same as Vaiphei but as it has been returned in the census schedules I have given it separately. I have placed Tipura, which was classed under the Bodo group in the census tables of 1921 and which still appears under the Bodo group as Tsakchip (Tipura) in the revised classification scheme, in the Old Kuki sub-group. I have done this because there appears to be no doubt that the so-called Tipura (or Tipra) language of Sylhet corresponds to the Hallam of the Linguistic Survey. Hallam seems to be a word which is practically unknown in Assam but that it exists is shown by the fact that about 20 entries of Hallam were actually found in the Sylhet returns. As the language of this tribe seems to be universally known as Tipura, I have kept that designation but I have placed it

in the Old Kuki sub-group. The following extracts from the Linguistic Survey throw light on the relation of the Tipura of Sylhet with the Khelma language of the North Cachar Hills.

Tipura has also been reported as spoken in Sylhet but an examination of the specimens received from that district shows that the language is really Hallami belonging to the Kuki and not to the Bodo group.....

The name Hallam may be connected with Mr. Damant's Khelma which tribe he says lives in the North Cachar Hills. The short vocabulary which he publishes agrees with Hallam. The same is the case with the vocabulary of Sakajaib or Shekasip which Mr. Soppit has published. As far as can be seen from the materials at my disposal Khelma and Sakajaib are identical with Hallam. According to Mr. Soppit the Sakajaibs are an offshoot of the Hrangkols...It is very probable that Khelma and Sakajaib are nothing else but Hallam."

The Sakajaib or Shekasip mentioned in this extract is apparently the same word as Sachip or Khelma. To show the relation between Khelma and the "Tipra" or Hallam of Sylhet specimens of both these languages are given in the appendix to this chapter: it is obvious that the relation is very close.

Other Old Kuki dialects which will be found in Imperial Table XV are Hrang-khol, Kholhang or Khotlang, Beite, Chiru, Aimol, Lamgang (or Hiroi-Lamgang), Purum, and Chote. None of these dialects have more than 2,000 speakers and most have less than a thousand. The first three are spoken principally in the North Cachar Hills and the other five in Manipur State.

The speakers of the Chansen (Jangsen) language have been shown separately on the advice of Mr. Mills who tells me that the Chansens are not the same as the Thados. They closely resemble them merely because they intermarry with them but the Chansens are really an Old Kuki tribe. I am also informed by Mr. Mills that the Kholhang or Khotlang language which appears in the tables is the language of a Kuki tribe who came originally from the Lushai Hills and that they are found in the North Cachar Hills and in Cachar (Sadri) and also presumably in the Lushai Hills. He tells me that this tribe has probably got other names as well. In his recent monograph on the Thado Kukis Mr. Shaw refers to the Khotlang as an Old Kuki clan with a dialect of its own. No speakers of the Old Kuki language given in the revised scheme of classification as Kolreng or Koireng appear in the tables. Kwoireng (Quoireng) is a Naga language spoken in Manipur and has been classed accordingly. Judging by the number of speakers the Kolreng or Koireng of the 1921 census tables is the Kwoireng language of this census but was misclassified. It was also misclassified at this census by the Central Compilation Office, but, as I knew something about the tribe, I obtained the census schedules of the Quoireng villages from Manipur and extracted the figures direct from them.

In the *Northern Chin sub-group* the principal language is Thado—the dominant Kuki tribe of Manipur. This language is now recorded as the mother tongue of over 50,000 persons against 31,000 in 1921. The increase is principally due to the elimination at this census of a large number of speakers of unspecified Kuki in Manipur State and adjoining districts. Thus 1,272 Thado speakers have now been found in the North Cachar Hills and 2,097 in the Naga Hills whereas in 1921 only 196 Thado speakers were recorded in both these districts.

The other languages in the group are Paite, Ralte and Sokte. Paite, which is spoken in Manipur State and the Lushai Hills, shows a large increase (from 9,000 to nearly 15,000). In 1911 the speakers of Paite numbered 16,000 so that the 1921 figure was apparently too low. The number of Ralte speakers shows an even greater increase (from 5,500 to 16,000). In 1911 they numbered 7,500. The difference is accounted for by the large decrease in Lushei at this census. It is interesting to observe that the Linguistic Survey gives 18,000 speakers of Ralte—a dialect which has been very largely influenced by Lushei.

Sokte (including Kamhao) has only 777 speakers against 4,606 in 1921. The Soktes (called Suhtes in Mr. Shaw's monograph on the Thado Kukis and also known as the Kamhaos after a former chief of the clan) are really a tribe belonging to the Chin Hills of Burma rather than to Manipur State and the only explanation I can offer for this sudden decrease is that either some Sokte villages have moved back over the border or they have been recorded as Kuki (unspecified).

In the *Central Chin sub-group* come Lakher and Lushai or Duliën. The speakers of Lakher which is found in Assam only in the Lushai Hills have increased by nearly 3,000 to 6,186 as the result of the incorporation of the Zongling area into British Territory. The Lakher language has recently been exhaustively dealt with by Mr. N. E. Parry, I.C.S., in his monograph on the Lakher (published by McMillan and Company, London). Mr. Parry states that each of the Lakher groups has a dialect of its own but the dialect spoken by most of the tribe is Tlongsai which is also used by the missionaries in the few school books which have been published. Mr. Parry thinks that before long the Tlongsai dialect will become the language of all Lakher in the same way as Duliën has superseded the other Lushai dialects. Lushai or Duliën speakers have decreased by 16,500 to 57,500. This decrease must be largely nominal and is explained by the large increase in the Lushai Hills in the number of speakers of Ralte (+11,500), Hmar (+12,000) and Paite (+3,000). These languages are all very similar and are now much mixed with Lushai.

Under unclassified Chin languages we find 3,886 speakers of Yahao and 14,191 speakers of unspecified Chin or Poi. All these people are found in the Lushai Hills. I cannot trace any entry of Yahao in previous census tables of Assam though it is mentioned in the Linguistic Survey as Zahao or Yahow—a language spoken in the Chin Hills. The appearance of this language in the Lushai Hills is presumably due to immigration from the Chin Hills.

The only representative in Assam of the *Kachin group* is Kachin or Singpho which has only 3,000 speakers divided between Lakhimpur district and the Sadiya Frontier Tract.

139. The principal languages of this family found in Assam are Kurukh or Oraon, Gondi, Telugu, Kandhi or Kui, and Tamil, all of which are spoken by tea garden coolies and ex-coolies. The total number of speakers of this family has increased from 98,000 to 141,000 the main increase being in the speakers of Gondi (from 22,000 to 49,000) and of Oraon (from 40,000 to 53,000). The Gondi figures were suspected to be far too low at the last census (only 22,000 Gondi speakers to 52,000 Gonds) and it seems probable that the figures of the languages in this family are more accurate now than in 1921.

140. In this family fall all the European languages found in Assam—from Welsh to Norwegian—as well as all those Indian languages which are derived from Sanskrit. Speakers of European languages number 4,013 a figure which corresponds almost exactly with the total number of Europeans and Anglo-Indians in Assam (4,012).

Of the speakers of European languages 3,852 claim English, 95 Italian (mostly Roman Catholic missionaries) and 31 Welsh as their mother tongue. Except Swedish which is the mother tongue of 11 persons (there is a Swedish match factory at Dhubri) no other European language is represented by more than 6 speakers. Far the largest numbers of speakers in the Indo-European family belong to the Eastern group, of the Outer sub-branch of the Indo-Aryan branch. This group which consists of Bengali, Assamese, Oriya and Bihari comprises 6,164,000 speakers—66·7 per cent. of the total population of Assam. Bengali is spoken by 3,966,000 and Assamese by 1,995,000 persons. The number of speakers of Bengali has increased by 440,000 or 12·5 per cent. and the number of Assamese speakers by 269,000 or 15·6 per cent. As Bengali and Assamese are the two principal vernaculars of the province a somewhat detailed examination of these two languages will not be out of place.

In Sylhet and Cachar, where the figures can be accepted as accurate, the number of Bengali speakers has increased from 2,646,000 to 2,848,000 or by 7·6 per cent. which corresponds closely with the general rate of increase in the population of those districts. In the Assam Valley (excluding the Frontier Tracts) the number of speakers of Bengali has increased from 852,000 to 1,086,000, the increases being particularly noticeable in the case of Kamrup (+120,000) and Nowgong (+121,000), neither of which are large tea districts and where the question of Bengali being used by Assamese enumerators to denote a foreign cooly language would hardly arise. On the other hand there are large decreases in Lakhimpur (—28,000) and Sibsagar (—58,000). The reason for the decreases in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar are almost

certainly due to the fact that the tendency of Assamese enumerators to use the word *Bangla* for any foreign language was checked more firmly on this occasion than at previous censuses. Even now, however, it is clear that the figures of Bengali in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur are far too high. The great increases in the speakers of the Bengali language in Kamrup and Nowgong is due to the continued immigration of Eastern Bengal immigrants and to the natural increase of the previous immigrants. Bengali although it has, on paper, received a setback in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts has really made enormous headway in the Assam Valley as can be seen from the fact that in the three lower districts of the valley—Goalpara, Kamrup and Nowgong,—where the figures should be fairly reliable, the total number of Bengali speakers has increased from 529,000 to 840,000. The Assamese language shows a considerable increase in the number of its speakers namely, from 1,726,000 to 1,995,000 or by 15·6 per cent.

Assamese is spoken almost entirely in the Assam Valley. Every district in that valley shows a substantial increase, the percentage increases being:—Goalpara 16·1, Kamrup 12·8, Darrang 10·1, Nowgong 12·7, Sibsagar 16·9, and Lakhimpur 26·2. It is interesting to observe that in spite of the large increase in the population of Assam at every census since 1901 the percentage of speakers of Assamese to the total

Percentage of Assamese speakers in population of Assam.

1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.
21·6	21·6	21·7	22·0

population has remained very steady as the marginal table shows. It is clear from the figures of increase in the speakers of Assamese at this census and from this table that the language is, at present, in no danger of supersession and that the Assamese are determined to preserve their national tongue. The question of Assamese *versus* Bengali in Goalpara has been fully discussed in previous census reports. After a special enquiry held in 1911 it was found that the census figures showed too many Bengali and too few speakers of Assamese, and that the correct number of Bengali speakers in Goalpara in that year was about 317,000 while Assamese speakers numbered 115,000. In 1921 the census figures gave 406,000 Bengali speakers and 139,000 Assamese speakers which Mr. Lloyd accepted as approximately accurate, the great increase in Bengali speakers being due to the immigration of Eastern Bengal settlers. At this census the number of Bengali speakers has risen to 476,000 and the number of Assamese speakers to 161,000. Allowing for an increase of population the 1931 figures agree quite well with those of 1921. Assamese is mostly spoken in the Goalpara subdivision and Bengali in the Sadr or Dhubri subdivision but, as might be expected in a district which is the meeting place of two languages—Assamese and Bengali—the district has developed a dialect of its own. Mr. Lloyd in the 1921 report quoted the remarks of a former Chief Commissioner who had an intimate knowledge of the province to the effect that:—“So long as we attempt to work on a basis of ‘Assamese’ and ‘Bengali’ the language statistics of Goalpara district will be worthless. The plain fact is that the people of Goalpara district all speak Goalpari. At the Bengal end they speak it with a tinge of Bengali, at the Assam end with a tinge of Assamese and in the middle with a tinge of both”. I have had the figures of Assamese and Bengali speakers in Goalpara extracted by thanas and the results are given in Appendix II to this chapter. The figures show clearly that Assamese (or what the persons who speak it claim to be Assamese) is hardly spoken at all in Dhubri, Golakganj, Gossaingaon, South Salmara and Mankachar thanas, which are all thanas at the Bengal end of the district; that in thanas Goalpara, Dudnai, North Salmara and Bijni, which are all thanas along the Kamrup (or Assam) border of the district, Assamese is spoken more than Bengali, and that in the middle of the district—in thanas Bilasipara, Kokrajhar and Lakhimpur Assamese and Bengali are both spoken but Bengali predominates. Kokrajhar and Bilasipara thanas contain the main block of speakers of Tibeto-Burmese languages, there being over 40,000 speakers of these languages in each of these thanas. It appears, therefore, that the true boundary of Assam from a linguistic point of view would be a line drawn from north to south almost exactly half way in the middle of the Goalpara district. Oriya is spoken by 203,000 persons—most of whom must be coolies and ex-coolies—an

increase of 41,000 since 1921. Practically the whole of the increase is confined to the three great tea districts of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Darrang. Part of the increase is probably due to the natural growth of the old Oriya-speaking population and part to greater accuracy in the returns.

Bihari is included in this group but no speakers of this language appear in the Assam tables. This is due to the fact that it is impossible in Assam to draw a line between Bihari and Eastern and Western Hindi. All speakers of Hindi have been lumped together at this census under Eastern Hindi which falls in the mediate sub-branch of the Indo-Aryan Branch.

In 1921 Mr. Lloyd classified all Hindi speakers in Assam under Western Hindi on the ground that vernacular Hindustani was officially classed as a dialect of Western Hindi. He then went on to say :—

"An attempt to divide the Hindi figures by use of immigration statistics is full of difficulty, because in many cases the districts of origin of tea garden coolies are not known and also, because the mongrel tongue spoken by them often falls into no proper language. Roughly it may be that two-thirds of the 468,000 Hindi speakers enumerated should be placed under Bihari, a quarter under Eastern Hindi and only one-twelfth under Western Hindi, but this is little more than a guess."

I agree entirely with Mr. Lloyd that only a very small fraction of the speakers of Hindi in Assam, who are practically all tea garden coolies from Bihar, Orissa and the Central Provinces, could possibly be speakers of Western Hindi but I do not agree with him that merely because Hindustani was officially classed as a dialect of Western Hindi all speakers of Hindi and Hindustani in Assam should be classed under Western Hindi. There can be no doubt whatever that the vast majority of the garden coolies in Assam who may be said to speak "Hindustani" speak some form of Bihari or some dialect of Eastern Hindi and I have no hesitation in classing all Hindi speakers in Assam under Eastern Hindi. In this group there are now 590,000 speakers against 468,000 speakers classified under Western Hindi in 1921. In the Surma Valley and the Hills the figures of Hindi speakers (223,000) are almost exactly the same as at the last census and practically the whole of the increase is due to the increase of Hindi speakers in Lakhimpur (+53,000), Sibsagar (+43,000) and Darrang (+15,000). A considerable proportion of the increase in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar must be set off against the decrease of 28,000 and 48,000 respectively in the number of "Bengali" speakers in those districts. Similarly in the case of Darrang there can be no doubt that the increase of Hindi speakers is more or less nominal. This is shown by the fact that the number of "Bengali" speakers in that district has only risen by 9,000 since 1921 although there are about 20,000 more immigrants from Bengal in that district than in 1921.

In the Inner Sub-Branch of the Indo-Aryan Branch there are two groups—the Central Group and the Pahari Group. In the Central Group the only languages which have got over 2,000 speakers in Assam are Rajasthani, Punjabi and Gujarati. Speakers of Rajasthani have increased by 3,000 to 16,000 though the number of immigrants from Rajputana has increased by 6,000. The difference has probably gone into Hindi. Punjabi speakers now number 3,587 against 1,267 in 1921 and there are now 2,035 speakers of Gujarati against 87 in 1921.

The only language in Assam which has been classed under the Pahari group is Naipali or Khas-kura which is also known as Eastern Pahari. The speakers of Khas-kura now number 136,000 compared with 95,000 in 1921. As already explained many speakers of Gurung, Limbu, Magari, etc., which fall in the Non-Pronominalized Himalayan Group of the Tibeto-Himalayan Branch have probably been recorded as speakers of Khas-kura and in order to ascertain the real increase in the number of speakers of Nepali languages it is necessary to consider both groups together. If we do so we find that the total number of speakers of all Nepali languages has increased from 104,000 to 140,000.

I have not yet mentioned the Eranian Branch of the Aryan sub-family. Pashto and Balochi are the chief languages of this branch spoken in Assam which contains only 2,500 speakers.

The 268 persons who have claimed Persian as a mother tongue have been shown in Subsidiary Table I under "others" as this entry is open to considerable doubt.

Under "others" also have been put the speakers of several languages which are numerically insignificant. The actual number of the speakers of each of these will be found in the last column of Part I of Imperial Table XV.

141. I have already indicated how the extent of bilingualism can be roughly ascertained from the linguistic map which appears at the beginning of this chapter. The actual figures are given in Imperial Table XV—Part II, and proportionate figures will be found in Subsidiary Tables II(a) and II(b) at the end of the chapter. These figures show only the number of persons whose mother tongue is (1) Assamese, (2) Bengali, (3) Khasi-Synteng, and (4) any Tibeto-Burmese language, who can also speak a language belonging to one of the other three groups. People like Bengmas, many of whom can speak fluent Angami, are not shown in the table because both these languages are Tibeto-Burmese languages nor have any figures been compiled for persons whose mother tongue is an Indian language but who are also able to speak fluent English. The great difficulty about a census of bilingualism in a province like Assam, where there are so many languages of which it is possible to have a smattering, is to know what standard of proficiency in another language would entitle a person to be classed as bilingual. In the census instructions it was laid down that only those who spoke a subsidiary language or languages *fluently and habitually* should be entered in the bilingual column. But the difficulty is to know what degree of fluency is expected: it is a fluency which would enable a candidate at a language examination to pass the lower standard or the higher standard or the degree of "proficiency" or the highest of all the "diploma of honour"? This question of the degree of fluency came up at every meeting of Charge Superintendents which I attended and was exhaustively discussed. My instructions were that the degree of fluency in the subsidiary language must be extremely high and that nobody should be entered in the bilingual column unless he could speak a subsidiary language quite fluently and without hesitation.

The general illustration I used was that an Assamese who claimed to be bilingual in Bengali must be able to get up and address a Bengali audience at a meeting without any fear or hesitation in the use of the language.

Probably as the result of my insisting on a high standard the statistics of bilingualism are smaller than might have been expected and show that the only people in Assam who are bilingual to any extent are the speakers of Tibeto-Burmese languages in Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Sibsagar and Nowgong and that, except in Goalpara, (where two-third of the Tibeto-Burmese speakers have Assamese and one third Bengali as their subsidiary language) the only subsidiary language which they can speak fluently is Assamese.

This general conclusion is I think undoubtedly correct and though the actual figures themselves may be dubious they certainly have a relative value and are of considerable interest. The proportion of Tibeto-Burmese speakers in each district who can also speak fluent Assamese is given in column 8 of Subsidiary Table II (b).

It will be seen that in the Assam Valley Darrang has the highest proportion (42 per cent.) followed by Kamrup (34 per cent.) and Lakhimpur 32 per cent. Sibsagar has 25 per cent. and Nowgong 11 per cent. The Nowgong and Sibsagar percentages are lower than those of the other districts owing to the fact that the Mikir Hills is divided between these two districts. Among the Mikirs very few, to my knowledge, can speak Assamese and in the Subdivisional Officer's Court at Golaghat a Mikir interpreter is kept for translating Assamese into Mikir and *vice versa*. His services, as I know from personal experience, are in continual request. The presence of a large number of Mikirs in Sibsagar district explains why that district has a much higher percentage than Nowgong of people who are bilingual in Tibeto-Burmese and Assamese.

Turning to persons whose mother tongue is Assamese we find that, except in Goalpara, very few of them are bilingual, but I would neglect the Goalpara figures altogether because, as already explained, it is extremely difficult to draw a line between Assamese and Bengali in that district which has a dialect of its own. The few thousand persons in Kamrup, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur whose mother tongue is Assamese but who can speak Bengali fluently are probably the educated classes who have studied Bengali for their matriculation and other examinations and who really do know the language.

Bilingualism.

I think these figures are in accordance with facts. I have often noticed that the ordinary Assamese knows no language but his own and has no desire to know any other. Bengali is the mother tongue of the vast majority of the inhabitants of the Surma Valley plains who have no occasion to use any other language. Hence, as we would expect, very few Bengali-speaking people in that valley are bi-lingual. Most of those who are bi-lingual are probably Government officers who have served for some years in the Assam Valley.

In the Assam Valley the statistics of the number of Bengali speakers cannot be accepted as accurate owing to the use of the term Bengali to signify any foreign language. The Kamrup and Nowgong figures should, however, be approximately accurate as there are few tea gardens in those districts, the bi-lingual statistics of which are extremely interesting in view of the fact that they contain the bulk of the Eastern Bengal settlers in Assam. The figures show that out of 170,000 Bengali speakers in Kamrup and 193,000 Bengali speakers in Nowgong only 4,000 in each district can, at present, speak fluent Assamese. It is, of course, too early to expect the Eastern Bengal settlers, many of whom are recent arrivals, to have acquired proficiency in Assamese but the future development of the contact between the two cultures and the two languages will be most interesting to observe.

The hill tribes in Assam are not good linguists and very few know any language except their own. In the Naga Hills out of 173,000 speakers of Tibeto-Burmese languages only 1,500 have been recorded as bi-lingual in Assamese—a figure too small to put on the map. A sort of bastard Assamese is the *lingua franca* in many parts of the Naga Hills but a speaker of this *patois* would, I am sure, have great difficulty in convincing an Assamese board of examiners that he could speak fluent Assamese.

Very few Khasis know any tongue except their own and English. I remember how surprised I was, some years ago, to find that young Khasi Extra Assistant Commissioners, just appointed to the service and sent for survey and settlement training, could not read the Bengali or Assamese script in which the land records are written.

In the Lushai Hills the number of speakers of indigenous Tibeto-Burmese languages who can speak Bengali or Assamese fluently is practically nil while out of 493,000 speakers of Tibeto-Burmese languages in Manipur State only 1,100 are fluent speakers of languages belonging to the other three groups.

Displacement of tribal languages.

142. In the last two census reports the question as to the extent to which tribal languages were disappearing as the result of contact with others, particularly with the Aryan languages of the plains, was examined at some length.

In 1911 Mr. McSwiney came to the following conclusion:—

"I think that we may safely claim from the statistics that, on the whole, the indigenous tribal languages of Assam are still in a vigorous condition: the fact that this is true in the hills is not unnatural . . . but that plains Kachari is as yet able to withstand the influence of Assamese is a wonderful proof of the claimishness of its speakers".

Lalung was the only language which Mr. McSwiney thought was probably dying out.

In 1921 Mr. Lloyd also came to the conclusion that the indigenous tribal languages of Assam were, in most cases, still flourishing. Subsidiary Table III at the end of this chapter gives us materials for judging how far these conclusions are true to-day. It will be seen at once that in the case of all the hill languages given in this table (except Manipuri where the difference between the number of speakers and the number of Manipuris is due to the fact that Muslim Manipuris are not included in the total of Manipuris) the number of speakers agrees almost exactly with the number of persons in the tribe. The small differences between the tribal and language figures are probably due more to sorting errors than to any other cause for it must be remembered that the language figures and the tribal figures were obtained at different times as the result of two separate sortings.

We can therefore say definitely that the indigenous hill languages are as vigorous as ever and show no signs of erosion. As regards the tribal languages spoken in the plains we have already seen that Kachari (including Dimasa) and Rabha, both of

which showed a decrease in 1921, have a considerable increase in the number of their speakers at this census. I have no doubt that the census figures for both these languages were too low in 1921. To show the vigour of Kachari I need only mention that out of the 57,000 persons in Darrang who have returned their caste as Kachari 51,000 speak the Kachari language and in Kamrup out of 107,000 Kacharis 93,000 still claim Kachari as their mother tongue. The question of Rabha is difficult because, owing to conversion to Hinduism, the actual number of people who returned their tribe or caste as Rabha has been steadily decreasing since 1911. In that year there were 79,000 Rabhas: in 1921 only 70,000 and at this census 69,000; yet the number of speakers of Rabha is practically the same now (27,000) as in 1911 (28,000) and considerably more than in 1921 (22,000).

As for Lalung I have already pointed out in a previous paragraph that the speakers of this language have declined at every census since 1901 but that I doubt whether the census figures represent the real number of speakers. On the whole I think we are justified in concluding that the tribal languages in the plains are holding their own in a wonderful manner. Even the small Deori community—about 4,000 strong—appear to be in no danger of forgetting Chutiya, their mother tongue. Mr. McSwiney remarked in 1911 that the Chutiya language was practically defunct though it continued to retain a small spark of life. That spark is still burning and shows no sign of being extinguished.

It will be of intense interest to observe whether the Assamese language itself—against the inroads of which the tribal languages of the plains have, for hundreds of years, put up such a stout fight—will, in its turn, be able in the future to defend itself against a new and a very powerful invader in the shape of Bengali which, with the coming of the Eastern Bengal settlers, has established itself firmly in all the districts of lower and central Assam.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I—*concl'd.*

DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL POPULATION BY LANGUAGE—*concl'd.*

Language.	Total number of speakers.		Number per mille of population (1931) of province.	Where chiefly found.	Language.	Total number of speakers.		Number per mille of population (1931) of province.	Where chiefly found.
	1931.	1921.				1931.	1921.		
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Kuki-Chin Group ...	591,186	604,972	64						
MARING ...	4,251	2,355	...	Manipur.	INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY.	6,922,775	5,994,600	749	
MANIPURI (MISITHI)	369,247	324,361	40	Manipur, Cachar and Sylhet.					
OLD KUKI SUB-GROUP	48,540	26,550	5						
Anal ...	3,314	3,066	...	Manipur.	ETANIAN BRANCH. Eastern Group	2,502	1,118	...	
Kom ...	2,662	2,855	...	Ditto.					
Hmar ...	21,583	8,583	2	Lushai Hills and Manipur.	Pashto ...	1,703	476	...	Everywhere.
Valphei ...	4,624	2,882	1	Manipur.	Balochi ...	799	643	...	Lakhimpur.
Tipura ...	6,404	5,058	1	Sylhet.					
Gangto ...	2,455	...	...	Manipur.	INDO-ARYAN BRANCH.	6,916,260	5,992,283	748	
Others ...	7,498	3,840	1	North Cachar Hills and Manipur.					
NORTHERN CHIN ...	82,108	50,466	9	Manipur and Lushai Hills.	OUTER BRANCH. SUB-Group	6,167,998	5,415,058	667	
Paite ...	14,674	9,306	2		North-Western Group (Sindhi).	17	7	...	
Ralte ...	16,163	5,539	2	Lushai Hills.	Southern Group	4,377	1,400	...	Tea districts.
Sokto ...	777	4,666	...	Manipur.	Marathi ...				
Thado (including Changsen).	60,491	31,015	5	Ditto.					
CENTRAL CHIN ...	63,859	77,283	7		Eastern Group	6,163,664	5,413,651	667	
Lakher ...	6,156	3,230	1	Lushai Hills.	Oriya ...	202,737	161,888	22	All tea districts.
Lushai ...	57,597	74,655	6	Ditto.	Bengali ...	3,966,363	3,525,923	429	Sylhet, Cachar and districts of Lower and Central Assam.
Others ...	16	3	...						
UNCLASSIFIED CHIN LANGUAGES.	3,896	...	...		Assamese ...	1,994,564	1,725,960	216	Assam Valley.
Yahac ...	3,896	...	...	Lushai Hills.					
Unspecified Chin	14,191	5,284	2	Ditto	Mediate Sub-Branch...	589,841	467,789	64	
Unspecified Kuki	6,154	18,668	1		Mediate Group				
Kachin Group ...	3,042	5,276	...		Eastern Hindi ...	589,841	467,789	64	All tea districts.
Kachin ...	3,042	5,276	...	Lakhimpur and Sadiya.					
TAI CHINESE SUB-FAMILY.	5,713	4,821	1		INNER BRANCH. SUB-Group	158,421	109,436	17	
Tai Branch.					Central Group	22,315	14,627	2	
Tai group.					Rajasthani ...	16,245	13,273	2	Assam Valley.
Khamti ...	3,858	3,057	1	Sadiya and Lakhimpur.	Gujarati ...	2,035	87	...	Tea districts.
Shan ...	1,855	864	...	Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.	Punjabi ...	3,587	1,267	...	Lakhimpur.
					Bhili ...	448	...	...	
DRAVIDIAN FAMILY.	140,840	98,128	15		Pahari Group (Naiyati)	136,103	94,609	15	Everywhere.
Dracida group ...	2,250	3,104	...						
Tamil ...	2,106	3,100	...	All tea districts.	EUROPEAN LANGUAGES.	4,013	3,095	1	
Others ...	144	4	...						
Intermediate group ...	107,604	65,221	12		OTHERS ...	1,092	1,199	...	
Kurukh ...	52,516	29,537	6						
Kandhi ...	6,180	4,022	1	All tea districts.					
Gondi ...	49,104	21,633	5						
Malto ...	4	...	...						
ANDHRA LANGUAGES. TELUGU.	30,736	29,733	3	All tea districts.					

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II.

(a) NUMBER PER 10,000 OF THE TOTAL POPULATION WHO SPEAK

District and Natural Division.	Assamese as mother tongue.		Bengali as mother tongue.		Tibeto-Burmese as mother tongue.		Khasi-Synteng as mother tongue.	
	Total.	As mother tongue with out any subsidiary language.	Total.	As mother tongue with out any subsidiary language.	Total.	As mother tongue with out any subsidiary language.	Total.	As mother tongue with out any subsidiary language.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
ASSAM ...	2,157	2,133	4,289	4,246	1,753	1,576	253	251
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY ...	4,197	4,160	2,303	2,221	1,185	912	3	3
Goalpara ...	1,826	1,731	5,397	5,384	1,765	1,539	...	...
Kamrup ...	6,850	6,618	1,745	1,705	1,148	760	6	6
Darrang ...	3,303	3,284	1,626	1,512	1,065	616	1	1
Nowgong ...	4,220	4,204	3,437	3,370	1,308	1,157	3	3
Sibsagar ...	5,396	5,383	785	608	776	579	1	1
Lakhimpur ...	3,113	3,113	1,069	983	708	431	3	3
Sadiya Frontier Tract ...	1,578	1,559	224	184	5,760	5,483	2	2
Balipara Frontier Tract ...	1,360	1,343	884	800	3,718	2,552	8	8
SURMA VALLEY ...	10	5	8,723	8,723	332	247	11	7
Cachar Plains ...	35	19	6,280	6,279	1,328	993	19	17
Sylhet ...	5	3	9,212	9,211	136	99	9	5
HILLS ...	70	49	248	244	7,545	7,491	1,815	1,807
Garohills ...	292	173	1,071	1,068	8,426	8,382	17	16
Khasi and Jaintia Hills ...	65	52	191	186	1,129	1,090	7,865	7,842
North Cachar ...	107	105	333	332	8,186	8,185	214	209
Naga Hills ...	46	44	29	24	9,686	9,699	1	1
Lushai Hills ...	9	5	107	105	9,671	9,646	7	3
Manipur ...	3	3	51	50	9,844	9,819	...	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II—concl'd.

(b) NUMBER PER 10,000 OF THE SPEAKERS OF EACH MOTHER TONGUE WHO SPEAK A SUBSIDIARY LANGUAGE.

District and Natural Division.	Assamese as mother tongue.			Bengali as mother tongue.			Tibeto-Burmese as mother tongue.			Khasi-Synteng as mother tongue.		
	With Bengali as subsidiary language.	With Tibeto-Burmese as subsidiary language.	With Khasi-Synteng as subsidiary language.	With Assamese as subsidiary language.	With Tibeto-Burmese as subsidiary language.	With Khasi-Synteng as subsidiary language.	With Assamese as subsidiary language.	With Bengali as subsidiary language.	With Khasi-Synteng as subsidiary language.	With Assamese as subsidiary language.	With Bengali as subsidiary language.	With Tibeto-Burmese as subsidiary language.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
ASSAM ...	101	8	...	99	...	...	775	231	5	14	60	7
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY ...	81	6	...	356	...	...	2,175	134	...	514	79	16
Goalpara ...	480	24	...	24	1	...	831	450	...	5,000	5,000	...
Kamrup ...	40	8	...	228	...	...	3,377	1	...	393	31	16
Darrang ...	42	12	...	704	...	...	4,204	10	...	247	...	...
Nowgong ...	31	6	...	144	...	...	1,149	5	...	56	...	56
Sibsagar ...	25	...	...	2,262	...	...	2,512	31	...	180	360	...
Lakhimpur ...	127	...	...	318	...	...	3,172	33	...	1,266	127	...
Sadiya Frontier Tract ...	122	2	...	1,760	17	...	481	...	...	3,077	...	...
Balipara Frontier Tract ...	86	...	...	945	...	...	2,330	...	...	...	...	...
SURMA VALLEY ...	4,741	...	3	1	...	...	2	2,549	...	12	3,052	6
Cachar Plains ...	4,474	...	...	1	1	...	2	2,481	...	...	1,322	...
Sylhet ...	5,078	...	7	1	...	...	2	2,681	...	17	3,794	8
HILLS ...	2,638	348	54	48	34	33	40	24	8	11	14	7
Garohills ...	3,583	477	...	5	26	...	128	42	...	63	...	126
Khasi and Jaintia Hills ...	1,690	...	256	74	4	184	52	59	230	11	14	5
North Cachar ...	142	28	...	18	9	...	1	...	...	...	...	29
Naga Hills ...	294	123	...	1,784	...	...	89	...	...	500	...	...
Lushai Hills ...	2,193	2,719	...	...	218	...	...	25	...	...	...	5,854
Manipur ...	960	...	...	18	92	...	...	25	...	...	...	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE III.

COMPARISON OF TRIBE AND LANGUAGE TABLES.

Tribe and language.	Strength of tribe (Table XVII).		Number speaking tribal language (Table XV).		Remarks.
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Austrian family—					
Khasi-Synteng ...	112,839	119,691	112,588	119,405	
Tibeto-Chinese family—					
Miri ...	43,669	41,369	41,560	39,271	
Garohills ...	97,611	95,862	97,077	95,403	
Kachari, Meoh and Dimasa	181,293	170,220	150,933	146,279	
Lalung ...	21,607	21,841	4,250	4,737	
*Manipuri ...	158,919	165,513	181,645	185,602	* The difference between the language and the tribal figure is mostly due to the fact that Muslim Manipuris are not included in the total of Manipuris which includes Hindus only. Muslims were not sorted for by race at this census.
Mikir ...	66,045	63,752	64,181	62,276	
Naga Angami (including Kezhama).	25,013	24,226	25,082	23,872	
Naga Ao ...	15,187	17,583	15,325	17,792	
Naga Lhota ...	8,957	9,281	8,970	9,284	
Naga Sema ...	18,647	18,798	18,937	19,209	
Naga Tangkhul ...	13,400	15,331	13,692	15,408	
Naga Kabui ...	8,854	9,977	8,664	9,811	
Rabha ...	35,616	33,538	13,462	13,544	
Thado (Kuki) ...	24,529	25,924	24,292	25,788	

APPENDIX I.

[For the specimen of *Khelma* (*Sachip*) of the North Cachar Hills, I am indebted to Mr. Ali, I.P., who writes: "The sounds are approximate only as the *Khelmas*, who are also known here as *Suochip*, have a habit of secreting the middle and ends of the words in mid-mouth and the results could only be represented by an elaborate system of symbols." Mr. Ali tells me also that the *Khelmas* intermarry with the *Hrangkols*. For the specimen of *Sylhet Tipura* (*Hallam*) I have to thank Babu Manmatha Kumar Chaudhuri, Sub-Deputy Collector, Patharkandi, Karinganji. The Linguistic Survey contains some standard words and sentences in *Hallam* which, however, differ in some respects from those now given.]

English.	Tipura of Sylhet.	Khelma (Sachip).	English.	Tipura of Sylhet.	Khelma (Sachip).
1	2	3	1	2	3
One ...	... Inkat	... Ankat.	Eye ...	... Mit ...	... Mit.
Two ...	... Ingnik	... Annik.	Mouth ...	... Kumur	... Gabai.
Three ...	... Ingthum	... Anthum.	Tooth ...	... Ha ...	... Ha.
Four ...	... Minali	... Manli.	Head ...	... Kulu	... Lu.
Five ...	... Ranga	... Hranga.	Tongue ...	... Melei	... Gasha.
Six ...	... Uruk	... Aruk.	Belly ...	... Bon ...	... Von.
Seven ...	... Swari	... Sari.	Iron ...	... Thir...	... Thir.
Eight ...	... Iret ...	... Ariet.	Gold ...	... Rangashak	... Rangachak.
Nine ...	... Ikok	... Akuo.	Silver ...	... Ruphai	... Shum.
Ten ...	... Som ...	... Shom.	Father ...	... Kapa	... Kapa.
Twenty ...	... Somnik	... Shom-annik.	Mother ...	... Kunu	... Kanu.
Fifty ...	... Somranga	... Shom-hranga.	Brother ...	... Parool	... Kanaipa.
Hundred ...	... Rajakhat	... Rajakat.	Sister ...	... Kasharanco	... Kanainu.
I ...	... Keima	... Kema.	Man ...	... Pashal	... Mir'em.
We ...	... Eingai	... Eni.	Wife ...	... Noopa	... Adongma.
Of us ...	... Keiningai	... Keni.	Woman ...	... Noopangai	... Nupang.
Thou ...	... Nangma	... Nangma.	Son ...	... Kansai	... Anaipasal.
Of thee ...	... Nanguingai	... Nitha.	Daughter ...	... Kansinnoopa	... Anainupang.
You ...	... Nangkei	... Nangni.	Sun ...	... Nisha	... Nisha.
Of you ...	... Nangmaha	... Nangnitha.	Moon ...	... Tha	... Tha.
He ...	... Hingpa	... Sho' sho'.	Star ...	... Arshi	... Arshi.
Of him ...	... Anningai	... Amatha.	Fire ...	... Mei ...	... Me-i.
They ...	... Amangai	... Sho'ngesho'.	Water ...	... Thui	... Thui.
Of them ...	... Songash	... Hingetha.	House ...	... Inn ...	... In.
Hand ...	... Kut ...	... Kut.	Cow ...	... Saratpui	... Sherat.
Foot ...	... Ka ...	... Ka.	Dog ...	... We ...	... Wi.
Nose ...	... Nar ...	... Nar.	Oat ...	... Meng	... Meng.
Ear ...	... Kor ...	... Kuor.	Duck ...	... Batak	... Watok.

APPENDIX II.

DISTRIBUTION OF ASSAMESE AND BENGALI SPEAKERS IN GOALPARA DISTRICT BY THANAS.

Area of Bi-lingualism.				Mother tongue—Assamese.								Mother tongue—Bengali.																			
				Number of persons speaking mother tongue.		Subsidiary languages.								Number of persons speaking mother tongue.		Subsidiary languages.															
						Bengali.				Tibeto Burmese.						Khasi Synteng.				Assamese.				Tibeto Burmese.				Khasi Synteng.			
						Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.			Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17															
GOALPARA	...	...	83,165	78,014	5,864	1,875	307	82	...	...	253,726	222,707	822	329	35	5	...	...													
Dhubri	...	...	354	160	123	62	...	...	...	...	36,004	32,197	57	11	...	...	...	...													
Golakganj	...	...	208	156	64	5	...	...	...	...	39,983	36,872	14	1	...	...	...	...													
Gossaingaon	...	...	393	206	77	5	...	1	...	...	7,344	5,915	9	2	...	...	...	...													
Bijni	...	...	12,853	11,247	567	120	19	1	...	...	8,743	7,077	19	3	2	...	...	...													
Kokrajhar	...	...	6,619	5,642	732	283	...	...	...	...	11,344	9,267	20	6	2	...	...	...													
Bilaspara	...	...	11,560	10,431	835	518	177	1	...	...	24,343	21,737	36	3	11	...	...	...													
South Salmara	...	...	29	12	3	2	...	...	...	...	47,050	42,851	5	11	...	4	...	...													
Mankacher	...	...	6	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	17,757	17,077	...	1	17	...	...	...													
Goalpara	...	...	12,145	13,462	1,160	487	29	19	...	...	7,105	3,458	426	226	1	...	...	...													
Dudnā	...	...	11,370	10,519	207	16	23	10	...	...	1,887	1,440	61	26	...	...	...	...													
Lakhipur	...	...	4,481	4,221	272	58	43	44	...	...	33,316	28,927	25	3	...	...	...	...													
North Salmara	...	...	23,001	21,816	1,716	278	3	4	...	...	18,772	15,842	147	24	...	1	...	...													
Christians and others (whole district).	...	...	68	62	3	1	3	2	...	...	79	68	3	2	2	...	...	...													

CHAPTER XI.

RELIGION.

In introduction.

143. A considerable amount of information on the subject of the various religions and sects in Assam is available in previous census reports and as practically everything that can be said on the subject has already been said, I propose on this occasion merely to discuss the changes that have taken place during the last decade.

The general instructions given to our enumerators were that each person's religion should be entered as the person enumerated gave it and that in the case of tribesmen who did not belong to any recognized religion the name of their tribe should be recorded as the name of their religion.

The main statistics for the purpose of this chapter are contained in Imperial Table XVI, which gives figures by sex and district for all the chief religions. Imperial Table V which gives the distribution by religion of the urban population has already been dealt with in Chapter II—Urban and Rural. The four subsidiary tables appended to this chapter show:—

- (1) The general distribution of each religion at each of the last five censuses.
- (2) The distribution by districts of 10,000 of each main religion.
- (3) The variation in the Christian population at each census since 1891.
- (4) The distribution by religion of 10,000 of the urban and rural population.

Except in the case of Hindus and followers of Tribal religions the statistics may be accepted as accurate, why the figures of Hindus and animists are doubtful are discussed in the next paragraph.

Hindu propaganda among tribal communities.

144. Mr. Lloyd remarked in the 1921 Assam Census Report that the border line between Hinduism and Animism in Assam was very vague owing to primitive practices so often continuing side by side with Hindu ceremonies and contributions to Hindu *Gossains*. At this census the Hindu Sabha of Assam endeavoured by an intensive propaganda campaign to do away with the border line altogether and to persuade all Animists that they were genuine Hindus. The campaign which derived its inspiration from outside the province was however, in practice, confined to the plains districts of the Assam Valley where alone there was a chance of success and was particularly noticeable in the Nowgong district where it was conducted with considerable skill by the distribution of leaflets in Mikir, Lalung and Kachari villages and by propaganda work among Hindu census supervisors and enumerators as well as among Hindu *Manzadars* and influential local gentlemen. Tours were also made by officers of the Sabha to propagate the new faith that all tribesmen were really Hindus. Mikirs were told that they were the descendants of Bali Raja and hence genuine Hindus of ancient lineage.

The following is a translation of one of the leaflets issued in Nowgong:—

"ASSAM PROVINCIAL HINDU SABHA—NOTICE.

Garos, Khasis, Mundas, Santals, Mikirs, Miris, Mishmis, Lushais, Lalungs, Rabhas, Kacharis, Meches, etc., living in Assam are really Hindus. Of this there is sufficient proof in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. It is a matter of great regret that at the census of 1921 all these Hindu people as well as Kaibaritas, Chutiyas, Koches, etc., were recorded as Animists. By reason of this a great injustice was done to our simple and religious brethren as anybody who looks into the census report of that year will feel in his heart.

I trust that at the forthcoming census the above mentioned Hindus will take steps to correct the previous error and return themselves as Hindus and have their religion recorded as Hindu in the enumerators' book. It is the earnest prayer of the Assam Hindu Sabha that every Hindu in Assam who loves his religion should co-operate in this matter."

To show that the movement originated outside the province I need only mention that the leaflet above which was written in Assamese is an almost exact word for word translation of a Bengal leaflet issued by the Bengal Hindu Sabha and published at Dacca. Both leaflets obviously owe their inspiration to the same source. In fact the "Hindu Mission" (Central Office, Calcutta) makes no attempt to conceal the part it has taken in the matter and has sent me an interesting pamphlet asking me to note in my final report that in many places the enumerators did not listen to the demand of the aboriginal people who wanted to be returned as Hindus by religion and Kshatriya by caste.

The following extracts taken from this pamphlet which is entitled "The Hindu Mission—Aims and Activities—are of great interest:—

"In order to stem the tide of conversion to Christianity we commenced work amongst the aboriginal people of Bengal, Bihar and Assam since the beginning of 1926. These people who are mentioned in the census reports as Animists form an important part of the population in these three provinces. Their number may be roughly estimated as no less than four millions—i.e., two millions in Bihar and one million each in Bengal and Assam. These are regarded as the chief recruiting centres of the different Christian Missions. At present there are more than fifty different Missionary Societies of different countries of Europe, America and Australia who have concentrated their energies in spreading Christianity amongst the simple men and women of the hill tracts of Bengal, Assam and Bihar. These people may be considered naturalised Hindus by long and close contact with their Hindu neighbours. But owing to the prevailing rigour of 'untouchability' amongst the caste Hindus and partly owing to difference in language, taste and race the Hindus took very little interest about these people. But as soon as the Hindu Mission organised propaganda parties, opened centres, took up the work of introduction of simple Hindu rites amongst these people and the removal of the vice of untouchability to bring them closer to the caste Hindus the success was phenomenal. During the year ending in March 1928 over sixty thousand Santals, Oraons, Khasis, etc., were absorbed into the Hindu fold after a very simple ceremony of initiation. Amongst this number there are a few thousands of Christians also.

In the succeeding years this work spread very quickly all over Bengal and Assam and a part of the province of Bihar. Since then we were not very particular in keeping any accurate register of the people who received initiation.

In 1930 a large number of our workers carried an intensive propaganda for several months before the census operation. We made a rough estimate of our progress and were convinced of a substantial increase of Hindu population in these provinces in consequence of the absorption of Animists.

The following census figures of 1931 go a great way to show the achievement of the Hindu Mission. The decrease of Animists in Bengal and Assam and the proportionate increase of the Hindus in those provinces clearly assert that at least a million of Animists has been absorbed into the Hindu society. But for this absorption the Animists in Bengal and Assam with natural increase during the last decade should have been no less than ten lakhs and twelve lakhs respectively in place of five lakhs and seven lakhs as at present. Incessant propaganda amongst these people since 1926 carried the message of this mission to the remotest corner of the hills and plains of these two provinces. Lakhs of people have been formally initiated and lakhs of others have been automatically absorbed by the initiated ones as well as by the local Hindus who felt interested in this work. Other local organisations such as the branches of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Ramkrishna Mission have also added their contributions to this number. The Mission has created an active and intensive enthusiasm for the assimilation of those who stand outside the fold of the Hindu society and the expansion of Hinduism on all sides in the path of love and toleration.

The actual absorption is more than what is testified by the census report (1931). The newly initiated Animists wanted to be returned as Kshatriyas. The authorities declined to record them as such. The result was that in many places they practically non-co-operated with the enumerators and were returned as Animists as in the previous census (1921).

The matter has been referred to the Superintendents of Census of Bengal, Bihar and Assam so that they may make a note of it in their final reports.

There still remain about four millions of Animists in these three provinces who may be easily assimilated into the Hindu society. All that is required is a little propaganda, humanitarian services, and social liberalism.

It is gratifying to note here that in several areas the Christian Missionaries, in spite of their serious efforts, failed miserably to keep these simple peoples within their fold. In some places the newly initiated people were subjected to all sorts of sufferings but they remained firm in their Hindu faith."

The only comment I need make on this amazing document is to quote the following extract from the tour diary of the Deputy Commissioner, Darrang :—

"The Hindu enumerator (and they are nearly all Hindus) tends to record all animistic and aboriginal tribes, such as Kacharis, Mikirs, Miris, Mundas and Santhals, as Hindus. Even if the enumerator fails, the supervisor or checking officer tends to keep him up to the scratch. An instance was brought to my notice at Halem where the enumerator had written Miri, but the checking officer changed it to 'Hindu Miri'. There is no remedy, though I have done what I can; the enumerator, if questioned, says that they say they are Hindus. In the great majority of cases I do not imagine they do say so. Those I have asked say (in the great majority of cases) that they are e.g. of the 'Miri' religion. The net result must be that the religion statistics collected at this census will be very inaccurate in areas where there are animistic or aboriginal tribes. In one respect I do not imagine that the Mussalman enumerator is better than his Hindu brother. A Mussalman will, it is true, not claim as a Mussalman—even for census purposes—any one who is not a Mussalman. He will however not record as a Hindu any one if he can help it. One of my Charge Superintendents has brought to my notice cases of Mussalman owned tea gardens, with Mussalman enumerators, who recorded members of such a typical Hindu caste as Goala as belonging to the "Goala" religion! On the balance the Hindu of course wins."

To which I may add that just before the census I received several petitions from Kacharis in Kamrup stating that they had been returned as Hindus in the census schedules and that they objected to the action of the enumerators recording their religion as Hindu. The Census Officer in forwarding the petitions noted as follows and I think his note sums up exactly what went on in most districts of the Assam Valley :—

"It is true to some extent that due to propaganda by the Hindu Sabha some of the Kacharis have willingly allowed themselves to be recorded as Hindu by religion; in some cases some of the enumerators have persuaded them to have themselves recorded as such; and in some cases some of the enumerators have recorded them as such of their own accord, they being ignorant of what was recorded of them."

I need say no more on this point except that it is peculiar that, though Hinduism is a religion or rather a social system of very great antiquity, it is only in quite recent years that it has laid claim to the aboriginals. The propaganda work of the Hindu Mission was certainly a great success in Assam from their point of view and had an enormous influence on the tribal peoples hovering in the borderland between Hinduism and Animism.

To illustrate the extent of this influence I might mention that some Lalungs came to see me in Nowgong in January 1930 and asked my advice as to how they should return their religion. I questioned them about their religion, ascertained that it was purely a tribal one and advised them to tell the truth. A meeting of Lalungs was subsequently held and a resolution was passed that the Lalung community should return their religion as Lalung. In spite, however, of this resolution the vast majority of Lalungs returned themselves as Hindus, in many cases, I have no doubt, voluntarily. But there can be no doubt that many enumerators under the influence of the propaganda entered Hindu against the names of tribal persons who found it difficult to state precisely what their religion was and if there was any doubt Hinduism got the benefit of it. The Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong, took steps to bring the matter to the notice of all Charge Superintendents and to explain to the people concerned that the propaganda was merely propaganda but there can be no doubt that Hindu Sabha achieved a considerable measure of success in that district and that by its efforts the number of animists was much reduced and the number of Hindus correspondingly increased.

In Darrang also—though propaganda work was not so noticeable—a similar success was achieved and the Deputy Commissioner reports that "he is definitely of opinion that in this district while the figures for Christians and Muslims will be very accurate the number of Hindus will be much in excess of what it should be owing to the inclusion of animists such as Kacharis, Miris and aboriginal tea garden coolies". The Deputy Commissioner states further that he had good reason to suspect a Charge Superintendent—a Government officer—of using his influence to get Animist Kacharis returned as Hindus.

In the other plains districts of the Assam Valley the propaganda was not very visible though traces of it are apparent everywhere. In Kamrup, for some years before the census, certain Kacharis had themselves been carrying on a campaign to give up eating pigs and fowls and to adopt Hinduism. In the Surma Valley where animists are few there was not much scope for propaganda work but it is reported that in the Sunamganj subdivision of Sylhet, where there are a few thousand Garos and Hajongs, the Hindu emissaries went out and persuaded these people to return themselves as Hindus. In the hill districts, with the exception of the North Cachar Hills, there was practically no propaganda. In the North Cachar Hills there was a good deal and attempts were made to return the Naga and Kuki tribes in that subdivision as Hindus. The Kacharis of the North Cachar Hills were returned as Hindus as in 1921.

I have dilated at some length upon the propaganda carried out by the Hindu Sabha because it is a completely new feature in the census of Assam and its effect upon the 1931 census figures has undoubtedly been to swell unduly the number of Hindus and to decrease the real number of followers of tribal religions. The statistics of the other religions may be accepted as accurate.

145. The statement in the margin shows the actual number of followers of each of the main religions as ascertained at the census of 1931. Hindus form more than half of the total population of the Province, Muslims nearly one-third and Animists about one-ninth. As at the last census Hindus pre-dominate in the Assam Valley, Muslims in the Surma Valley and followers of tribal religions in the Hills.

Hindu (including Brahmo and Arya)	...	5,204,650
Muslim	...	2,780,514
Tribal	...	992,393
Christian	...	249,246
Buddhist	...	15,045
Jain	...	2,803
Sikh	...	2,729
Miscellaneous	...	480

146. Hindus now form 56.3 per cent. of the population of the whole province as compared with 54.6 per cent. in 1921 and 54.4 per cent. in 1911, the actual increase in Hindus being 841,520. In order to examine the cause of this increase it is necessary to look at the figures of the increase in the various natural divisions and a glance at the marginal table, which shows the increase in the number of Hindus in various localities, proves that it is the Assam Valley which has been almost entirely responsible for the large increase in the number of Hindus. The

Assam Valley	...	+750,000
Surma Valley	...	+34,000
Hills	...	+23,000
Frontier Tracts	...	+7,000
Manipur State	...	+27,000

reason for the enormous increase in Hindus in this valley is mostly due to the fact that the number of Animists, which was 545,345 in 1921, is now only 253,141—a decrease of 292,204. But the real decrease is larger than this, as, if no conversions to Hinduism had been made, the followers of tribal religions in the Assam Valley would probably have amounted, owing to natural increase, to about 600,000 in 1931. Hence about 350,000 or nearly one-half of the enormous increase in Hindus in the Assam Valley is due to the fact that hundreds of thousands of people who in 1921 would have been recorded as Animists returned themselves or were returned as Hindus.

As already explained the propaganda work of the Hindu Sabha was largely responsible for this increase in Hindus and decrease in Animists in the districts of Nowgong and Darrang. In these two small districts alone there are 100,831 less Animists than in 1921 while Kamrup which had 101,901 Animists in 1921 has now only 19,493—a decrease of 82,408. Lakhimpur and Sibsagar where there was little open propaganda, have lost 84,139 and 49,550 Animists respectively—due principally to the fact that Santals, Mundas, and other jungly coolies working in the gardens of those districts have now been recorded as Hindus.

Except, therefore, for this conversion movement the increase in the number of Hindus in the Assam Valley would have only been about 400,000 of which about 300,000 would probably be due to natural increase and the balance to immigration of Nepalis, Hindu Bengali settlers, etc. The actual percentage increase of Hindus at

this census is 19.3 per cent. against 13.6 per cent. in 1921 and 11.9 per cent. in 1911 but this large increase is—to my mind anyhow—largely unreal and I feel sure that of the 5½ million persons in Assam recorded as Hindus a very large number probably about a quarter of a million would find it difficult to convince a modern Inquisitor that the religion practised by them could by any stretch of the imagination be called Hinduism. It is noteworthy that in the Surma Valley, where the number of Animists has always been small, Hindus, have increased only by 31,524 or 2.3 per cent. The large district of Sylhet with 1,113,426 Hindus contains only 13,681 more Hindus than in 1921 or an increase of 1.2 per cent. In 1921 it contained only 800 more Hindus than in 1911, so that in the last twenty years the Hindu population of Sylhet has increased only by 1.3 per cent. as against a Muslim increase of 17.5 per cent. The low percentage of Hindu increase in Sylhet as compared with the Muslim increase was commented on in the Census Report for 1921 and the reasons given were:—the decrease in the importation of Hindu tea-garden coolies, the custom of lifelong widowhood among Hindu females and the more nourishing diet of the Muslims who also gained by the system of plurality of wives. It is easy to explain the increase of Muslims in this district but the cause of the very small increase in the number of Hindus during the last twenty years is perplexing and I find it difficult to assign any definite cause. The following note written by a gentleman in Sylhet whom I specially consulted on the matter is of interest:—

“Everybody expected that in Sylhet the Mahomedans would increase in population much more than the Hindus. The causes are many.

One of the reasons suggested is diet. If by diet is meant the quality of food taken by the Hindus and the Mahomedans respectively I beg to differ. There is an impression that the Mahomedan takes more meat than the Hindu. Generally it is not so. Meat diet is a luxury which neither an ordinary Mahomedan nor an ordinary Hindu can afford. Rice, *dal*, fish, fresh or dried, constitute the dietary of the average people of both the communities. The case is of course different with Mahomedans of means.

It is however a fact that an average Mahomedan eats more than an average Hindu because the former is harder than the latter. Why he is so I shall say later on. He is much stronger and consequently has a better capacity for reproduction.

The chief reason for increase among the Mahomedans is that every one of them whether a male or a female who can produce children does produce them. Although there is no limit to the number of wives a Hindu can marry he generally marries one wife at a time. With the Mahomedans the rule is to marry to the limit allowed by law—i.e., 4 wives at a time. Plurality of wives is very common among Mahomedans of all ranks. So called *Khadims* are almost an institution among wealthy Mahomedans.

Enforced widowhood checks the growth of population among the Hindus. Unchaste widows take care to prevent conception and employ means to get rid of the child in the womb for fear of disgrace.

There are classes among Hindus who find it very difficult to get brides. Baruis, Barbers and Telis are the typical instances. Owing chiefly to the paucity of girls, a high fee is demanded. Consequently some go without marriage and some marry very late in life.

There is a class of people among Hindus who are known as *Bia-Kamlas* i.e., professional marriage brokers if I may use the word. They go through ceremonies of marriage with girls of a class for a fee. It is never intended that the marriage should be effective. A Hindu girl may not remain unmarried; therefore the wealthy people who want maid servants arrange such marriages and pay the fees themselves. Such girls live in their family for their lives. The race, however, is very nearly extinct.

Any Hindu who offends against the caste rule is outcasted and is driven to embrace Islam.

There has been an influx to parts of Sunamganj and Habiganj of a very large number of *Charuas* i.e., settlers on *churs*—who are all Mahomedans.

Every Mahomedan has a large family. To help him in his work he marries as many wives as his law permits. He works hard, his wives do so—so do his children as soon as they are fit to work. Necessity drives him to these shifts. He thus raises a family of hardy individuals.”

In the Hills, where Christianity can offer many more inducements, Hinduism has made practically no progress, and, as in 1921, the increase of Hindus is largely due to the natural increase among Manipuris. The number of Hindus in the Naga and Lushai Hills remains almost the same as in 1921. In the Khasi Hills, however, the number of Hindus has doubled itself and has risen from 13,145 to 26,476. This is due principally to the large increase in the number of Nepali immigrants into the district. The Garo Hills shows an increase of over 9,000 Hindus due to the “conversion” of the entire Rabha community in that district to Hinduism.

Brahmos and Aryas have been included in the total of Hindus. Their numbers in Assam are insignificant. There are now only 448 Brahmos and 12 Aryas against 559 Brahmos and no Arya in 1921; nearly half the total number of Brahmos are to be found in Shillong.

147. Muslims have increased altogether by 25.3 per cent. and now form 30 per cent. of the total population of the province and 31.9 per cent. of the population of the British Territory of Assam. This large increase is due principally to the continued influx of Mymensinghia immigrants into the Brahmaputra Valley, the increase of Muslims in that Valley being 61 per cent. which is only slightly less than it was in 1921 where the percentage increase of Muslims in that Valley reached the enormous figure of 65. The districts principally effected by this invasion were Nowgong, Kamrup, and Darrang where Muslims increased by 152 per cent., 115 per cent. and 85 per cent., respectively. Sibsagar and Lakhimpur are now the only districts in the Assam Valley which have remained practically untouched by the invading army of Muslim immigrants. One-fifth of the entire population of the Assam Valley is now Muslim.

In the Surma Valley Muslims have increased by 12.2 per cent. against 5.5 per cent. in the previous decade. There is little immigration into this Valley and the increase is due almost entirely to natural growth. As already pointed out the increase of Hindus in Sylhet is 1.2 per cent. only or nearly eleven per cent. less than the increase in Muslims in the same district. The rapid increase of Muslims in Sylhet has been continuous for the last five censuses. They now form 58.9 per cent. of the population of that district as against 56.4 per cent. in 1921, 55.2 per cent. in 1911, and 52.6 per cent. in 1901; on the other hand the Hindu percentage has shrunk from 46.8 per cent. in 1901 to 40.9 per cent. in 1931. In the Cachar plains the same phenomenon is visible and the Muslim percentage of the population of the Cachar plains is now 36.4 per cent. against 30.5 per cent. in 1901. In the hill districts the number of Muslims is insignificant. In Manipur State they have increased by 30 per cent. to 22,864 owing to natural growth and to the opening up of the Jiribam area by new settlers. Elsewhere in the Hills their numbers have remained either stationary or have increased slightly. Practically all Muslims in Assam belong to the Sunni sect. Information regarding the number of Shias was collected in the census schedules but, in view of the need for economy, it was not sorted for. In 1921 the number of Muslims in the province whose sect was returned as Shia was only 434.

148. Animists or followers of their old tribal faiths have decreased from the 1921 figure of 1,256,641 to 992,390 or by 264,251. The real decrease is however rather larger as about 15,000 Animists have been newly included in the province since the last census on account of the additions of new territory in Sadiya and the Naga Hills. This large decrease in the number of Animists is due to two reasons. The first is that very large numbers of tribal people living in the Brahmaputra Valley have returned themselves or have been returned as Hindus and the second is that in the hill districts a considerable number of Animists have been converted to Christianity. Except in Goalpara and the Sadiya Frontier Tract the number of followers of the tribal faiths in the Assam Valley has, as already explained, decreased enormously in all districts. In Goalpara there is a peculiar increase from 64,665 to 89,339 or 38 per cent. This is partly due to a large number of people in the Kokrajhar thana of that district returning both their religion and their caste as *Boro* as well as to an increase in the number of Santali settlers.

I made certain enquiries regarding the *Boro* religion and the following are extracts from the reports of the Sub-Deputy Collectors of Gossaigaon and Sidli circles:—

“(1) The *Boros* are Meches who write *Boro* after their names. They do not follow the Hindu rites and do not follow the gods and goddesses of the Hindus. They perform one *Puja* at harvest time every year and sacrifice goats, pigs, fowls, pigeons, etc., to please their gods. They believe that their gods take possession of a woman whom they seat before the offerings and it is through the expression of this possessed woman that they know of the desire of their gods.”

“(2) So far as I know the *Boros* are the same people as the Mech and practise the same form of religion and have the same habits, manners, and customs. The *Boros* are Animists and the existence of any difference between the *Boros* and the Meches is not known to me.

And the following is a note written on the subject by Srijut Rup Nath Brahma, B.L., who himself belongs to the Boro community :—

"The people formerly known as Meches in the district of Goalpara are known among themselves as Boro or Bodo. The term Meech is not their tribal designation. It was given to them out of contempt by the neighbouring orthodox Hindus. They were never known among themselves as Meches. So the Bodos strongly object to their being called Meches. The Boros or Bodos are identical with the Kacharis of Upper Assam. It is only in the district of Goalpara and in some parts of Eastern Bengal that they have been wrongly known as Meches. The term Boro or Bodo is their common term. The Boro people are found in large numbers in every district of the province of Assam. History shows that they were once the most influential people in the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley. They had a distinct state of civilization of their own. They had also a distinct form of religion which they have been retaining up till now. They were not idol worshippers. They have been worshipping from time immemorial one supreme Lord through the *Siju* tree within a bamboo enclosure which they regard as the symbols of the five elements and three attributes of the supreme Lord of the Universe. The *Siju* tree and the bamboo enclosure are together called *Bathan* and the Supreme Lord worshipped through *Bathan* is called *Bura Bathan* or *Bathan Barai*. They also worship fire and the sun.

The Bodos had a separate society of their own and never allowed their tribal peculiarities to be merged into the Hindu society. They do not recognise Brahmanical supremacy though many of them have been gradually converted to Hinduism. They say that they do not require any sort of conversion or initiation. Some 30 years ago a new form of Vedic religion was introduced among the educated classes of the Bodo people of the district of Goalpara by one * Sib Narain Swami. In that form of religion no Brahmanical supremacy is recognised. The Boros adopting the new form of religion began to call themselves as Brahmas styling their religion as Brahma religion. They recite *Gayatries*, perform *Homa* sacrifice and worship God through the sun. Thus from the religious point of view the Boro people should not be treated as Animists. They may fairly be treated as Hindus. But the majority of them are not willing to recognise themselves as Hindus simply because, according to their views, they would be losers thereby in the social and political spheres. They are in favour of having a separate representation of their own in Councils and other Government departments and they are not in favour of allowing their tribal interests to be merged with those of the Hindus. With these objects in view many of the Boros, specially those of the Kokrajhar thana, returned themselves as Boro by religion and Boro by caste. They say that considering the strength of their population in the whole province they have a rightful claim to have a separate category as Boro or Bodo in the census reports."

In the hill districts and the Sadiya Frontier Tract the number of Animists as a whole has actually increased but the increase is mostly due to the natural increase among the tribesmen in the Manipur Hills and to the additions of new territory in the Sadiya Frontier Tract and the Naga and Lushai Hills. Thus the increase of 7,000 in the number of Animists in the Sadiya Frontier Tract is due to the inclusion of many previously unadministered villages in the administered area of the Tract.

In the Garo Hills Animists have lost over 6,000; in the Lushai Hills over 5,000; and, excluding altogether an increase of about 2,000 by territorial transfer from the Naga Hills, the North Cachar Hills have lost over a thousand. On the other hand Animists have increased by 23,000 in Manipur, by 14,000 in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and by 3,000 in the Naga Hills. The increase in the latter district is, however, entirely due to inclusion of new territory. It is evident that the tribal religions in Assam, although making a good fight in the hills, are ultimately doomed to extinction. Hindu propaganda and influence have enormously reduced their numbers in the plains and in the hill districts the success of the Christian Missions is the measure of defeat of the primitive tribal faiths. The Manipur Hills is the only part of the hills which is likely to show an increase in the number of Animists in 1941. In the rest of the hills the number of Animists is bound to diminish slowly unless a *Swaraj* Government turns out the missionaries bag and baggage.

Christians.

149. Christians in Assam have increased from 132,106 to 249,246 or by 88·7 per cent. In Subsidiary Table III will be found the number of Christians in each district at each census since 1891 and their percentage increase. It will be seen that the number of Christians has practically doubled itself at each successive census. The hill districts account for most of the increase and of these the Lushai Hills has the most remarkable record. Twenty years ago there were less than 3,000 Christians in that district, there are now over 59,000 and Christians form very nearly half the

* Vide page 37 of Assam Census Report, 1911.

total population. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills has a few hundred Christians more than the Lushai Hills but progress, though steady, has been less rapid, and in the last ten years the percentage increase has been less than in any other hill district in spite of the fact that the headquarters of both the Catholic and the Welsh Presbyterian Missions of Assam are situated in Shillong. Nevertheless the Khasi and Jaintia Hills is rapidly becoming a Christian district and Christians now form over one-fifth of its total population. In the other hill districts Christians still form only a very small proportion of the total population but they are rapidly increasing and have more than doubled their numbers in the last ten years.

In the Surma Valley, where Animists are few, the number of Christians is insignificant when compared to the Hindu and Muslim population and amounts only to 5,617. This is, however, an increase of over 2,000 on the 1921 figure. On the other hand the numbers of Christians in Assam Valley has increased by 35,000 and now stands at nearly 74,000. Goalpara has the largest number, viz., 18,536, followed by Darrang and Lakhimpur with about 15,000 each. Except in Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang the Christians in the Brahmaputra Valley are mostly tea-garden coolies or ex-coolies, many of whom had come under Mission influence in their home districts before their arrival in Assam. In Kamrup and Darrang there are a considerable number of local Garo and Kachari Christians; thus there are about 4,000 Garo Christians in Kamrup out of a total Christian population of 5,583 and about 6,000 Kachari Christians in Darrang out of a total of 15,716 Christians. In Goalpara out of the 18,536 Christians in that district 7,000 are Garos, 2,500 Kacharis and most of the balance are Santals, etc., belonging to the Santal colony.

The progress of Christianity in Assam during the last decade has thus been extremely rapid and there is no reason to suppose that it will not continue at the same rate during the next ten years. The Manipur Hills, the Garo Hills and the Naga Hills are the three hill districts in which the number of Christians is still comparatively small and these districts offer probably the most fruitful fields in India to-day for the growth of Christianity. *Messis quidam multa, operarii autem pauci.*

The reasons for the rapid expansion of Christianity among the tribesmen of the Assam Hills are not difficult to understand. A mission with its organization, with its schools and hospitals, with enthusiasm and drive behind it, has an overwhelming advantage over the crude system of belief which it is attacking and the care and attention which the missionaries give their converts are highly appreciated. The reason given by one of my children's *ayahs* (a Khasi) for becoming a Christian is perhaps typical. Her reply was "It is good because when I am ill the *padre* comes and reads in a book and gives me *dawai* (medicine) and when I die they will put me in a very fine 'bakkus' and give me a good funeral".

Owing to the necessity for economy the numbers of adherents of the different Christian sects were not sorted for at this census and the only figures I can give are for Roman Catholics, Syrian Christians and all other Christians combined. The actual figures will be found in the flyleaf of Imperial Table XVI.

Roman Catholics have increased from 5,419 to 15,056; this very rapid growth is due to increased mission activity. The Roman Catholic Mission which is conducted by the Salesian Fathers has expanded considerably in the last ten years and a seminary for the training of young men for the priesthood has been founded in Shillong. The Mission has branches at Gauhati and Dibrugarh. The plains districts of the Surma Valley are, I understand, outside the field of activity of the Salesian Fathers and the small Roman Catholic community there (principally at Badarpur—a railway centre) falls within the jurisdiction of the diocese of Dacca. Over a third of the Roman Catholics are in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills where they number 5,592—an increase of over 3,000 since 1921. The bulk of the rest are tea-garden coolies and are to be found in the tea districts of Lakhimpur, Darrang, Nowgong and Sibsagar.

Syrian Christians number only 3. The rest of the Christian population of Assam belongs to the Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran and Anglican sects. As already explained it is not possible for me to give the exact number of adherents of each of these sects but approximate figures can be ascertained by allotting the number of non-Catholic Christians in the various districts to the Missions working

in those districts. Thus the Welsh Presbyterian Mission works in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Cachar, Sylhet, and the Lushai Hills and I have calculated that the number of Presbyterians in Assam is about 110,000 or 44 per cent. of the entire Christian population as against 64,000 in 1921; next to Presbyterians come the Baptists. The principal Baptist Mission is the American Baptist Mission which covers a wide field in the Naga Hills, Garo Hills, Kamrup, Darrang, Lakhimpur, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Manipur and Sadiya. The total number of Baptists in Assam is roughly about 80,000 or 32 per cent. of the entire Christian population as against 45,000 in 1921. The balance of the Christian population are mostly Anglicans, Lutherans, and followers of minor protestant sects. The principal Lutheran Mission is in Goalpara and is known as the Santal Mission of the Northern Churches, and the principal Anglican Mission is the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel which works in the upper districts of the Brahmaputra Valley.

In the Manipur Hills, in addition to the American Baptist Mission, there is a small Mission known as the North East India General Mission working in the South West area of the State. In the Lungleh Subdivision of the Lushai Hills the Lakher Pioneer Mission is at work. Both the North East India General and the Lakher Pioneer Mission would be classed as minor unspecified Protestant.

In the Khasi and Jaintia Hills besides the Welsh Presbyterian and the Roman Catholic Mission there are some small but interesting Christian sects which deserve mention; one is the "Church of God" known by the nick name of "Gospel Trumpets" from the name of its paper "The Gospel Trumpet" (published in the United States of America); another is called the "Balangtrairi" which is the Khasi word for "Khasi National Church" and another is known as the "Church of Christ". All of these three Churches are controlled by Khasi Pastors and are the only indications in Assam of the formation of national churches. The numbers of adherents of these churches is however very small and it seems unlikely that they will ever be able to compete with the better organized foreign missions who have in fact completely identified themselves with the interests of the Khasis and who have done and are doing an enormous amount of good work for them.

Buddhists. 150. Buddhists have increased from 13,520 to 15,045; of this number nearly 11,000 were enumerated in the Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts and the Sadiya Frontier Tract where they are the descendants of old immigrants from Burma—Phakials, Aitons, etc. In the other districts they consist mostly of Bhutia traders and Maghs from the Chittagong coast. In the Garo Hills there is one peculiar village of *Mans* which is the Assamese word for Burmese. I heard about this village when I was on tour in those hills and the enquiries I made go to show that this village is apparently a living relic of the great Burmese invasion of Assam and that the founders of the village were Burmese troops who either escaped from or surrendered to the British forces at the time of their advance into Assam in 1824.

Jains, Sikhs and others. 151. Jains have decreased from 3,503 to 2,803. In 1911 they amounted to 2,508. They are all traders from Rajputana or Western India. The decrease is due principally to the fact that in 1921, 662 Jains were recorded in the Sibsagar districts whereas now only 181 are shown. Many persons who are Jains regard themselves also as Hindus and there can be no doubt that the decrease in the number of Jains in Assam is due solely to this cause.

Sikhs have increased from 1,009 to 2,729. They have increased in all districts but the principal increase is in Lakhimpur, where their numbers have gone up from 183 to 1,025. The Sikhs who come to Assam are generally skilled workmen—motor mechanics, carpenters, building contractors, etc., and are naturally to be found in the largest numbers in the most advanced industrial districts. Since 1921 Sikhs have increased by nearly 2,000 and many of them are earning very good incomes; yet there are at least 2,000 Assamese and Sylhetti youths who have passed the Matriculation and upwards and are without any employment.

Details are given in the title page of Imperial Table XVI of the 480 persons whose religion has been grouped together under Miscellaneous. Among them are to be found Confucians, Jews and Parsis but most of them consist of the 373 persons in

the Naga Hills who have returned themselves as under the expressive title of "Sitters in the Middle." These are Nagas (principally Aos) who had been converted to Christianity but who found the regulations of the Mission (particularly the regulation against drinking rice beer) too arduous to follow and preferred excommunication to prohibition.

152. I cannot conclude this chapter—which is intended to discuss the numbers of those who have been returned as professing various religions rather than their tenets—without making some observations on the remarkable change which has taken place in the relations between the Hindu and Muslim communities within the last decade. We have already seen that the continued influx of Mymensinghia immigrants has been the principal factor in the large increase in the Muslim population of Assam and that the propaganda work of the Hindu Sabha among the primitive tribes in the Brahmaputra Valley has been the main cause for the large increase in the Hindu population. These are the salient facts brought out by the census; but the most important fact which cannot be proved by any census statistics is that the relations between the Hindu and Muslim communities in Assam have undergone a decided change for the worse in the last ten years. This is particularly noticeable in Sylhet. Rai Bahadur Promode Chandra Datta, C.I.E., of Sylhet, formerly a Minister in the Government of Assam notes as follows:—

"It is a matter of regret that during the last decade the feelings between the Hindu and Muslim community have grown worse."

Rai Bahadur Rajani Kanta Rai Dastidar, Additional District Magistrate, Sylhet, notes to the same effect. "A great change" he says "has taken place in the mutual relations between the two communities. They might now fly at each others' throats on the slightest provocation. The former cordial relationship between the two communities unfortunately appears to be non-existent."

The same phenomenon is visible in the Brahmaputra Valley which used to be singularly free from trouble of this nature.

The real cause of this regrettable change in the relation between the two largest communities in Assam must be sought outside the province; what we have in Assam is merely a reflection of events elsewhere. The Simon Commission speaking of India as a whole gave their opinion as follows:—"The true cause, as seems to us (of communal tension) is the struggle for political power and for the opportunities which political power confers". This is undoubtedly true for India as a whole but as far as Assam is concerned the communal infection has spread to us from larger provinces where the political struggle has been more acute.

I am fortified in this opinion by that of Maulavi Abdul Hye Chaudhuri, Extra Assistant Commissioner, who writes to me as follows:—

"The causes (of the strained feeling between the communities) are mostly extra provincial. The riots in other parts of India could not but have their repercussions in Assam. An irresponsible Press with its flaming headlines of "Hindu widow kidnapped by Muhammadan" and "Hindu religious procession obstructed by Muslims" accentuates the bad feeling between the communities. Furthermore the economic domination of Hindu money lenders and landlords has been realized by the Muslims of Eastern Bengal and Sylhet. And the general impression which prevails—whether rightly or wrongly—that Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha have combined to maintain this domination has gone a long way to strain the relations."

I have stated the unpleasant facts on this subject because they are facts which affect the social and political well-being of the province and are just as real as the statistics given in this chapter.

I forget who it was but it was probably an Irishman who once wrote of my own country:—

*A fruitful peasantry on a fertile sod,
Fighting like devils for conciliation
And hating each other for the love of God.*

We are getting towards that stage in Assam now but the struggle for conciliation is not particularly noticeable.

Hindu-Muslim relations.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION BY RELIGION.

Religion and Locality.	Actual number in 1931.	Proportion per 10,000 of population.					Variation per cent. (Increase +; Decrease —).				Net variation per cent.
		1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1921 to 1931.	1911 to 1921.	1901 to 1911.	1891 to 1901.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
HINDU.											
ASSAM	5,204,650	5,628	5,461	5,438	5,598	5,472	+ 19.3	+ 13.6	+ 11.9	+ 14.4	+ 73.7
Brahmaputra Valley ...	3,409,854	7,219	6,878	7,014	7,182	6,984	+ 28.6	+ 21.6	+ 15.9	+ 9.9	+ 99.3
Surma Valley	1,447,198	4,437	4,665	4,771	5,000	4,980	+ 2.0	+ 1.1	+ 5.7	+ 5.7	+ 15.2
Hills	347,698	2,753	2,668	2,523	2,584	...	+ 19.2	+ 14.5	+ 15.7	...	...
MUSLIM.											
ASSAM	2,780,514	3,007	2,778	2,693	2,581	2,710	+ 25.3	+ 16.8	+ 20.2	+ 6.6	+ 87.4
Brahmaputra Valley ...	944,129	1,999	1,520	1,143	950	681	+ 61.1	+ 65.0	+ 42.8	+ 3.6	+ 292.9
Surma Valley	1,799,551	5,517	5,273	5,166	4,920	4,904	+ 12.2	+ 5.5	+ 16.3	+ 5.7	+ 45.5
Hills	36,834	292	273	251	299	...	+ 23.8	+ 17.5	— 0.5	...	...
TRIBAL.											
ASSAM	992,390	1,073	1,573	1,755	1,744	1,771	— 21.0	+ 1.4	+ 16.0	+ 10.2	+ 2.3
Brahmaputra Valley ...	277,440	637	1,459	1,734	1,782	1,974	— 50.7	+ 4.4	+ 15.5	— 3.5	— 42.6
Surma Valley	9,169	23	49	53	73	110	— 38.4	— 4.5	— 19.8	— 29.9	— 68.9
Hills	705,781	5,590	6,215	6,790	6,845	...	+ 3.9	— 0.8	+ 17.6	+ 27.0	...
CHRISTIAN.											
ASSAM	249,246	270	165	94	59	31	+ 83.7	+ 98.5	+ 85.1	+ 113.5	+ 1,379.7
Brahmaputra Valley ...	73,704	156	100	68	48	28	+ 60.3	+ 82.0	+ 69.8	+ 83.7	+ 681.2
Surma Valley	5,017	17	11	9	6	6	+ 68.9	+ 28.0	+ 54.6	+ 17.1	+ 288.8
Hills	169,925	1,346	824	423	256	...	+ 88.8	+ 111.0	+ 96.2	+ 153.6	...
BUDDHIST.											
ASSAM	15,045	16	17	15	14	14	+ 11.3	+ 28.6	+ 18.0	+ 15.8	+ 95.5
Brahmaputra Valley ...	13,554	29	31	31	30	29	+ 12.2	+ 23.3	+ 23.3	...	+ 95.5
Surma Valley	61	...	...	...	...	...	+ 3.8	+ 13.6	+ 109.5	+ 110.0	+ 710.0
Hills	1,410	11	13	7	11	15	+ 3.1	+ 105.8	— 28.6	+ 28.0	84.7
OTHERS.											
ASSAM	6,012	6	6	5	4	3	+ 22.6	+ 47.5	+ 38.4	+ 83.2	+ 305.9
Brahmaputra Valley ...	4,612	10	10	9	7	5	+ 20.5	+ 36.5	+ 40.8	+ 53.3	+ 247.6
Surma Valley	413	1	1	1	1	...	+ 1.2	+ 153.8	— 19.1	+ 107.3	+ 233.1
Hills	987	8	6	3	3	1	+ 47.8	+ 67.0	+ 52.1	+ 1,038.3	+ 3,110.0

SUBSIDIARY TABLE II.

DISTRIBUTION BY DISTRICTS OF THE MAIN RELIGIONS.

District and Natural Division.	NUMBER PER 10,000 OF THE POPULATION WHO ARE														
	HINDU.					MUSLIM.					TRIBAL.				
	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1931.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
ASSAM	5,628	5,461	5,438	5,598	5,473	3,007	2,778	2,693	2,581	2,710	1,073	1,573	1,755	1,744	1,771
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY ...	7,219	6,878	7,014	7,182	6,984	1,999	1,520	1,143	950	681	587	1,459	1,734	1,782	1,974
Goalpara	4,372	4,844	5,573	4,409	4,631	4,392	4,151	3,522	2,779	2,751	1,013	848	788	2,719	2,567
Kamrup	7,269	7,141	6,876	6,914	7,019	2,461	1,463	968	911	873	200	1,336	2,105	2,132	2,077
Darrang	7,791	7,077	6,502	7,065	6,367	1,154	764	538	515	599	759	2,023	2,582	2,326	2,585
Nowgong	5,799	5,579	5,856	6,422	6,226	3,160	1,774	517	482	411	944	2,553	3,560	3,051	3,343
Sibsagar	9,011	8,443	8,623	8,855	9,167	471	425	431	416	433	343	991	634	656	355
Lakhimpur	9,132	7,834	7,846	8,979	8,944	358	263	286	321	318	204	1,681	1,635	484	493
Sadiya	4,874	4,871	...	...	...	151	145	...	...	...	4,403	4,166	...	...	...
Balpara	7,403	7,172	...	...	...	140	68	...	...	...	1,579	2,223	...	...	...
SURMA VALLEY	4,437	4,465	4,771	5,000	4,980	5,517	5,273	5,166	4,920	4,904	28	49	53	73	110
Cachar plains	6,208	6,379	6,488	6,725	6,528	3,641	3,409	3,311	3,055	3,070	101	177	177	194	378
Sylhet	4,087	4,327	4,444	4,680	4,715	5,887	5,640	5,519	5,285	5,217	14	24	29	50	64
HILLS	2,753	2,668	2,523	2,584	599	292	272	251	299	136	5,590	6,215	6,790	6,845	9,080
Garohills	1,464	1,049	1,310	960	637	526	524	517	564	460	7,161	7,988	7,811	8,192	8,472
North Cachar	7,758	7,165	5,521	5,858	4,340	137	153	162	1,423	8	1,493	2,376	4,263	2,563	5,651
Khasi and Jaintia Hills ...	913	540	403	265	230	90	58	65	55	41	6,930	7,682	8,167	8,192	9,308
Naga Hills	361	300	283	337	361	39	43	21	14	17	8,291	9,019	9,473	9,585	9,571
Lushai Hills	321	397	385	409	368	12	37	34	25	49	4,635	6,675	9,274	9,642	9,578
Manipur	5,773	5,994	5,816	5,906	...	513	455	419	365	...	3,474	3,433	3,758	3,631	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE III.

CHRISTIANS—NUMBER AND VARIATIONS.

District and Natural Division.	Actual number of Christians in					Variation per cent.				
	1901.	1921.	1911.	1901.	1891.	1921-1901.	1911-1901.	1901-1911.	1891-1901.	1891-1921.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ASSAM	249,246	132,106	66,562	35,969	16,844	+ 88.7	+ 98.5	+ 85.1	+ 113.5	+ 1,379.7
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY	73,704	38,723	21,272	12,526	6,817	+ 90.3	+ 82.0	+ 69.8	+ 83.7	+ 981.2
Goalpara	18,536	10,312	5,252	3,495	1,632	+ 70.8	+ 66.3	+ 50.3	+ 114.2	+ 1,035.8
Kamrup	6,583	3,661	2,635	1,479	918	+ 62.5	+ 44.4	+ 71.4	+ 56.0	+ 468.9
Darrang	15,716	5,319	1,913	1,358	849	+ 105.6	+ 178.0	+ 40.9	+ 60.0	+ 1,751.1
Newgong	5,043	2,025	1,373	693	417	+ 72.4	+ 113.0	+ 131.5	+ 42.2	+ 1,109.4
Sibsagar	13,231	8,390	5,410	2,459	1,365	+ 57.9	+ 54.9	+ 117.4	+ 82.3	+ 869.3
Lakhimpur	14,864	7,731	4,789	3,112	1,606	+ 92.3	+ 61.4	+ 53.9	+ 93.8	+ 825.5
Sadiya	439	300	...	...	...	+ 46.0	...	...	...	...
Balpara	293	96	...	...	...	+ 205.2	...	...	...	...
SURMA VALLEY	5,617	3,366	2,629	1,701	1,452	+ 66.9	+ 28.0	+ 54.6	+ 17.1	+ 286.8
Cachar plains	2,632	1,610	1,117	927	809	+ 63.5	+ 44.1	+ 16.7	+ 18.3	+ 235.3
Sylhet	2,985	1,756	1,512	744	643	+ 70.0	+ 16.1	+ 103.2	+ 15.7	+ 364.2
HILLS	169,925	90,017	42,661	21,742	8,575	+ 88.8	+ 111.0	+ 96.2	+ 153.6	+ 1,881.6
Garohills	15,950	7,608	5,439	3,647	1,184	+ 109.6	+ 39.9	+ 49.1	+ 208.0	+ 1,247.1
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	59,673	41,123	31,257	17,321	7,144	+ 44.9	+ 31.6	+ 80.5	+ 142.5	+ 733.9
North Cachar	1,970	783	64	83	1	+ 151.6	+ 1,123.4	- 22.9	+ 8,200.0	+ 196,900.0
Naga Hills	22,908	8,734	3,308	601	231	+ 162.3	+ 164.0	+ 450.4	+ 160.2	+ 9,816.9
Lushai Hills	59,123	27,720	2,461	45	15	+ 113.3	+ 1,026.4	+ 5,368.9	+ 200.0	+ 394,033.3
Manipur	10,401	4,050	132	45	...	+ 156.8	+ 2,968.2	+ 193.3	...	...

SUBSIDIARY TABLE IV.

RELIGIONS OF URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION.

Natural Divisions.	Number per 10,000 of urban population who are					Number per 10,000 of rural population who are				
	Hindu.	Muslim.	Tribal.	Christian.	Others.	Hindu.	Muslim.	Tribal.	Christian.	Others.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ASSAM	7,615	1,761	298	263	63	5,558	3,051	1,100	270	21
Brahmaputra Valley	7,546	2,165	32	165	92	7,200	1,994	604	156	37
Surma Valley	6,214	3,673	3	81	29	4,403	5,551	29	16	1
HILLS	8,422	278	778	477	45	2,185	203	6,073	1,433	16

CHAPTER XII.

CASTE, TRIBE, RACE AND NATIONALITY.

153. Caste, like a dome of many-coloured glass, stains the whole fabric of Hindu society but any person who expects to find in this chapter a learned dissertation on the caste system will, I fear, be disappointed. Nothing will here be found of the four *Varnas*, of hypergamy, endogamy, exogamy or of functional groups. In fact the whole object of the census on this occasion was to throw fresh light on the what are loosely called the "depressed" classes of Indian society and the whole value of this chapter—if it has any value—is contained in the appendix on the depressed and backward classes of Assam which was originally written for the information of the Indian Franchise Committee on the occasion of their visit to India last cold weather.

This report is not, however, entirely devoid of new light on the subject of caste and in Appendix C at the end of this volume will be found a most interesting note by Professor K. M. Gupta of the Murarichand College on some castes and caste origins in Sylhet.

154. Before I proceed to deal with the difficulties of the return of caste I invite the attention of my readers to the social map of Assam which is published as a frontispiece to this volume. This map shows the broad religious and social composition of the population of each district in the province and the references on the map itself, read with the Key to the Map which is published as Appendix II to this chapter, explain the meaning of the various colours used in the rectangles, which are drawn on a scale of 500,000 persons to one square inch. This map is the result of a considerable amount of labour and is, I think, almost self-explanatory. One thing, however, must be remembered, namely, that only persons belonging to tea garden cooly castes and tribes who were actually returned as Hindus are included in the light blue hachured colour. Persons belonging to tea garden cooly castes and tribes who were returned as belonging to a tribal or to the Christian religion appear either as red (tribal religions) or as white (others). But as the number of coolies and *ex-coolies* belonging to tribal religions is only about 53,000 and Christian coolies and *ex-coolies* number only about 31,000 the map does, in fact, give a good idea of the proportion of coolies and *ex-coolies* in each district. Similar maps will be published in the census report of all provinces. These maps have their origin in a memorandum written by Baron Eickstedt, Director of the Anthropological Institute and Ethnographical Museum at the University of Breslau. The following extract from his memorandum shows the object at which the learned Baron was aiming.

"At the present state of scientific knowledge of the castes and tribes of India there is no question of greater importance than that of the distribution of the hill tribes and their interdigitation with the Hindu castes. On the solution of this question depends all future scientific work in this department of study....."

Thanks to the excellent works of Grierson, Risley, and Baines we possess a first general outline of the distribution, and a general indication of the importance of the non-Hindu and half Hinduised population of India. In an even more striking and impressive way than there, the enormous importance, practically always undervalued, of this old Indian population for civilization, language, material and spiritual culture, for race and history of modern India, is shown in the splendid ethnological works written under Government auspices by Thurston-Rangachari for Southern India, Russell-Hiralal for the Central Provinces, Risley for Bengal and Orissa, Iyer for Cochin and Mysore, Hutton, Hodson and Gait for Assam, Roy for Chota Nagpur, Scott for Upper Burma, Enthoven for Bombay, the District Gazetteers, etc.

But all further detailed or specialised study in anthropology or ethnology, in linguistic and dialect research is bound to be unsatisfactory or even futile as long as we lack an exact knowledge of the distribution of the ethnic layers of the population. All questions connected with the intermigration and the resulting influences on one another of these tribes with the problems of cultural layers and racial analysis, and not least, the history of their relations with Aryans and Hindus; all questions relating also, on the one hand, to the present enormous economical changes going on within these tribes and, on

the other, to their linking up with and merging in the economic system of neighbouring Hindus or plains people—all these questions, so far as any detailed knowledge of the ethnic substratum is concerned are left entirely in air. The exact basis is still lacking.....

The time to take this scientific step, following logically and necessarily from the results of the excellent works named above, is now and only now. For there cannot be the least doubt that those extraordinary economical revolutions in India and all over the world which determine the cultural history of our time, will have destroyed in a very short time the remnants of most of these hill tribes. The book of their history which can still be opened will soon be closed and lost for all time—no conclusions will ever be possible, no effort of future generations will be able to restore what is lost and forgotten in our days.

It is well known what radical changes in a hill area may be produced in a few years by a single bus route, by a handful of Mahammadan traders, by the example of some Hindu workmen. The process of amalgamation—for the anthropologist always a process of annihilation—proceeds with alarming rapidity. The few places still exempt, will be involved in a very short time.....

It is well known what great interest the Government of India has always taken in the scientific opening up of the country, how most of the important works on the country were created with its assistance or published under its patronage, and how an administration of unrivalled brilliancy—well known to me by years of co-operation—found its counterpart in monumental scientific surveys and publications.

It is this fact which has given me the courage to write this memorandum and to address the following request to the Government:—

That hand in hand with the Census Operations of the year 1931 exact material may be collected on the distribution of the different castes and tribes that this material may be placed in suitable hands for further treatment, and that the completed distribution map, be it as an annexe to the Census Volumes or as a separate Government publication may be made accessible in book form and with a short introduction to all concerned."

The Baron's original scheme provided for a map which would show the number of aboriginals, etc, in each village. This was obviously impracticable and for various reasons—the main one being the necessity for economy—it was only found possible to publish two maps—one showing the general social structure of the population of each district and one showing the languages spoken in each district and the extent of bilingualism. The latter is dealt with in Chapter X—Language.

But the number of indigenous castes and tribes in Assam is so large and the immigrants who have swarmed into the province since the first census was held are so numerous and so varied that even the preparation of a map showing the general composition of the population of each district presented great difficulties and it was only after much consideration that I decided, with the approval of the Census Commissioner for India, to show only eight classes on the map, namely (1) Muslims, (2) Hindus other than 3, 4 and 5, (3) Hindu "exterior castes", (4) Hindu tea garden cooly castes, (5) Hindu still preserving a tribal organization, (6) Tribal religions, (7) Christians belonging to hill tribes (8) Others.

Had such a map been prepared only forty years ago it would have been very different from the present map. The green patches (Muslims) in the Assam Valley would have been hardly noticeable and the pink hachured sections (Christians belonging to hill tribes) would have been so small that they would have been difficult to find.

In 1891, for example, the Muslim percentage of the population of Kamrup was 8.7 per cent., to-day they form 21.6 per cent. of its population; forty years ago the Muslim percentage in the population of Nowgong was 4.1 per cent.: to-day it is 31.6 per cent. As for the Christians I need only mention that in 1891 the total number of Christians in the Lushai Hills was 15 (practically all Europeans). In 1894 the first missionaries arrived there and half the population of the district is now Christian.

In the case of the Hindu population, also, very great changes have occurred on account of the gradual absorption into the Hindu fold of large numbers of tribal peoples in the plains and considerable portions of the areas in the map now coloured pink (Hindus possessing a tribal organization) and blue (other Hindus) would have been coloured red (tribal religions) had a similar map been prepared in 1891.

155. Economy being the order of the day the only castes sorted for at this census were those whose numbers were required for administrative purposes. Hence Imperial Table XVII—Caste, Tribe or Race—in which the statistics of caste will be found is an extremely exiguous table compared with the caste tables of previous censuses.

In many ways this is possibly an advantage. The returns of caste are undoubtedly getting less accurate at each successive census and it seems extremely doubtful whether it is worthwhile collecting and publishing statistics for any castes except for those which are known to be likely to be accurate. For various administrative purposes, *e.g.*, for calculating the proportion of appointments in Government service the statistics of certain castes, *e.g.*, the Ahoms, are required by the Local Government. There is no difficulty in collecting accurate caste figures for the Ahoms or for most of the racial castes of the Assam Valley but when it comes to castes like the Kayasthas, Mahisyas, and Patnis I confess that the figures appear to me to be worthless and not worth the trouble of collecting.

The entry of caste in the census schedules is, in fact, the one entry which gives rise to difficulty at the time of the census and is invariably the subject of a large number of memorials submitted by members of various castes to the Local Government, to District Officers and to the Superintendent of Census. The general orders on the subject were that each man's caste should be recorded as the person questioned gave it provided it was a real caste name. Any other orders would have given rise to more trouble than the statistics were worth but it is obvious that accurate information for all castes cannot be collected on these lines. In the case of many castes—especially in the case of the tribal castes—our statistics are accurate. There is, for example, no desire among the Ahoms or no reason why there should be any desire to give any other caste name but Ahom, nor is there any reason why any other caste should adopt this name. But when we came to castes like the Patnis in the Surma Valley we find that at each successive census their numbers have been melting away in a most mysterious fashion. Far be it from me to re-open on this occasion or even refer to the old feuds which still exist among various sections of the Hindu community regarding their claim to a more exalted origin than would ordinarily be admitted by their social superiors. All I need say is that the old tendency to use the census as an opportunity to press for recognition of social claims was just as pronounced at this census as in 1921. This tendency was reflected in the census schedules in various ways. Some castes favoured tacking on the word Brahman to an abbreviated form of their caste name, *e.g.*, Nai—Brahman for Napit and it was even mooted at one time that the Namasudras should return themselves as Nama-Brahman. Other castes adopted a different name altogether. Thus the Brittia-Banias, who before 1901 were known under a still different title, dropped the Brittia prefix altogether at this census and returned themselves as Bania only. The Additional District Magistrate, Sylhet, where the return of caste invariably gives rise to trouble, gives the following description of the difficulties encountered.

"The caste entry raised unnecessary difficulties and agitation. The orders on the subject issued from time to time were fairly clear and elastic enough to meet the situation. The high caste Hindus, however, could not appreciate the idea of low caste Hindus calling themselves as they chose and sometimes the enumerators also grumbled. Warning had to be given to some enumerators to act as directed. A general order was issued to all supervisors to enter the caste of each person as he himself described it and in cases of obvious deviation to enter the man's real caste name within brackets just below it. Many supervisors and enumerators at first resented this but timely warnings and persuasion had its effect.

But where the enumerators themselves adopted a better caste name they could not be persuaded to enter the original caste below it."

After the census was over I received requisitions from some courts in Sylhet for certain census schedules—apparently in connection with cases of libel which had been filed by persons who were dissatisfied with the caste entries which had been made against them—but on my pointing out section 12 of the Indian Census Act and asking for further details of the cases to enable me to come to a decision I heard nothing further on the matter.

In the case of the Muslims there was a considerable amount of objection everywhere to column 8 of the schedule—caste, tribe or race—which had been translated into the vernacular as *jati*—a word which was supposed to give an impression that the Muslims had a caste system. It was clearly laid down in the instructions that Islam recognized no caste distinctions but that Muslims were divided into four large families and into various sectional and functional groups. Still this did not generally

satisfy the Muslims and there was a general feeling among them that this column should not be applied in their case. The following quotation from my administrative report gives the Muslim view on the subject:—

"There was a considerable objection in many places to the caste column for Muslims. This column is in English *Race, Tribe or Caste* but it was translated as *jati* which was supposed to give it a Hindu significance. This question was brought up at practically every census meeting I attended. Muslims were very firm in their views that their religion was Islam and they had no *jati*. They would return Islam in column 4 and Muslim in column 8. Personally I entirely agree with them and I consider that the old classification of Muslims into the so-called families of Moghul, Pathan, Sheikh and Saiyid mixed up with a classification into functional groups like "Malmal", "Moria", "Nagarchi," etc., is completely illogical and worthless and that, at the next census, only the religion of Muslims should be recorded. The following extract from the report of a Muslim Subdivisional Officer gives the general opinion of all Muslims on this subject:—

"Among Muhammadans there is no caste system and so any forced division among them cannot be correct. Of course it may be said that some division may be made among them from the point of view of original stock but it cannot possibly be accurate as any man who is not a descendant of the Prophet coming originally from Arabia will be termed a "Sheikh" as also will be a member of an aboriginal tribe who accepts Islam. So the term Sheikh actually conveys no idea of the original stock to which the man belongs.....The divisions Syed, Pathan, Moghul signify stocks whereas divisions like Jula is one based on profession. Thus a Syed, or Moghul, or Pathan or Sheikh or any Mahammadan who weaves cloth is a Jula. The whole thing is against Mahammadan tenets and traditions and the Mahammadan public objected to these provisions in the Code."

It is a pity that we did not know before the census took place that the necessity for economy would in any case prevent us from sorting the Muslim slips for these so-called families and functional groups; the objections of the Muhammadans to this column of the census schedule could then have been easily met by an order that they need not fill in the column at all. Among the hill tribes there was, of course, no difficulty. No hillman has any reason to be ashamed of the name of his tribe or to claim to be something different from what he is. Europeans and Americans were instructed to return their nationality and Anglo-Indians to return themselves as such. No difficulty was experienced in these cases.

156. The question of the depressed castes has been so exhaustively dealt with in the appendix to this chapter that it would be wearisome to mention them again and hence, in this paragraph, I propose to deal only with those Assamese castes which were sorted for at this census (they are very few) and with certain hill tribes. Considerable attention has been devoted in previous census reports to the question whether the Assamese are a dying people and it was shown in 1911 and 1921 that they were not. This conclusion is certainly confirmed by the figures showing the increase in the few indigenous castes of the Assam Valley who were sorted for on this occasion. They are conveniently set out in Imperial Table XVIII. Looking at the figures for the Assamese castes and tribes given in this table we see that the Ahoms have increased from 154,000 in 1891 to 249,000 in 1931, the Miris from 37,000 to 85,000, the Mikirs from 95,000 to 130,000 and the Kacharis of Goalpara and Kamrup from 173,000 to 216,000. The Lalungs alone have a smaller population (43,000) than they had in 1891 (52,000); this is due to the ravages of *kala-azar* which reduced their numbers between 1891 and 1901 by 17,000 or by practically one-third. Since 1901, however, the Lalungs have been slowly but steadily increasing.

All these castes and tribes, except the Lalungs, show considerable increases since the last census (Ahoms 10.9 per cent., Miris 23.8 per cent., Mikirs about 14 per cent., Kacharis of Goalpara and Kamrup 11.2 per cent.). The Lalungs have only increased by 6 per cent., but it is possible that on conversion to Hinduism some of them returned a different caste name. The same remark applies to the Rabhas who decreased from 79,000 in 1911 to 70,000 in 1921 and have now decreased still further to 68,000. This, as pointed out in the census report for 1921, is due to the return of a different caste name—probably Kshattriya.

Unfortunately in the case of many of the hill tribes it is difficult to make an exact comparison as the number of Christians belonging to these tribes was not recorded at previous censuses and in many cases members of various Kuki and Naga tribes were lumped together under the very wide term Kuki or Naga. Every effort was made at this census to keep down the number of unspecified Kukis and Nagas with the result

that we now have over 50,000 Thado Kukis against 30,000 in 1921, but the only conclusion we can draw from this is that many Thados in 1921 were simply recorded as Kuki. It is, however, clear that in Manipur State the Kuki tribes as a whole have increased at a very satisfactory rate. In 1921 there were 62,000 Kukis belonging to all Kuki tribes (excluding Kuki Christians) in the State. There are now 72,000 non-Christian Kukis in the State plus 6,500 Christian Kukis. In the Lushai Hills, also, the various Lushei-Kuki clans who make up its indigenous population have increased at a considerable rate, and so have the Khasis and Syntengs. But in the Naga Hills things are by no means so satisfactory and it is clear that the Lhotas are dying out and that the great Angami tribe is apparently at a standstill.

The Lhotas who numbered over 22,000 in 1891 have gradually decreased at each successive census until to-day they number just over 15,000. In the case of the Angamis it is necessary to calculate from 1911 as many previously unadministered Angami villages were incorporated in the Naga Hills district between 1901 and 1911. In 1911 the Angami tribe was about 44,000 strong: they now number 49,000 but according to the census statistics, practically the whole of this increase took place between 1911 and 1921 and there has been no increase since 1921. I suspect, however, that a few thousand Kachha Nagas were returned as Angamis in 1921. Even so an increase of 11.1 per cent. in 20 years is a very poor rate of increase for a hill tribe of Assam. The Semas are increasing and so too are the Aos. Among the Aos the proportion of Christians is so large that any comparison with previous "caste and tribe" tables, which do not give the number of Christians, is difficult but from the language table it is clear that the Aos have increased from 29,000 in 1911 to 30,000 in 1921 and to 33,000 in 1931. The Naga tribes of Manipur after the bad setback which they received in 1911-21, owing to the influenza epidemic, have recovered their lost ground and show satisfactory increases. The Garos, judging by the increase in the number of Garo speakers—from 173,000 to 193,000 have also increased at a satisfactory rate. Why the Naga Hills alone should be the one area where depopulation has apparently set in and why it should apparently be confined to the Lhotas and the Angamis is a matter which I must leave to the anthropologists. The matter has been dealt with in an illuminating note by Mr. J. P. Mills, i.c.s., Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, which is published as Appendix A at the end of this volume.

157. The well known series of monographs on the primitive tribes of Assam has

The Mithels (Hodson).
" Mikirs (Lyall).
" Garos (Playfair).
" Naga Tribes of Manipur, (Hodson).
" Kacharis (Biddle).
" Lushai-Kuki clans, (Shakespeare).
" Khasis (Gordon).
" Angami Nagas (Hutton).
" Sema Nagas (Hutton).
" Lhota Nagas (Mills).
" Ao Naga Tribe (Smith).
" Ao Nagas (Mills).
" Thado Kukis (Shaw).
" Lakheras (Parry).

received several valuable additions during the last ten years. I give in the margin the complete list of the volumes in the order of their appearance with the names of their authors in brackets after each volume. These monographs (published by Macmillan and Company, London, by direction of the Government of Assam) are a brilliant example of the services

which can be rendered to ethnology by officials who study intensively the tribes under their administrative charge and by a Government which has always encouraged such study.

Some of the earlier volumes in this series require revision owing to the changes which have taken place since they were published. In Appendix B at the end of this volume will be found notes on the Garos, Lushais, and Khasis—all written by officers with an intimate knowledge of these peoples—which should be found most useful if ever the volumes on these tribes are revised and republished. Notes on some other tribes which have not yet formed the subject of separate monographs are also included in Appendix B.

The table which gives the statistics of Europeans and Anglo-Indians is Imperial Table XIX—European and Allied Races and Anglo-Indians by Race and Age. The total number of Europeans in Assam (using the word European to cover all white races) is 3,362 (2,329 males and 1,033 females) of whom 3,127 are British subjects and 235 the subjects of foreign powers; of the latter nearly half are Italians and half citizens of the United States of America. The great predominance of these nationalities is due to the presence in Assam of the Salesian Fathers (a Roman Catholic order whose mother-house is at Turin) and the American Baptist Missionaries.

Monographs on Assam Hill Tribes.

Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

In 1921 the total number of Europeans was 2,768 of whom 2,669 were British subjects and 99 were subjects of other powers. The number of Europeans in the province which hardly varied between 1911-21 has thus increased considerably in the last 10 years. Most of the increase has taken place in Lakhimpur district where there are now 973 Europeans against 585 in 1921. The great expansion of the oil industry in that district accounts for most of the increase. The great majority of the Europeans censused in the province are tea planters: others are Government servants, missionaries and persons engaged in commerce or industry. The table below shows the distribution by districts.

Population—4—10.	22—26.	131.	305—351.	425—527.	973.
Balipara Garo Hills	Manipur Naga Hills Lushai Hills Sadiya Goalpara	Kamrup	Cachar Sylhet Darrang	Khasi and Jaintia Hills Sibsagar	Lakhimpur.

Anglo-Indians number only 650 against 491 in 1921. Most of them are employed in Government service or on the railways. It is probable that some persons who would have been more correctly described as Anglo-Indians have returned their father's nationality but they cannot be many. It is not, of course, possible to compare the total number of Europeans with the number of those born in Europe as many Europeans were born in India (for example two of my own children who were enumerated at this census were born in India) but a rough check can be applied and I find from Imperial Table VI—Birthplace—that the total number of persons born in Europe, Africa, America and Australia and censused in Assam amounts to 2,732. Our figures for the total number of Europeans in Assam cannot, therefore, be far wrong.

Changes in
Social
structure.

158. I have already mentioned in Chapter I the effect of the spirit of individualism on the Hindu joint family system. This spirit—the spirit of freedom, of liberty, of being one's own master—has, I consider, developed considerably during the last decade. The *Swaraj* movement and the growing sense of nationalism have directly fostered this feeling and political events have had a profound effect upon social development. A more liberal spirit is abroad—especially among the younger generation—in matters appertaining to caste and, particularly in towns, the bonds of caste have been relaxed to an appreciable extent. Naturally the process of relaxation and change is slow; the caste system goes back some thousands of years and the spirit of nationality and democracy is a thing of yesterday. But the caste system, so far as I can perceive, is still as strong as ever and is merely adapting itself to modern conditions and modern requirements. How the system will work under a democratic system of Government will be one of the most interesting things to observe in India during the next ten years. Probably the higher castes will have to grant various concessions in order to maintain their ascendancy: but that they will maintain their ascendancy I have no doubt. The habits and mode of thinking of a few thousand years cannot be eradicated by anything short of what the Bolsheviks would call a *liquidation* of the twiceborn. Writing on the subject of caste Babu Dinesh Chandra Dutta of the Murarichand College, states:—

"In towns, among the educated classes, the different castes mix freely with one another and caste rules are not so rigidly observed in public and private banquets, e.g., the Shahas who formerly enjoyed the privileges of a common *hooka* are now admitted to the common dining table (or rather the dining hall) of the liberal-minded caste-men. In the villages the old order continues, but even in the villages the breaches of caste rules are more frequently connived at. The Congress volunteers do not observe the caste rules in matters of dining. They move freely from village to village and are entertained by influential castemen without any objections. The Brahmins, who are the guardians of our social order, think it prudent to bear with such developments without making any fuss. The England-returned youths are now more readily admitted into the folds of society. Rigours of untouchability are also vanishing due to the liberalising influences of the time, including frequent railway journeys. A Brahmin would not formerly touch an untouchable, and if he did so accidentally he would purify himself by bathing. Nothing like that is done now-a-days.

Though untouchability is losing ground, there is hardly any indication of intercommunal fusions. Intermarriage between different castes is still a distant ideal, though one such marriage was celebrated in this district last year. On the other hand, there is also a tendency towards caste jealousy and exclusiveness. For instance, the Vaidyas and the Kayasthas of Sylhet used formerly to intermarry but now some of them, at least, try to avoid such marriages as far as practicable. A Shaha formerly considered it honourable to procure a bride even from a humble Kayastha family and a better class Das did likewise. But now they prefer to confine their matrimonial alliances among themselves.

There is a growing caste consciousness among all classes of people, accompanied by feeling of caste patriotism. This finds expression in organised activities including annual meetings and conferences. The objects sought are:—

- (1) To preserve and to acquire caste privileges.
- (2) To raise the status of the caste in relation to other castes.
- (3) To encourage education among the community and to improve their economic condition.
- (4) To agitate for special scholarships and special representation in Government services.
- (5) To agitate for political privileges and so on.

When caste consciousness reaches an active stage, the first attempt of the people of that caste is to change their caste name for a more honourable appellation. The Patnis, for instance, now prefer to call themselves Das, the Mali, Malakars; the Naths, Yogis, Kaivartas, Das; Agradanis, Mahapurahits and so on. Next may follow an attempt to support the claim for a better social status by historical or Puranic evidences. Certain kinds of labour are then discarded, and certain practices such as widow-remarriage which mark their inferiority are banned. Then comes a refusal to partake of meals prepared by other castes whose relative superiority in the scale of social ladder is being challenged.

Developments, in practice, are sometimes insignificant and, for one unacquainted with our social system, they are not easily appreciated. Sudras, for example, used to carry sweetmeat baskets for the Brahmins and Kayasthas on occasions of marriage but they refuse to do so now. They used, also, to carry the brides and grooms in wooden chairs at the time of the celebration of marriage, but now they think it humiliating to do so and the upper classes are modifying their practices in this respect. The Malis who were formerly *palki*-bearers are refusing to carry *palkis* in certain places, and even where they do so, they do not now carry certain castes. The Naths refuse to partake of meals prepared by the Brahmins and other castes which they used to do formerly. The Namasudras, in some places, are following the Naths in this respect. Among all castes, outdoor work for women is being restricted and the *pardah* is being tightened. Patni, Mali and Namasudra women used formerly to work in the fields as daily labourers but they are not allowed to do so now. Women belonging to these castes used to move freely and to go to the *hats* for marketing. Such freedom is being restricted and in some places definitely prohibited. A blind imitation of the social habits and customs of the upper castes is a distinctive feature of the movement. Widow-remarriage which was formerly common among lower castes is now banned or discouraged.

Developments, such as those noted above, do not touch the upper classes directly, except that the refusal to do certain kinds of labour creates a difficulty for getting those kinds of labour. The upper classes have to accommodate themselves and some change of practices had to be conceded. Reference has already been made about certain practices on the occasions of marriages. The use of *palkis* is now being reduced to the minimum of carrying brides and grooms on the occasions of marriage, and in towns motor-cars have now entirely replaced *palkis*. Nevertheless, such developments affect the vanity of the upper castes, and in some cases, the orthodox section among them become positively hostile and attempts to suppress these movements by economic pressure. It is for this reason that such movements first originate in places where, as in Cachar, the lower castes enjoy a more independent economic status and are not likely to be subjected to any economic pressure by the upper castes.

I know of no important social privilege that has been extended to the lower classes by the upper classes in the last ten years. The "brotherhood of the Hooka" is being silently extended to the cleaner and the more educated section of the lower castes, but this still lacks social recognition. Some of the comparatively advanced castes such as the Shahas, the Dases and the Pals are now received with greater honour by high caste men and are given more honourable seats in their house. But the reasons behind it are more economic than social. In one or two cases, a caste which had been enjoying the privilege of the Sudras without formal recognition have received such recognition formally. The Rahri-Kshattriyas, or the Barhs (or the Kupadars, as they are called in Karimganj) were taken in the fold in this way about 5 years ago.

The influence of economic factors in bringing about a change in social status cannot be neglected. The Brahmins are now moving to towns in increasing number in search of employment as cooks. Many high caste men take employment as clerks and *gomasthas* in the shops of low caste men. There is thus a levelling influence whose effects will be more pronounced in the coming years."

This relates to the Surma Valley: In the Assam Valley a similar change is noticeable. Mr. G. C. Bardalai, Extra Assistant Commissioner, writes to me as follows:—

"So far as Assam proper is concerned though there are distinct barriers between the Brahmin and non-Brahmin on one hand, and between caste Hindus and the "exterior castes" on the other, yet the rigidity is slowly slackening. Amongst non-Brahmin educated people the distinctions between such castes as Kayasthas, Kalitas, Keots, and Kochees are hardly noticeable. There are innumerable instances of marriages between these castes. Low castes like Kaibartas and Brittial Banias, are to-day tolerated in formal and official tea-parties, if they are otherwise respectable, but in the case of the mass population of Kaibartas and Brittials there has been no advancement in the social gradation. Caste Hindus are not throwing open their temples to them yet. But there are signs to show that a change is coming. The educated amongst them are invited to parties as mentioned above and on social visits they are introduced to parlours and sitting rooms and are given the same seats as are offered to others and the seats are not held to be polluted as was the custom before."

It is impossible to prophesy about the future of caste. There can be no doubt that in the past it is largely due to British administration that the "depressed" castes have received some measure of consideration and the fear of the low castes that under provincial autonomy they would receive scant consideration was very apparent in the evidence given before the Assam Provincial Franchise Committee.

Panta rei—all things are in a flux—as one of the earliest Greek philosophers perceived, and the immemorial system of caste cannot escape from the universal law: but the system is so solid, so ancient, and so powerful that I confess myself unable to believe those who tell me that caste prejudices will have disappeared in another generation.

APPENDIX I TO CHAPTER XII.

(This note was originally written for the Indian Franchise Committee. Certain portions which gave figures for the various tribes have been omitted as the figures are now available in Imperial Table XVI. Otherwise the note is substantially the same as that submitted to the Indian Franchise Committee)

THE DEPRESSED AND BACKWARD CLASSES OF ASSAM.

Under the orders of the Census Commissioner for India a list of depressed and backward classes has to be prepared for every province in India. The invidious task of preparing such a list for Assam has, therefore, been laid upon me and I am compelled, however reluctantly, to assume the functions of a modern* Ballal Sen.

The first difficulty that one meets in dealing with this complicated problem is to get a suitable framework into which the various castes and tribes concerned will fit on some sort of logical basis. The following is the general scheme I have adopted:—

The depressed and backward communities in Assam fall into one of the following divisions:—

- (1) Hindu exterior castes.
- (2) Indigenous backward tribes.
- (3) Tea garden cooly castes.

Briefly (1) consists principally of indigenous castes which are recognized as Hindu castes but which suffer from severe social disabilities. What these disabilities are will be explained later.

(2) Consists of aboriginal tribes which are educationally backward. These tribes may be either living in the hills—like the Naga tribes—quite untouched by Hinduism or they may be living in the plains—like the Lalungs or Miris—and influenced to a greater or less degree by Hinduism. The deciding factor in the latter case is that such tribes should still be aloof from the main body of Hindus and should still be generally regarded as a separate community rather than as a Hindu caste. In deciding this the fact that they still speak a Tibeto-Burmese tribal language may be of importance.

(3) Consists of coolies originally imported from other provinces to work on tea gardens and their descendants.

It will be noticed that I have not used the word "depressed" for any of these three divisions. I have done this advisedly because the word "depressed" is not, in my opinion, suitable as a description of the status of any caste in Assam. "Depressed" as used in India in connection with caste has come to be associated particularly with persons belonging to certain castes in Madras who are unapproachable, whose touch necessitates immediate purification and who are not allowed to read in the schools along with other boys.

† There is, I am glad to say, no such degree of depression in Assam; an unapproachable caste is unknown here and boys of all castes are freely admitted into all schools and colleges. Nor are there any difficulties worth mentioning as regards the drawing of water by all castes from public 'tanks' and wells.

Hence I would be loath to apply to any caste in this province an adjective which has come to connote an extreme state of degradation. The expression "depressed castes" does however occur frequently in this note in the extracts quoted from the opinions of various officers. This is merely because these opinions were received before I had decided that I would not use the term in Assam.

The unusual expression "Hindu Exterior Castes" has been invented by me in accordance with the permission given by the Census Commissioner for India to Provincial Superintendents to use any expression which they considered more suitable to local conditions than the hackneyed term "depressed."

To return to our three divisions:—

(1) † HINDU EXTERIOR CASTES.

This, as I have confessed, is an expression to which I plead guilty. I am by no means proud of it and it is open to many criticisms. I have, however, asked many Indian gentlemen to give me a better one but they have not succeeded. The expression, as it stands, connotes castes which are within the Hindu religion but which outside something and that is really what I mean to imply.

* Ballal Sen was a King of Bengal in the eleventh century A. D. He is famous for his social reforms and his inquiries into matters of caste.

† This view has been endorsed by the Assam Provincial Franchise Committee.

‡ In the report of the Indian Franchise Committee which has just been published I notice that Dr. Ambedkar, the recognized leader of the depressed classes in India accepts my expression "exterior castes" and presses for its official recognition in place of the word "depressed".

What are they outside? The answer is that they are outside the social pale of Hindu Society; that they are "below the salt"; that they are on the other side of a barrier which prevents them from moving upwards.

But before going further I must define what I mean by "Hindu Exterior Castes."

By this expression I mean castes recognized definitely as Hindu castes whose water is not acceptable and who, in addition, are so deficient as castes in education, wealth and influence, or, for some reason connected with their traditional occupations, are so looked down upon that there seems little hope of their being allowed by Hindu society to acquire any further social privileges within—at any rate—the next decade.

By the use of the word "exterior caste" I certainly do not intend to imply that such a caste can never raise itself to a higher level. On the contrary I intend to imply that this can happen, as it actually has happened in the past; and that an exterior caste may in the course of time possibly become what I may call an "interior" one.

It is impossible to lay down any simple test to distinguish members of the Hindu exterior castes in Assam from others. The main test to distinguish "clean" castes from "unclean" castes is whether the water of the caste is accepted by members of the upper castes. A caste whose water is acceptable is known in the Surma Valley as "*jalchal*" and a caste whose water is not accepted may be conveniently defined as "*jal-achal*". In the Assam Valley the words "*pani chale*" and "*pani ne chale*" are in vogue. But we cannot apply this simple test alone in order to find out which castes are exterior and which are not. It is true that all exterior castes are *jal-achal* but it is not true that all *jal-achal* castes are exterior. For example, in the Sylhet district the Shahas are technically a *jal-achal* caste but they are a very wealthy and influential community who are treated with considerable respect in society and by a peculiar social convention are permitted to purchase their brides from the higher castes.

The Shahas are in fact a good example of a caste which though technically unclean have by their own efforts raised themselves to a position in which the upper classes simply cannot afford to ignore them.

I have not therefore classed the Shahas as an "Exterior Caste."

One of my friendly critics—Babu K. C. Datta, Extra Assistant Commissioner, has taken up this point.

"You do not class," he writes "the Shahas as an exterior caste simply because of their education and the wealth and influence they command. Yet they are not *jal-chal*, they are not allowed entrance into the *Thakurghar* of the cleaner castes and the disability is not likely to be relaxed in the next decade. I do not concede for a moment that the disabilities that bar the Shahas are any more pronounced in the case of the less influential and uncultured castes. These exterior castes are suffering from want of education, wealth, culture, in fact, all that contributes to social influence. As soon as they have achieved these, their position will be akin to that of the Shahas—neither clean nor depressed."

The Shahas are, of course, exterior to the extent that they fall on the other side of the great line which divides Hindu society—the *jal-chal* line—but though this line is still of great importance, other things must be taken into consideration.

If, for example, the Patnis and Namasudras could shake off the tradition which associates them with occupations regarded as low (most of them are now cultivators but tradition associates them with fishing and boat-plying) and could acquire, as a caste, a reputation for wealth and culture they would, I admit, be in much the same position as the Shahas are to-day.

This process will, however, take many generations and in the meantime they are, in my opinion, clearly suffering from greater disabilities than the Shahas, the disabilities being the very absence of those factors which have made the Shahas a respected caste.

Thus while the *jal-chal* line is a useful line of division between the upper and the lower castes it is not of much use as a test for determining the "Exterior Castes." Nor does the test of temple entry afford us much assistance.

Generally speaking in the Surma Valley castes which are not "*jal-chal*" are not allowed into the actual *Thakurghar* of temples in which the higher castes worship and are not allowed to assist in the ceremonies by bringing tulsis and flowers with which to decorate the idol. *Jal-achal* castes are however allowed "*darshan*" and are permitted to come into the compound of the temple. In the Assam Valley where the "*Namghar*" generally takes the place of the temple the same principle holds good but a distinction is made between different classes of *jal-achal* castes. Nadiyals and Baniyas for example are not allowed at all into the *Namghars* of higher castes whereas Katanis and Suts are allowed in some districts to enter the part not regarded as particularly holy, i.e., they are not allowed to enter the *Monikhut*.

The whole matter being, therefore, so indeterminate how, it may be asked, can I possibly venture to say, with any degree of certainty, what castes are exterior. The only possible method was to find out by local enquiry in each district the general social position of all castes which might be thought to come under the definition of "exterior castes". This is the method I adopted and

to those gentlemen who helped me in my enquiries—particularly to the many Extra Assistant Commissioners and Sub-Deputy Collectors who gave me much valuable and, above all, impartial information—I am greatly indebted.

The two Valleys—the Assam and the Surma Valleys—are really different countries and must be treated quite separately.

Caste in the Assam Valley is not, as elsewhere, chiefly a functional division; it is really a racial division and functional castes are very few.

Probably for that reason Hinduism in that valley is tolerant towards the tribal communities which have not yet been completely absorbed into its organism. It must, in fact, be extremely difficult for an Assamese Hindu to despise at heart a man whose Hinduism is open to considerable doubt but who considers that he is just as good a man as any Koch or Kalita. In fact people like the Deoris consider that they are much better and don't care who knows it. Nobody can be depressed who hits you with a big stick if you attempt to show your contempt for him.

As a result the only castes in the Assam Valley which can be called exterior are castes which are either traditionally associated with some degrading occupation (such as selling fish) or whose traditional origin is associated with a bar sinister. About some castes in this valley there is, however, no possible doubt. Let us deal with these first.

There is, I consider, no doubt that in the Assam Valley the caste which at this census has adopted the name of Bania and which at previous censuses was styled Brittil-Bania is an exterior caste. Some of the leading men of this community have in fact informed me that their position in society is hopeless and have asked to be classed as a depressed caste.

That this caste is an exterior caste is also the unanimous opinion of all responsible officers whom I have consulted.

Nor is there any doubt about the large class which has now adopted the caste name of Kaibartta—and which was previously known as Nadiyal; nor about the Charals of Lower Assam who now call themselves Namasudras with their offshoot the Hiras. The general opinion about all these castes is unanimous.

Thus the Census Officer, Dhubri, reports:—

"Namasudras or Nadiyals or Jaluas or Charals or Kaibarttas or Doms are considered untouchable by caste Hindus who neither admit them into their places of worship nor take water touched by them" and the Census Officer, Jorhat:—

"Among the indigenous Assamese castes the following are depressed:—

- (1) Kaibarttas or Nadiyals or Doms;
- (2) Brittil-Banias.
- (3) Hiras or Charals (found in Lower Assam only)".

From Darrang comes further evidence:—

"That Doms, Nadiyals, Namasudras, Charals, Hiras and Brittil-Banias are depressed, is admitted by the members of the community themselves who were consulted", writes the Census Officer.

In fact in every district of the Assam Valley the opinion is unanimous that the Brittil-Banias and the Kaibarttas (which name may be taken to include Charals, Nadiyals, Hiras and all the other names which from time to time have been applied to various branches of this family) are the most exterior castes in the whole of the Assam Valley.

These castes are socially "outside the pale" and though the Brittil-Banias have worked hard to improve their position and have a considerable number of educated men amongst them they appear to be as far off as ever from any sort of social recognition.

Ancient custom and practice have ordained that members of these castes are to be treated as untouchable. It is true that the former necessity of taking a bath if touched by a member of one of these castes has fallen into disuse among persons with any pretensions to enlightenment but among others the practice is by no means unknown.

Above these castes came others whose position seemed to me for a long time to be extremely doubtful. They are the Nathas or Jugis (known in Upper Assam as Katanis) and the Suts who are also commonly called Borias.

A careful study of the position of these castes has however convinced me that I might do them a serious wrong if I were to class them as exterior.

As the position of these two castes is likely to be the subject of controversy I give below at some length the evidence which has led me not to class them as exterior:—

Rai Bahadur P. G. Mukherji, formerly Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong, considers that the following classes in the Assam Valley are depressed:—

- (1) Katani or Nath or Jugi.
- (2) Sut or Boria.
- (3) Kaibartta, Nadyal, Jalia or Dom.
- (4) Brittil, Bania or Hari.
- (5) Hira or Charal.

He mentions that all these five classes suffer from the following disqualifications :—

- (a) Water or food (cooked or raw) offered by them is not taken by caste Hindus.
- (b) Caste Brahmans do not officiate in their ceremonies.
- (c) They are not allowed entrance into the cook-sheds of caste Hindus.

He then goes on to say "Naths and Suts are, however, allowed to enter inside the *Namghar* but not into the *Monikkut*. They are also allowed to partake of uncooked and raw eatables under the same roof and in separate lines behind the caste Hindus but the other castes mentioned above are not allowed these privileges".

These privileges are, of course, important and show clearly that there is a distinction between the Naths and Suts of the Assam Valley and exterior castes like the Kaibarttas and Brittil-Banias. The Suts and Katanis themselves object to being included in the category of depressed castes and the All-Assam Sut Association passed a resolution on the 16th November 1930 asking to be classed in the census records "not as a depressed caste but as one of the high castes of Assam backward in point of education or as one of the minority communities in respect of appointments and the franchise". But resolutions of Sanmilanis are of doubtful value and I prefer to rely on the evidence which I collected myself. The following are the opinions of various officers whom I personally consulted in the course of my tours in 1930 :—A Brahman Sub-Deputy Collector whose home district is Nowgong in discussing the position of the Suts and Naths with me stated as follows :—

"High caste men in Nowgong will not take water from Katanis (Jugis) but they are allowed into the aisles of the higher caste *Namghars* at night time when a *bhaowna* is being held (a *bhaowna* is a mythological play). Katanis are not invited to attend the upper caste *Namghar* in the day time for any purpose. Suts have their own society but are not untouchable. They are not despised in the same way as Doms are. When I was a little boy I had to take a bath if I touched a Dom. The higher castes do not accept water from the Suts but like the Katanis they are allowed into the aisles of *Namghars*. The Suts and the Katanis are on the same footing. The Suts have made an attempt to show that their caste is a very old one and is different from the Borias but the attempt has not been very successful and we do not recognize any distinction between a Sut and a Boria. The Katanis do not regard themselves as inferior to the higher caste people and won't take food from the higher castes. The Suts in Nowgong are not as progressive as the Katanis. There was a Sut Mauzadar in Nowgong."

An Assamese Extra Assistant Commissioner, in whose judgment I have the greatest confidence, told me that the Suts and Katanis have every chance of rising socially. For example a Sut tea planter who acquires wealth may get his sons married into a Kalita family.

A former Subdivisional Officer of Mangaldai told me :—

"The Katanis or Jugis in Mangaldai are not unclean. Water is taken from them in Mangaldai. In Mangaldai there are very few Suts. In some places Jugis and in some places Suts are regarded as clean castes."

An Assamese Deputy Inspector of Schools gave me the following information :—

"Katanis (Jugis) are regarded as unclean in Upper Assam but are not regarded as unclean in Tezpur. I have myself taken tea from certain educated Katani gentlemen in Tezpur.

Suts are unclean but I hear that in Tezpur their water is taken. In Sibsagar, I know, their water would not be taken.

Castes like Doms and Haris are not allowed at all into the upper caste *Namghars* but Katanis and Suts are allowed into the portion called the *tup*."

At a general discussion held in Tezpur I recorded the following note as the general opinion held :—"The word '*jal-chal*' would be understood in the Assam Valley but only by literates. In Lower Assam, however, it would be understood universally. Suts in Darrang are not yet *jal-chal* but are allowed into the body of the *Namghar*. Katanis are in exactly the same position as the Suts. In towns such as Tezpur the treatment of these castes is more liberal than in the villages."

In North Lakhimpur a Sub-Deputy Collector told me :—

"Suts or Borias are looked down on as people who have lost their caste. They have formed an association in North Lakhimpur with the object of improving their social position and they may do so. Katanis are also looked down upon (they are not known as Jugis here) but not as much as Suts."

The Census clerk in North Lakhimpur was himself a Sut. The following is a summary of his evidence :—

"My father is a member of Local Board. Suts in North Lakhimpur are not a depressed community. I am personally quite satisfied with any position in society. In Nowgong the Suts are hated by the higher caste people but they are allowed into the *Namghars* there. There is now no Sut Sanmilani in North Lakhimpur."

In Jorhat I collected the following evidence from an absolute reliable source :—

Katanis (Jugis) in Sibsagar are allowed into the *tup* of the *Namghar*. Their food or water is not taken but probably a Katani who became rich would be received into society by some but not by all. Suts are also allowed into the *tup* of the *Namghars*; but they don't go—they have their

own *Namghars*. Suts and Katanis work as daily labourers in our houses; we consider both to be on an equal footing. We would not accept water from either of these castes—*pant ne chale*. Doms and Haris are not allowed into any part of a caste *Namghar*.

The Suts and Katanis are both below the *jal-chal* line but they are "*vedar bhithor*"—inside the Vedas; others are not. People like the Doms are absolutely beyond hope. There is no movement among the Suts of Jorhat to raise their social position: they are apparently quite content with it and will not admit that they are depressed. Many Suts occupy a very good station in life. A Sut would be invited by the higher castes but a Hari never."

In addition I have received a mass of written opinions. Thus the Settlement Officer, Darrang, (Rai Bahadur D. K. Mukherji) gives us his opinion that the Doms, Haris and Hiras should be treated as depressed classes but that the Katanis (Naths) and Suts in the Darrang district should not be included in the category of the depressed classes. The Census Officer, Tezpur, (a Muslim) recognizes that the question of the Suts and Yogis presents difficulties. He thinks that their untouchability is being removed but has not yet been fully removed and then goes on to say :—

"However, in view of the opinions of the members of these two castes who do not like to be included in the depressed castes, I do not consider it necessary to class them as such."

The Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara reports :—

"Jogis or Katanis who are known as Naths in this district are now well advanced in matters of education and civilization. They are allowed into places of worship in this district; some of the higher castes do not now-a-days hesitate to take water touched by them so that they are not now treated as a depressed caste here."

In Lakhimpur the Officer in charge of the Census (a Muslim) included Sut as a depressed caste but the Deputy Commissioner thought it advisable to enclose also a note by his Hindu Revenue Sheristadar. In that note the Sheristadar states "Among the Assamese the Sut or Boria caste is not properly speaking a depressed class though they have their own priests and Brahmans of caste Hindus do not officiate as priests at their ceremonies. Jogis or Katanis, Ahoms and Sonowals are also similarly treated. The case is however somewhat different with—

- (1) Doms or Nadiyals,
- (2) Brittil-Banias,
- (3) Hiras, Charals, etc., in Kamrup,

and these classes only came within the scope of the present question."

The truth about the Naths and the Suts appears to be that they are "superior exterior castes" who are moving upwards and it seems quite possible that within the next ten years (*vide* my definition of exterior castes) they may acquire further social privileges and become generally recognised as "interior" castes.

The Suts and Naths do not themselves desire to be classed as depressed or exterior and in fact strongly object to it.

Hence I have not classed the Naths and Suts of the Assam Valley as exterior castes. If, however, these castes ever felt that by not being so classed they were being deprived of an advantage which they otherwise would have gained I would have no hesitation in classifying them as exterior.

With a view to ascertaining how the Naths and Suts were treated by their fellow students in the Cotton College—which would naturally be the most liberal-minded society in the Assam Valley—I made certain enquiries into the matter and the following extract from a note written by Professor B. C. Sen Gupta describing the conditions in his own hostel is of considerable interest. The Professor states that the lower caste boys feel themselves more at home in his hostel than in any other and goes on to say :—"The hostel authorities have always maintained an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards the depressed castes, and absolute non-interference in matters of caste. The Education Department in 1915 provided three general dining halls and four separate rooms and the understanding has always been that the upper caste boys are to dine in the general dining halls and the depressed or backward class boys are to use the above four rooms. We never dictate to any one as to whether he should dine in the general dining hall or in one of the above four rooms. These matters are left to the students themselves, as far as possible. The Jugi or Nath caste boys formerly did not dine with upper caste boys in mess II (the mess under me). They used the above four rooms for their meals. For years they went on agitating for admission into the general dining hall and subsequently secured the consent in writing of all the upper caste boys in their favour. One boy who gave his consent in writing but who did not really intend to do so, quietly left the hostel. Since then the Nath boys have been dining with the upper caste boys in the mess under me. I am not aware if any 'Nath' boy is dining in the general dining hall of any other mess. But it may be noted that on ceremonial occasions, e.g., the Saraswati Puja festival the upper caste boys of all the messes within the hostel compound dine together along with the above Nath boys. The 'Sut' caste boys also similarly succeeded some years ago in securing the consent of other caste boys to their admission into the general dining hall of mess II, and they have been dining in that general dining hall since then. The following castes generally take their meals in the four rooms meant for the 'backward' or 'depressed class boys,' viz., Miri, Deori, Kaibartta, Bania, Lalung, Kachari.

For the last two years, there has been a very strong movement for admitting these remaining "backward" caste boys into the general dining hall—there is an overwhelming majority in their favour, only a small minority of about five or six still being in the opposition."

Professor Sen Gupta has subsequently informed me that the movement referred to in the last paragraph of his note resulted in August 1931 in the abolition of the remaining restriction and that—as a tentative measure—permission was given to the students who had formerly dined in the four rooms set apart to dine in the general dining hall. The Professor thinks it probable that the concession will continue.

This last piece of information, I confess, surprised me. If the concession is allowed to continue it will reflect great credit on the liberal spirit of Professor Sen Gupta's mess and may, in time, have a far-reaching effect on social custom in the Assam Valley. It does not, however, change my opinion that the Kaibarttas and Baniyas are definitely "exterior castes".

On the whole I feel fairly confident that my classification of exterior castes in the Assam Valley is correct. I am fortified in this opinion by the criticism of my friend Mr. G. C. Bardalai, Extra Assistant Commissioner, who writes as follows:—

"I consulted some of the Honorary Correspondents here and we have come to the conclusion that so far as the Assam Valley is concerned your finding that none of the lower castes except the Baniyas, Kaibarttas, Charals and Hiras are included in 'exterior castes' is perfectly correct."

I only wish I felt as confident about the exterior castes in the Surma Valley.

Conditions in that Valley are very different from those in the Assam Valley. Sylhet is linguistically and ethnologically connected with Bengal and the inclusion of this large district in Assam was originally merely a measure of administrative convenience.

Sylhet and Cachar (which is largely populated by people of Sylhetti origin) are therefore essentially Bengali in their culture. Hence there are many more functional castes than in the Assam Valley where, as I have already explained, caste is largely racial. Moreover, the presence of a large upper caste *zamindar* class in Sylhet—the arbiters of social usage—has not tended to encourage any relaxation in the treatment of the lower orders of society.

I have received many interesting opinions in the question of depression in Sylhet. The trend of opinion of educated Indian gentlemen is that there is no such thing as an exterior caste in that district though there are "backward" castes. A typical opinion is that of Professor Nalini Mohan Shastri, M. A., of the Government Sanskrit College, Sylhet, who writes as follows:—

"I have come to the definite conclusion that so far as this district is concerned, there does not exist any class of people, who can properly be termed as depressed and suffer from disabilities, which render their position in the Hindu society akin to that of *pariahs*. Hindu society is an organic whole, composed of different classes, occupying positions of different grades and ranks, each with a distinctive feature of its own, as regards customs, manners and other social matters. Each is as important as the other in forming a part of the whole and having its use in the entire scheme, although the one may be lower in rank than the other. Even the lowest in rank such as the Muchis and Malis have their uses in society, and they are requisitioned in religious festivals to perform important duties in connection with them. As a matter of fact, a certain form of inferiority-complex attaches to every caste other than the Brahmin, and it is more or less pronounced, according to the position the caste occupies in the order. But so long as it does not practically exclude a particular class from the general scheme or organisation, there is no justification of the assumption of a distinct class, called 'depressed', as separate from the other. Officiating by priests of one class or group of classes in ceremonies of another, or taking by one of food touched by the other, or discriminating service of barbers are matters of local custom originating from convenience rather than from any other cause and would not make any class 'degraded' or 'depressed' for that reason."

Professor Shastri's view is strongly supported by the gentlemen who have been good enough to act as my critics. Thus Babu K. C. Datta, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Census Officer, Sylhet, writes:—

"The consensus of Hindu opinion will bear out Professor Shastri in the view expressed that the body politic of the Hindu society is an organic whole, the different classes forming its component parts, although they vary in their respective ranks and grades. Each with its diversity of manners and customs is as essential a factor in society as the other. In a social and religious ceremony, e.g., a priest, a barber, a potter, a mali, a dhubi each has to play his own rôle and the ceremony cannot be regarded as complete unless each has performed his own function. In spite of the inferiority-complex that is attached to all the castes other than Brahmins—the shade differing according to their respective ranks—the social organism never rejects or excludes even the humblest. The necessity therefore of demarcating some from the rest hardly arises. Even if a classification on this line be made the distinction will, I am inclined to think, be without a difference and wholly artificial."

Yet, with all due respect to the learned Professor, this view strikes a non-Hindu as being a very one-sided one.

It may be extremely comforting for an upper caste man to reflect that society is so providentially arranged that all the menial jobs of life can never be done by himself; but surely an organization of this nature must, like that of an army, be an organization imposed from above. The man who has to do the menial jobs does not do them for pleasure; he would rather be at the top than at the bottom; but he cannot climb up because the organization does not let him. It is small comfort to him to realize that he is part of an organic whole.

Furthermore, when Professor Shastri says that "the taking by one of food touched by the other or discriminating service of barbers are matters of local custom originating from convenience rather than from any other cause" he is demonstrably wrong. Surely nothing could be more excessively inconvenient than the refusal of one caste to take food or water from another. The restrictions of caste rules are, in fact, the source of endless inconveniences and always have been.

Another interesting opinion is that of Swami Saumyananda, Secretary, the Ramkrishna Mission Seva Samity, Sylhet. He says:—

"The Samity started and is still maintaining several primary schools among the Dhulies (drummers), Namusudras and Khasia-Patras (charcoal makers) and as such the workers of the Samity are always in close touch with them. The chief thing needed for them is education which in its ultimate effect may be expected to raise them to the average level of the Hindu society."

These people may be classed as 'Backward' but not as depressed, inasmuch as the high caste Hindus do not stand in the way of their advancement—religious, material or educational. In fact, in social and religious festivities these people are invited by the high caste Hindus to their houses. In all public places of Hindu worship, e.g., temples in Benares, Gaya, Deoghar, Kamakshya, Puri, Hardwar, Chandranath and the like, all the Hindus irrespective of caste or creed, are allowed free entrance. So it is not a fact that certain classes of Hindu are not admitted into the Hindu temples. In private temples, as in other spheres, the owner has a discretion."

I regret that I cannot agree with this gentleman that the high caste Hindus do not stand in the way of the advancement of the low castes. Take for example the case of a M. A. of the Sylhet Mali caste occupying a good Government post. Many responsible Hindu officers have informed me definitely that if such a person came alone to see them in their paternal homes a chair would not be offered to the guest. *Ajot-chauki* (small wooden stool) might be offered. Even Muslims treat these low castes in the same way. A Muslim Subdivisional Officer tells me that if a Dhubi friend of his occupying a good position in Government service were to come to his house to see him "I would not offer him a chair. I would simply say 'sit down' and the Dhubi would not take a chair."

Surely if the upper caste Hindus wished to help the lower castes the least they might do is to treat the educated men among the lower castes with the same courtesy as they would extend to an educated Muslim.

The following opinion of a responsible Hindu Government officer is of interest: "Some low caste men by their *submissive attitude* win the hearts of the upper caste men and get partial admission into society. Others claim as of right and get refused. A lot depends on the man himself. If he claims too much he gets badly snubbed. In places where orthodoxy is strong he will not, in any case, get fair treatment. In the towns treatment is more liberal than in the villages. In the villages orthodoxy still prevails. If a Patni is the tenant of a Zemindar he will never get fair social treatment however highly educated he is. Orthodoxy is strongest amongst the Zemindars. But if the low caste man is an executive officer such as a Sub-Deputy Collector or an Extra Assistant Commissioner he would be given better treatment than a non-executive officer, e.g., than a Deputy Inspector of Schools." The above remarks refer, of course, only to private social intercourse. On all social and public occasions the educated Mali or Patni is simply nowhere. He has (if he goes to the ceremony) to sit along with his other caste-men outside the house on the mat provided for their caste, while the higher castes sit inside the house.

Add the following facts:—

- (1) Members of castes like Mali, Patni, Muchi, etc., are not allowed to enter into the temples set up by the higher castes;
- (2) The upper castes will not take water or food touched by them;

and one begins to realize the dreadful sense of mingled inferiority and hatred which an educated member of one of these exterior castes must feel in most cases towards the higher castes.

The exterior castes themselves are, however, guilty of similar treatment to each other and an exterior caste which considers itself to be on a higher social level than another exterior caste adopts exactly the same attitude as the higher castes do towards the exterior castes. A case which recently happened in Sunamganj illustrates this point. The local ferry-man there (a Patni by caste) was prosecuted for refusing to row a Muchi across the river. His defence was that, according to social custom, a Patni could not row for a Muchi and that it had always been the practice, if a Muchi wanted to cross the river, for the paddle to be given to him so that he could row himself across.

After careful consideration and analysis of the evidence I have collected, I have come to the conclusion that the following are the main castes in the Surma Valley which should be classed as exterior. They are arranged in alphabetical order:—

1. Dhupi or Dhobi
2. Dugla or Dholi
3. Jhalo and Malo
4. Yogi (Jugi) (Nath)
5. Kaibartta (Jaliya)
6. Mahara
7. Mali (Bhuinmali)
8. Namasudra
9. Patni
10. Sutradhar.

There is general consensus of evidence that these castes are exterior throughout the Surma Valley though the position of some of them seems to be much more hopeful in Cachar than it is in Sylhet. I have no doubt that this is due largely to the absence of a Zemindari class in Cachar which is a temporarily-settled district.

The following extracts from a note written by the Census Officer, Silchar, describe the position of some of the chief exterior castes of Cachar:—

Namasudras.—They belong to a low class in Hindu society. They cannot even enter into the verandah of a Hindu temple. Their water is not acceptable to high caste Hindus and the Brahmins of high caste Hindus do not minister to their religious rites. The Namasudras are fishermen by profession but in Cachar they have taken up agriculture as their main vocation. In Cachar the majority of the Namasudras are illiterate and they may be rightly classed as depressed.

Patnis.—The Patnis in Cachar have assumed the nomenclature of Mahishya Das. Their position in Hindu society is exactly like that of the Namasudras. They are boatmen by profession as their class name indicates, *pat* means boat and *Patni* means one whose occupation is boating. In Cachar there are some educated men among the Patnis and the Patnis as a class are making all endeavour to lift themselves up socially and educationally. They are undoubtedly a progressive class here and though the spread of education and refinement is not very appreciable at the present moment, there are indications of a change in the near future. By the next census, I think, the stigma of depression will be removed from their brow.

Malis.—In Cachar the Malis call themselves Malakars and claim to be included among the Nahashakas. Their position is very low in Hindu society. They are on the same level as the Patnis and Namasudras and suffer from the same stigma of social inferiority. They are mostly illiterate. In Cachar they have taken up agriculture as their profession.

Dhobi or Shuklabidya.—They are washermen. They have no status in Hindu society. They cannot enter into the verandah of a Hindu temple and their water is not acceptable to high caste Hindus. They are mostly illiterate and appear to be indifferent to any improvement of their social status.

Duglas.—They are music-players. Their position in Hindu society is akin to that of the Patnis and Namasudras. They have no entrance into Hindu temples and their water is not accepted by high caste Hindus. They are almost cent-per-cent. illiterate.

The Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, in forwarding this note writes as follows:—

"There is clear evidence that the Patnis are endeavouring to rise in the social scale and many of them, for their social betterment, have given up their old trade of purveying fish at the cost of economic suffering. They are now cultivators with insufficient land. Similar movements are taking place among the Namasudras but are as yet less intense and widespread."

To any person who sympathizes with the desire of the lower castes to raise themselves to a higher social level such movements cannot be but welcome. It is, however, rather annoying to find that it seems to be *de rigueur* for a caste which wishes to rise to adopt a different caste name. This procedure is really childish and impresses nobody and has the practical disadvantage of making the census statistics unreliable.

Mr. Lloyd in noting on the large apparent decrease in Patnis in the Surma Valley in 1921 remarked "A strong movement was started and decrees of Pandits were obtained to allow Patnis to use Mahisya as their caste name. It was suggested by one of the leaders in the movement that a caste which was so looked down upon could not hope to improve its status without getting a better name; but it is not clear why they could not find a name unappropriated by others."

As a result the actual census figures for Patnis in 1921 and 1931 are inaccurate, and it is necessary as we shall see later, to make a very reliable estimate of their real number.

I sincerely trust that the efforts of those who have, in Cachar, adopted the caste name of Mahisya will be crowned with success and that they will, at the next census, be found to have achieved an "interior" position in the social scale. But on the evidence before me I must, at present, classify them as an exterior caste. It is their misfortune that Sylhet is so near and that they are still commonly regarded as the same caste as the Patnis of that district.

It would be impossible in the compass of this note to examine in detail the evidence I have collected to prove that the indigenous Surma Valley castes I have mentioned are really exterior. To show, however, that I have, to the best of my ability, tried to get at the truth I may perhaps quote the following correspondence which took place between me and the Subdivisional Officer, South Sylhet. I wrote to him as follows:—

"I have been told by several officers that the Maharas are a *jal-chal* caste and that people of this caste were made 'clean' by some ancient Raja of Sylhet—the idea being that the Maharas used to carry the Raja's palanquin and, as the Raja wanted to smoke in it, he had to have as palanquin-bearers people who could attend to his smoking requirements. On the other hand some officers completely deny this story and say that the Maharas are not a *jal-chal* caste. As the Maharas are principally to be found in South Sylhet will you please make particular enquiries on this point?"

The Subdivisional Officer (a Muslim) replied as follows:—

"I have made close and careful enquiries and there is a general consensus of opinion that the Maharas are not *jal-chal* and are a depressed class. The story that Raja Subid Narayan made them *jal-chal* for smoking requirements only, seems to be true. If the Maharas are at all *jal-chal*, they are *jal-chal* only in the sense that a man of higher caste can smoke a *huka* filled with water by a Mahara. There is not a single graduate among the Maharas in this subdivision and not even a single matriculate can be found. The Deputy Inspector of Schools reports that the only educated Maharas he has met in the whole subdivision are three persons working as Vernacular teachers in Primary and Middle English Schools. So the Maharas are depressed both socially and educationally."

It will be noticed that I have classed the Yogis (Jugis) of the Surma Valley as exterior whereas I have not classed the Katanis (Jugis) of the Assam Valley as exterior. As this procedure may look peculiar I will deal with the Yogis of the Sylhet Valley (commonly called Nathas) at some length. One gentleman of Habiganj belonging to that community has written to me as follows. "The Yogis do not require the services of the Brahmins of the caste Hindus as priests nor do they allow them to officiate as such from time immemorial. They have priests belonging to their own community. The Yogis do not take food touched by general Hindus. In fact, judging the merits of the form of religion they observe, they claim to be twice-born and it may be safely said that it is the only community among the Hindus who have persistently denied Brahmanical supremacy over them. My opinion was discussed at the annual general meeting of the Assam-Bengal Yogi community in October 1930 and was endorsed without a single dissentient voice. On this ground I, along with my community, protest against the inclusion of the Yogi community in the category of depressed classes."

This gentleman's protest was not, however, backed up by the Yogi representative who appeared before the Assam Franchise Committee, who stated that the resolution of the Assam-Bengal Yogi community was not endorsed by the Sylhet Yogis who claimed to be a depressed class.

That the Nathas or Yogis of the Surma Valley are an exterior caste in the opinion of all responsible officers in Sylhet.

The following are typical opinions:—"The Yogis are really regarded as out-castes—outside the pale—because they do not reverence Brahmins and select as their priests persons who are not Brahmins at all. They say that years ago they established exactly what Gandhi is preaching to-day, *i.e.*, abolition of caste distinctions and universal weaving but that the other Hindus would not follow their example."

"Nathas are regarded as Hindus even though they bury their dead. They have now-a-days taken the sacred thread. Nathas do not get admission into temples. They have gained in social position by their aloofness from general Hindu society and by the fact that they do not do any menial work. I am inclined to include Nathas among the depressed castes but I would emphasize that fact that they don't do menial work."

Jogis were "originally a weaving caste but now deny this. They form a separate community altogether but we consider them to be Hindus. They are a depressed caste."

"Jogis are a little superior to Namasudras but are not allowed into temples and their water is not acceptable."

One gentleman from Karimganj—himself a Nath—writes as follows:—

"So far as my knowledge goes, amongst the Hindus inhabiting this subdivision the Patnis, Jogis (Nathas), Namasudras, Malis, Dhobis and Duglas are to be properly included in the list of depressed classes. The reason of depression regarding each of these communities are almost the same, namely:—

- (1) The members of these communities are not allowed by the so-called high caste Hindus, to enter the temple; even their shadow defile the image in the temple.

- (2) The high class Hindus never take any food and water touched or shadowed by these people.
- (3) Brahmins of caste Hindus never agree to officiate as priests in ceremonies performed by these people even if they request them.
- (4) Some of these communities are not allowed to have the same barber who works amongst the high class Hindus to work for them.

In conclusion I beg to say that these are but few amongst the many disadvantages from which these people suffer."

Previous census reports show that for the last forty years the Naths have been endeavouring to raise their social position by giving up widow remarriage and refusing food prepared by other castes. In spite, however, of these efforts the Nath community of the Surma Valley has not apparently been able to gain any further social privileges and I must, I consider, class them as an "exterior caste."

The relationship between the Katanis (Jugis, Naths) of the Assam Valley and the Naths (Jugis) of Sylhet would be an interesting subject to study. So far as I have been able to look into the matter the origin of these people is extremely obscure. They now seem to be separate castes and I am informed that no intermarriage takes place between the Naths of Sylhet and the Katanis of the Assam Valley.

In any case conditions in the Assam Valley are so different from those in the Surma Valley that there is no reason at all why a caste which is exterior in Sylhet and Cachar should not be interior in the Assam Valley where Hinduism seems to be so much more tolerant. Even in the Murarichand College caste restrictions seem to be much more closely observed than in the Cotton College. I have received a note on the system of messing in that college and it appears that even the Sahas are not allowed to take their meals in the general dining hall reserved for the upper caste students. In fact the *jal-chal* line is strictly observed there — at least nominally — and the students who do not belong to the upper castes have their meals served to them "either in their own rooms or in those set apart in the main block or in two out-houses provided for the purpose".

The Senior Hostel Superintendent adds however "The observance of these distinctions is becoming more a matter of form with the students than an inviolable practice. On festive occasions or when they are in a mood to fraternise these differences are sunk. If the differences are still reigning here it is more because the students are afraid of their elderly guardians than because they believe in such a ban themselves."

I have now dealt to some extent with all the castes I have classed as exterior except the Kaibarttas (Jaliya), the Jhalos and Malos and the Sutradhars. The first three are fishing castes and for that very reason are exterior. The Sutradhars are principally boat-builders and makers of ploughs; they are not *jal-chal* and are educationally very backward.

In addition to the indigenous castes which I have classed as exterior there are also some non-indigenous castes such as the Muchis and various sweeper castes who must be added to the list. Their numbers are, however, small.

The following are the figures in round thousands for the castes in the Assam Valley which I have classed as exterior. Their exact number will be found in appendix V to Imperial Table XVII.

Caste,	District,	Number.
Namasudra	Goalpara	8,000
	Kamrup	13,000
	Nowgong	8,000
	Sibsagar	1,000
	All other districts in the Assam Valley.	1,000
		31,000
Kaibarttas	Goalpara	4,000
	Kamrup	20,000
	Darrang	12,000
	Nowgong	27,000
	Sibsagar	33,000
	Lakhimpur	22,000
	Sadiya	1,000
		119,000

Caste.	District.	Population.
Bania (Brittial-Bania)...	Goalpara	less than 500
	Kamrup	4,000
	Darrang	2,000
	Nowgong	3,500
	Sibsagar	2,500
	Lakhimpur...	1,500
		14,000
Hira	Goalpara	3,000
	Kamrup	5,000
	Darrang	1,000
	Nowgong	8,000
		17,000
Sweeper castes	All districts of Assam Valley	2,000

The grand total of exterior castes in the Assam Valley is therefore 183,000. The figures for the various castes correspond in most cases to the figures ascertained at previous censuses and may be accepted as correct for all practical purposes. It is, however, probable that a few thousand Doms belonging to the foreign Dom caste who are employed on tea gardens have been included in the figures for Kaibarttas.

The following are the figures for the Surma Valley. I accept them all as approximately correct except in the case of the Patnis where, owing to the partial adoption of a different caste name, an adjustment based on the figures of previous censuses has had to be made.

Caste.	District.	Population.
Mali (indigenous)	Cachar	4,000
	Sylhet	35,000
		39,000
Dhupi (Dhobi)	Cachar	2,000
	Sylhet	21,000
		23,000
Dugla or Dholi	Sylhet	10,000
Jhalo and Malo	Cachar	2,000
	Sylhet	9,000
		11,000
Yogi (Jugi)	Cachar	13,000
	Sylhet	71,000
		84,000
Mahara	Sylhet	5,000
Sutradhar	Sylhet	13,000
Muchi	Cachar	4,000
	Sylhet	4,000
Patni	Cachar	(Census figures give 9,000 only; correct figures are at least 40,000.)
	Sylhet	(Census figures give 43,000 only; there are at least 70,000.)
Namasudras	Cachar	15,000
	Sylhet	124,000
		139,000
Kaibarttas (Jaliya)	Sylhet	30,000
Sweeper castes	Sylhet and Cachar (together)	1,000

The total for the exterior castes of Sylhet is therefore 392,000 at a minimum, and for Cachar 80,000, and the total for the whole of the Surma Valley is 472,000 at a minimum. For the Assam and Surma Valley together the total is 655,000 and for the whole province 657,000,

(2) BACKWARD TRIBES.

To deal with the backward tribes after an attempt to reduce to some logical basis the extraordinary complexities of the Hindu social system is, indeed, "port after stormy seas".

By backward tribes I mean communities which still retain some form of tribal organization and which are below the general provincial standard of education. They can conveniently be divided into two sections :—

- (a) those living principally in the hills and frontier tracts who are practically untouched by Hinduism,
- (b) those living principally in the plains who have become Hinduized to a greater or less extent.

In section (a) would be included the various Naga and Kuki tribes, the Garos, the Mikirs and the Abors, Mishmis, Singphos and Khamtis of the Sadiya Frontier Tract.

Whether the various Lushai clans should be included in (a) is a matter of opinion. The Lushai Hills is now actually the foremost district in the whole of Assam for literacy—which, for the purpose of the census, is the ability to read and write a letter to a friend. There are, however, very few well-educated Lushais and the thin veneer of literacy over the district—a product of the last 30 years only—has probably not affected the real culture—form of the people.

"Such education as there is among them," wrote Mr. N. E. Parry, I.C.S., as recently as 1928, "is purely superficial."

The Khasis (with whom I include the Syntengs) are another race which, from the census point of view, has a high proportion of literates.

Among the Khasis, however, there are a considerable number of well-educated persons (a Khasi has been a Minister to the Government of Assam) and nobody could, I think, class the Khasis as a "backward tribe".

Most of the Khasis live, of course, in the Khasi States outside the British portion of the Khasi Hills.

The figures for all these tribes will be found in Imperial Table XVII and no further mention of them appears to be necessary.

Under (b) would come the Kacharis, the Meches, Miris, Deoris, Lalungs, Rabhas, Tiparas and Hajongs.

Except the Hajongs and the Kacharis of the North Cachar Hills all the other tribes in this section dwell in the plains.

The question of the Manipuris of Sylhet and Cachar requires special mention. These people are the descendants of persons who originally emigrated from Manipur State and settled in those districts. They form an entirely separate community—a kind of Manipuri oasis in the plains—and, as the Census Officer, Silchar, has reported :—"They have their own society independent of general Hindu society. They call themselves Kshatriya by caste but have no inter-marriage or dining with Hindus of any class. They are, however, making rapid strides towards progress and education".

Babu Girish Chandra Mazumdar, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Sylhet, writes as follows on the same subject :—

"We see that in Sylhet there are Manipuris who have been living for nearly 200 years in Bengali villages but it is curious that these Manipuris have never adopted Bengali customs or habits though they have got practical education in Bengali manners and customs from living among them".

Mr. C. Gimson, I.C.S. (formerly Deputy Commissioner, Cachar), who knows the Manipuris well has written as follows :—

"I doubt whether the Manipuris of Cachar ought to be classed as 'backward'. They are intelligent and are taking to education and they are free from most of the habits (*i. e.*, overindulgence in opium and liquor) which tend to perpetuate the backwardness of other backward classes".

The Manipuris of Cachar and Sylhet are really a people apart—they are foreigners who have settled in a strange land and have kept very much to themselves, preserving their own culture and their own language. Another peculiar fact about these Manipuris is that although the majority are devout Hindus there are also many Muslims among them.

They must, in my opinion, be considered rather as a community requiring special treatment than as a backward race.

The number of Manipuris in Sylhet and Cachar is as follows :—

		Hindu Manipuri.	Muslim Manipuri.
Cachar	...	44,000	11,000
Sylhet	...	27,000	2,000
Total	...	71,000	13,000

The number of speakers of Manipuri is 55,000 in Cachar and 29,000 in Sylhet.

Let us now examine the position of those backward tribes who dwell principally in the plains and who have been influenced by contact with a civilization which is predominantly Hindu. Take the Miris. Many Miris have become disciples of Assamese Gossains. They remain, however, a community apart and do not mix socially with their Assamese neighbours.

An Assamese officer who knows the Miris well has given me his opinion as follows :—

"Even though some Miris have become disciples of a Gossain they are not accepted into our society. They still keep pigs and fowls though they may call themselves Hindus. Personally I cannot regard a Miri as a Hindu. He is outside the Hindu fold, and from a social point of view he is not a Hindu though he may worship some Hindu deities. Still we respect the Miris and consider them good people whereas I confess, we hate the Doms.

Miris are not depressed because their own society satisfies them and they do not care for us. They won't allow any of us to get up on their *changs*. Deoris are the same. They are rich people and can stand by themselves. The Assamese villagers are frightened of them. I consider the Kacharis the same as the Miris. In Lower Assam Kacharis can gradually enter a Hindu caste by first becoming 'Sarana', then 'Saru Koch', then 'Bor Koch' and finally mix with the Hindu Koches.

In Upper Assam, however, where Assamese orthodoxy is stricter a Miri cannot enter Hindu society in this way. Even the Auniati Gossain could not get a Miri into Hindu society as a Koch. The reason why things were not so strict in Lower Assam is that it was further removed from Sibsagar—our old social capital. In any case the Miris have not got the slightest desire to join our society. They are quite independent of us".

At discussions held with various gentlemen in Darrang and Lakhimpur the general opinion was that very few Miris had entered Hinduism and that they were an independent tribe quite happy in their own society.

The Lalungs, Rabhas, Kacharis and Meches are in much the same position as the Miris. In spite of partial conversion to Hinduism they still remain tribal peoples and do not mix to any extent with outsiders. The Kacharis of the North Cachar Hills, even though they now return their caste as Kshatriya, still remain essentially a hill tribe.

The census statistics show that there has been a wholesale "conversion" of many of these tribal communities to Hinduism during the last decade. This is, however, mainly a political move and for all practical purposes these tribes remain exactly in the same position as before.

It may be asked why I have classed, *e.g.*, the Kacharis as a backward tribe while I have said nothing about, *e.g.*, the Ahoms. Both, it may be said, are really tribal communities; both were, in fact, at different times the dominant tribe of the Assam Valley.

The real basis of the distinction I have made is that the Ahoms—though in many ways a separate community—have been for so long completely Hinduized that they are now a racial caste rather than a tribe whereas the Kacharis though largely nominally converted to Hinduism during the last 10 years are still, I consider, more a tribe than a caste. One very clear distinction between them is that the Kacharis have preserved their own language whereas the Ahoms have lost theirs.

This in itself indicates that the Kacharis as a community have remained more aloof than the Ahoms from the general development of Assamese culture. Similarly the Miris, Lalungs, Meches, Rabhas, Deoris and Sylhet Tiparas have all preserved their tribal languages.

I have already divided the backward tribes of Assam into two sections, namely (a) the real hillmen and (b) those living principally in the plains who have been Hinduized to a greater or less extent and we are now only discussing section (b). In section (b) I would class the following tribes as backward (1) Kachari (including Mech, most of whom returned themselves as Boro-Kachari at this census).

- (2) Miri,
- (3) Lalung,
- (4) Rabha,
- (5) Hajong,
- (6) Tiparas of Sylhet,
- (7) Deoris of Upper Assam.

Figures for all these tribes except (6) and (7) will be found in Imperial Table XVII.

The Tiparas of Sylhet and the Deoris of Upper Assam are hardly worth mentioning. There are about 4,000 Tiparas in Sylhet and probably about the same number of Deoris in Lakhimpur. The Deoris are a section of the Chutiyas who have preserved their old language and have not become Hinduized like the Hindu-Chutiyas and the Ahom-Chutiyas.

(3) TEA GARDEN COOLY CASTES.

Their name is legion, some are castes recognized in their provinces of origin as definite Hindu castes; others would be considered Hindu castes merely by courtesy while other—such as the Mundas and Santals—cannot be said to be castes at all but aboriginal tribal communities. Coolies in Assam form, however, a separate class of the population no matter what caste or tribe they belong to and hence it seems best to treat all cooly castes and tribes under one heading, for all have one common characteristic and that is that, in Assam, a “cooly” is always a “cooly” and whether he works on a garden or whether he has left the garden and settled down as an ordinary agriculturist, his social position is nil. From the point of view of Assamese society a person belonging to any cooly caste or tribe is a complete outsider and is as “exterior” as any of the indigenous castes I have classed as exterior. Indeed from many points of view the social position of coolies and *ex-coolies* is worse than any class in the province; they are educationally terribly backward; they have no recognized leaders or associations to press their claims or to work for their social advancement, they are foreigners to the country and, as a class, they are much addicted to liquor.

The number of tea garden coolies and *ex-coolies* in Assam is a matter of considerable interest and indeed of administrative importance. Attempts were made in the Census Reports for 1901, 1911 and 1921 to estimate the number of coolies originally brought to Assam for the purpose of working on tea gardens and the number of their descendants. As pointed out in the Census Report for 1911 this is an extremely difficult business and, as Mr. Lloyd remarked in 1921, “the problem becomes increasingly complex and liable to error at each succeeding census”.

In view of the need for economy cooly castes were not sorted for separately on this occasion but arrangements were made in the sorting offices to extract the lump sum total of all cooly and *ex-cooly* castes in all districts. The main trouble about this procedure is that there are foreign cooly castes with the same name as indigenous castes who have nothing to do with tea gardens, *e.g.*, Telis. Every attempt, however, was made to keep the indigenous castes of the same name quite separate. The result, however, cannot be considered more than a rough estimate.

The following estimate was worked out by Mr. Lloyd in 1921. What he was endeavouring to do was to work out the number of persons in the province who were here either directly or indirectly on account of the tea industry.

The population censused on tea gardens in 1921 was 922,000. From this, however, must be deducted the managing and clerical staffs and also all persons belonging to indigenous castes censused on tea gardens. After making this deduction the number of immigrant coolies and their descendants actually on gardens was estimated by Mr. Lloyd to be

Add <i>ex-coolies</i> ...	...	...	...	...	840,000
					360,000
					<u>1,200,000</u>

This figure represents the number of persons who were in Assam in 1921 directly on account of the tea industry. In addition Mr. Lloyd estimated that there were 130 or 140 thousand persons in Assam *indirectly* connected with the industry. These consisted of traders, *mistris*, carters, earth-workers, etc.

In Mr. Lloyd's estimate the number of *ex-coolies* was ascertained by assuming that 300,000 acres of the land in the province was held by *ex-coolies* and that five acres of land supported 6 persons.

The estimate which I give below is made on a different basis and has been arrived at by actually ascertaining the total number of persons who belong to castes which are generally recognized as tea garden cooly castes. The estimate therefore includes not only persons who came to the province originally to work on the tea gardens and their descendants but also persons belonging to cooly castes who came as settlers, *e.g.*, the Santal colony in Goalpara and also some coolies on the railways and in industrial concerns, etc. Except, however, for the Santals in Goalpara the number of persons belonging to cooly castes in Assam who have not had, at one time, some connection with the tea industry must be very small indeed.

The following is the estimate I have made on these lines for 1931:—

Number of Hindus belonging to cooly castes ...	...	1,316,000
Number of animists belonging to cooly castes ...	...	53,000
Estimated number of Christians belonging to cooly castes ...	...	31,000
Total ...	...	<u>1,400,000</u>

By valleys the division of this total would be approximately—

Assam Valley ...	...	1,050,000
Surma Valley ...	...	350,000

This total includes coolies of all kinds whether living on gardens or living in the villages: it also includes persons belonging to cooly castes who did not come to Assam for employment on tea gardens, *e.g.*, the Santals of the Santal colony in Goalpara district.

Let us now endeavour to ascertain how many of these 1,400,000 persons belonging to cooly castes or tribes are actually on gardens and how many are outside. The census figures show that 980,000 persons were censused on the tea gardens of the province (including, of course, the managing and clerical staffs) of whom 910,000 were Hindus, 25,000 animists, 24,000 Muslims, and 19,000 Christians; 654,000 were censused in the Assam Valley and 326,000 in the Surma Valley.

As a rough estimate—it cannot be more—I take 900,000 (600,000 Assam Valley, 300,000 Surma Valley) as the number of persons actually censused on tea gardens who may be said to belong to tea garden cooly castes or tribes. If we deduct this figure from 1,400,000 we should therefore get the number of persons belonging to cooly castes who live outside the gardens; this comes to 500,000 in the whole of Assam of whom about 450,000 would be in the Assam Valley and about 50,000 in the Surma Valley.

It may be of interest to compare this estimate with an estimate made on the same basis as Mr. Lloyd's estimate in 1921, *i.e.*, on the basis of the amount of land settled with *ex-coolies* assuming that 5 acres support 6 persons.

I find from the figures of land settled with *ex-coolies* that on a basis of 5 acres to 6 persons there are about 400,000 *ex-coolies* in the five districts of Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur.

According to my estimate there are 390,000 persons belonging to castes generally recognized as tea garden cooly castes censused *outside the gardens* in those five districts distributed as follows:—

Kamrup ...	...	17,000
Darrang ...	...	100,000
Nowgong ...	...	24,000
Sibsagar ...	...	109,000
Lakhimpur ...	...	140,000
Total ...	...	<u>390,000</u>

In addition I get 55,000 persons of cooly castes censused outside tea gardens in Goalpara (these are principally Santals and Mundas who came there as ordinary settlers and are not real *ex-tea garden coolies*) and 5,000 in the Frontier Tracts. The Annual Immigration Reports give no figures for the Frontier Tracts and show practically no settlement with *ex-coolies* in Goalpara district.

My estimate of persons of cooly castes in the Assam Valley agrees therefore fairly well with the only check we have *i.e.*, the figures for the amount of land held by *ex-coolies*.

For the Surma Valley the Annual Reports on Immigrant Labour give no figures for the amount of land held by *ex-coolies* (this would be impossible in the permanently-settled district of Sylhet) so that we have no possible check. According to my estimate there are about 50,000 *ex-coolies* in the Surma Valley divided fairly equally between Cachar and Sylhet. Land is, of course, difficult to secure in that valley and the coolies on the tea gardens there have not had the same opportunities as they have had in the Assam Valley of settling outside the gardens. It must not be assumed that because Mr. Lloyd's estimate gives 360,000 *ex-coolies* and mine gives a figure of 500,000 persons belonging to cooly castes censused outside tea gardens that the number of *ex-coolies* has increased by 140,000. This is not so. My figures include the Santals and Mundas of Goalpara whom Mr. Lloyd did not include as *ex-coolies*. Deducting these my estimate for *ex-coolies* and their descendants would be 445,000 in 1931—an increase of 85,000 since 1921 of which probably over half is due to the natural increase of the old *ex-cooly* population.

But as I have already said the whole question of the real number of *ex-garden coolies* and their descendants is extremely complex and I wish to make it quite clear that the figures I have given for the probable number of persons belonging to cooly castes outside gardens is at best merely a rough estimate.

Provincial Table III in the volume of tables gives the actual number of persons censused on the tea gardens in each district. With a view to comparing these figures with the figures for the labour force given in the Immigrant Labour Report for 1930-31 I give below a summary in round figures of the two sets of figures. The census figures include, of course, not only coolies but the managing and clerical staffs as well as traders living within the garden boundaries.

District.	Census figure (including managing and clerical staff).	Immigration Report figure (1930-31) for labour force.
Goalpara	5,000	5,000
Kamrup	7,000	7,000
Darrang	133,000	149,000
Nowgong	24,000	24,000
Sibsagar	234,000	264,000
Lakhimpur	250,000	294,000
Sadiya	1,000	...
Total Assam Valley	654,000	743,000
Cachar	148,000	141,000
Sylhet	178,000	181,000
Total Surma Valley	326,000	322,000
Grand total for Assam	980,000	1,065,000

It will be noticed that there is a large discrepancy between the total of the census figures and the total of Immigration Report figures, viz., 85,000 and that the discrepancy is confined to the three large tea districts of the Assam Valley. At the 1921 census the discrepancy was almost exactly the same, viz., 90,000. The real discrepancy is, however, somewhat larger as the census figures include the managing and clerical staffs on the gardens whereas the Immigration figures do not. The reasons for this discrepancy are as follows:

- (1) In the Assam Valley the figures for the labourers on oil-fields and coal mines are included in the Immigration Report figures. In Lakhimpur this amounts to about 12,000.
- (2) At the time the census was taken (February 1931) many cooly *Sirdars* were away recruiting—(about 30,000 go every year from the Assam Valley; in the Surma Valley there were very few recruiters away as recruitment has practically stopped in that Valley).

These two reasons would explain about half the discrepancy. The balance must, in my opinion, be due to the fact that although the Immigration Report figures are supposed to refer only to persons "living in garden lines and on garden land" they do in fact also include coolies who are on the garden books but who actually dwell outside the garden boundaries, i.e., *faltoos* labourers.

APPENDIX II TO CHAPTER XII.

KEY TO SOCIAL MAP.

(See also appendix I to this chapter on the depressed and backward classes of Assam):

"Hindu Exterior Castes" are, briefly, indigenous Hindu castes which suffer from severe social disabilities. "Hindu tea garden cooly castes" are coolies and the descendants of coolies who came from other provinces to work in Assam—principally on tea plantations. "Hindus preserving a tribal organization" are tribal peoples recognized as Hindus who are generally regarded as separate communities and who have retained various tribal characteristics e.g., the use of their own tribal language. "Tribal religions" consist of persons who still worship their tribal deities in their own fashion—the people who are described as animists in previous census reports. In the plains a certain proportion of tea garden coolies belong to this class but the great majority of coolies and *ex-coolies* are Hindus. In the hill districts Christians belonging to the hill tribes have been shown separately in the map. In the plains district Christians have been included with "Others". In Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Cachar and Sylhet the white rectangles are almost entirely composed of Christians but in Sibsaigar, Lakhimpur and Sadiya the white rectangles include both Buddhists and Christians.

The following table gives the percentages of the various communities in each district or rectangle on the map:—

GOALPARA DISTRICT.

Population	822,748
Tribal	10.2 per cent.
Hindu tribal	8.5 per cent.
Hindu cooly	4.6 per cent.
Hindu exterior	1.8 per cent.
Other Hindus	28.8 per cent.
Muslims	43.9 per cent.
Others	2.2 per cent.

KAMRUP DISTRICT.

Population	976,746
Tribal	2.0 per cent.
Hindu tribal	13.1 per cent.
Hindu cooly	2.5 per cent.
Hindu exterior	4.4 per cent.
Other Hindus	52.7 per cent.
Muslims	24.6 per cent.
Others	.7 per cent.

DARRANG DISTRICT.

Population	584,817
Tribal	7.6 per cent.
Hindu tribal	8.9 per cent.
Hindu cooly	31.8 per cent.
Hindu exterior	2.8 per cent.
Other Hindus	34.5 per cent.
Muslims	11.5 per cent.
Others	2.9 per cent.

NOWGONG DISTRICT.

Population	562,581
Tribal	9.4 per cent.
Hindu tribal	10.5 per cent.
Hindu cooly	7.3 per cent.
Hindu exterior	8.4 per cent.
Other Hindus	31.8 per cent.
Muslims	31.6 per cent.
Others	1.0 per cent.

SIBSAGAR DISTRICT.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	933,326
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	3.4 per cent.
Hindu tribal	...	...	...	...	...	6.0 per cent.
Hindu cooly	...	...	...	...	...	33.8 per cent.
Hindu exterior	...	...	...	...	...	4.0 per cent.
Other Hindus	...	...	...	...	...	46.4 per cent.
Muslims	...	...	...	...	...	4.7 per cent.
Others	...	...	...	...	...	1.7 per cent.

LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	724,582
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	2.0 per cent.
Hindu tribal	...	...	...	...	...	9.5 per cent.
Hindu cooly	...	...	...	...	...	48.9 per cent.
Hindu exterior	...	...	...	...	...	3.3 per cent.
Other Hindus	...	...	...	...	...	29.6 per cent.
Muslims	...	...	...	...	...	3.6 per cent.
Others	...	...	...	...	...	3.1 per cent.

BALIPARA FRONTIER TRACT.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	5,148
Tribal and others	...	...	...	...	...	26 per cent.
Hindu tribal	...	...	...	...	...	25 per cent.
Hindu cooly	...	...	...	...	...	16 per cent.
Other Hindus	...	...	...	...	...	33 per cent.

SADIYA FRONTIER TRACT.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	53,345
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	44.0 per cent.
Hindu tribal	...	...	...	...	...	10.4 per cent.
Hindu cooly	...	...	...	...	...	6.6 per cent.
Hindu exterior	...	...	...	...	...	1.7 per cent.
Other Hindus	...	...	...	...	...	30.1 per cent.
Muslims	...	...	...	...	...	1.5 per cent.
Others	...	...	...	...	...	5.7 per cent.

GARO HILLS DISTRICT.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	190,911
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	71.6 per cent.
Tribal Christian	...	...	...	...	...	8.4 per cent.
Hindu tribal	...	...	...	...	...	7.4 per cent.
Other Hindus	...	...	...	...	...	7.3 per cent.
Muslims	...	...	...	...	...	5.3 per cent.

KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS DISTRICT.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	289,926
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	69.3 per cent.
Tribal Christian	...	...	...	...	...	29.4 per cent.
Hindu	...	...	...	...	...	9.1 per cent.
Others	...	...	...	...	...	1.2 per cent.

NAGA HILLS DISTRICT.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	178,844
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	82.9 per cent.
Tribal Christian	...	...	...	...	...	12.8 per cent.
Hindus	...	...	...	...	...	3.6 per cent.
Muslim and others	...	...	...	...	...	.7 per cent.

MANIPUR STATE.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	445,606
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	34.8 per cent.
Tribal Christian	...	...	...	...	...	2.4 per cent.
Hindu tribal	...	...	...	...	...	56.4 per cent.
Other Hindus	...	...	...	...	...	1.3 per cent.
Muslims	...	...	...	...	...	5.1 per cent.

NORTH CACHAR HILLS.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	32,844
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	14.9 per cent.
Tribal Christian	...	...	...	...	...	6.0 per cent.
Hindu tribal	...	...	...	...	...	73.1 per cent.
Hindu cooly and others	...	...	...	...	...	6.0 per cent.

LUSHAI HILLS DISTRICT.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	124,404
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	48.4 per cent.
Tribal Christian	...	...	...	...	...	47.5 per cent.
Hindu	...	...	...	...	...	3.2 per cent.
Others	...	...	...	...	...	.9 per cent.

SYLHET DISTRICT.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	2,724,342
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	.1 per cent.
Hindu tribal	...	...	...	...	...	1.1 per cent.
Hindu cooly	...	...	...	...	...	7.0 per cent.
Hindu exterior	...	...	...	...	...	14.4 per cent.
Other Hindus	...	...	...	...	...	18.4 per cent.
Muslims	...	...	...	...	...	58.9 per cent.
Others	...	...	...	...	...	.1 per cent.

CACHAR PLAINS.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	537,687
Tribal	...	...	...	...	...	1.0 per cent.
Hindu tribal	...	...	...	...	...	9.4 per cent.
Hindu cooly	...	...	...	...	...	29.5 per cent.
Hindu exterior	...	...	...	...	...	14.9 per cent.
Other Hindus	...	...	...	...	...	8.4 per cent.
Muslims	...	...	...	...	...	36.4 per cent.
Others	...	...	...	...	...	.4 per cent.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

Notes on the effect on some primitive tribes of Assam of contacts with civilization.

(I) The effect on the tribes of the Naga Hills district of Contacts with civilization; by Mr. J. P. Mills, I.C.S.

The conditions obtaining throughout the Naga Hills district being fairly uniform, to deal with each tribe separately would entail much unnecessary repetition. I will therefore note on the district as a whole, drawing my examples from the Angami, Sema, Ao, and Lhota Nagas, and the Thado Kukis.

In this area contact with civilization is brought about in two ways—by the visits of tribesmen to the plains lying along the base of the hills, and by the penetration of foreigners into the hills. The latter is by far the most important. Foreigners residing in the hills influence the culture and mode of life of the indigenous inhabitants in numerous ways—by administration, by missionary propaganda, by the innate tendency to imitate foreigners who display a culture in some way regarded as “higher,” by objects of trade imported from without, by the introduction of disease, by medical work, by communications that make travelling everywhere easy and safe, by the presence of an armed force strong enough to suppress any rising or inter-tribal war, and by countless subtle influences that react on the mentality of the villagers, usually to the detriment of their pride in their customs and history.

There has been little or no exploitation of forests, minerals or agricultural land, but the future can not be held to be secure as long as the ruling of Government stands that *jhum* land, which the owners have bought or inherited as immovable property which can be validly held by an individual or a clan is all unclassified State forest at the absolute disposal of Government, on which there is no liability to pay compensation in the event of its being taken over.

There is no systematic recruitment of hillmen for work in the plains. Gangs, especially of Semas and Aos, go down in the cold weather to work on tea gardens in order to earn cash for their house tax. They come back none the better for the journey. Women do not go down with the men in any large numbers, but when they do go girls are not infrequently lured into a career of prostitution by the prospect of an easy life, being unable to distinguish between the easy-going moral code of their own villages and the systematised vice of the plains, with their so-called higher culture. The men are apt to waste money on rubbish they see displayed in the shops, and on distilled liquor for which they acquire a taste. Gangs going year after year to the same garden are paid regularly and well, but those working for petty contractors are cheated of their earnings with regrettable frequency. They cannot bring suits in the plains—the expense, the distance and the endless adjournments are all against them. When they find that Government is prevented by its own legal methods from settling their claims equitably and quickly their respect for it naturally suffers.

Improved communications, while they have immensely facilitated internal trade, have undoubtedly spread disease. All Nagas assert definitely that since their country was taken over illness has increased. Not only have specific diseases, such as venereal disease and tuberculosis, been introduced, but epidemics spread more quickly. In the old days of war and raiding villages remained more or less constantly segregated. Nowadays people travel freely everywhere and disease spreads quickly. Tuberculosis is definitely established. So far its spread has been slow, but the time may come when it will become rampant and the Nagas and Kukis of these hills will follow other primitive peoples into oblivion.

The national drink of the hill tribes of Assam is rice beer. Foreigners have brought in distilled liquor, and its effects are evil. The casual labourer working away from his village, himself the product of contact with civilization, has no wife with him to brew his rice beer and buys spirits instead. Later he comes to regard distilled liquor as a necessity. Nagas are fully aware of the evils, and certain Angami villages have sworn oaths that no member will indulge in it.

Opium is only consumed in certain areas. The Konyak Nagas are inveterate opium addicts, having acquired the habit from plainmen, with whom they have been in close contact for a very long time. A limited number of Ao Nagas have also taken to the habit. A few years ago a village founded by the American Baptist Mission as a Christian village contained more opium addicts than the whole of the rest of the tribe. The reason was that the Mission had forbidden alcoholic liquor and their converts had taken to opium as a substitute. I believe things are much improved now. In the rest of the district there are few addicts except detribalised Nagas living in Kohima bazaar. With them the vice must be directly put down to contact with foreigners.

The opening up of the cart road to Manipur has undoubtedly led to an increase in prostitution. Except to a limited extent among the Eastern Angamis, prostitution, in the sense of women selling themselves for money to all and sundry, is not an indigenous Naga or Kuki custom. In many tribes girls before marriage allow their lovers every privilege, but this is very different from a commercial transaction. Foreigners coming into the hills by the cart road often demand women, and where there is a demand a supply is apt to be forthcoming. Some women even visit the cart stands and offer themselves to the bullock drivers.

While the extension of communications had led to the introduction of much foreign rubbish and cheap jack ware it has also stimulated genuine Naga trade. For example in the old days the supply of ivory armlets was very limited, as they could only be obtained from the very few elephants killed by Nagas themselves. Now Angamis bring large numbers up from Calcutta and trade them through the hills. Similarly, Naga ornaments which are only made in a few places, such as the baldricks made in the Sema village of Seromi, are far more easily distributed. I have no doubt more Naga ornaments are worn now than were worn in the days before the hills were taken over, and for this peace and easy communications are responsible.

Before the hills were taken over the important village of Khonoma, with insufficient land to support its population, raided far and wide for heads, tribute, loot and prisoners they could hold to ransom. Now they have substituted trade for raiding, and landless men wander right into Burma selling beads. The prestige of the village enables them to keep almost a monopoly of this trade.

I have mentioned above the increase in prostitution due to the cart road. Far more serious in this respect is the presence in Kohima of a large number of unmarried foreigners, including the unmarried men of a battalion of Assam Rifles, and of Naga subordinates living away from their villages. A population is growing up of persons with no tribe or customary law and religion, and their settlement is a plague spot. Any girl who quarrels with her parents in a Naga village and can bolt to this sink of iniquity can find an old hag ready to take her in and start her without delay on a career which can only end in disease and misery.

Education of the type which is given has been on the whole an evil rather than a good. Some men have withstood its evil influence and have remained good Nagas, with something else very useful added. Not so the majority. Very rarely indeed does a Naga regard education as something which is going to make him more fitted for his ordinary life; he regards it as something which will fit him for a very different life, and he expects that life to be offered to him in the form of a Government post—aptly described to me once as a “sitting-and-eating job”. When boys apply to me for scholarships my custom is to ask them what they intend to do when they have finished their education, and the reply almost invariably is “I hope Government will find me a job”. The result is a surplus of half-educated youths, unwilling to go back to the village life of their fathers and looking in vain for employment which they consider suitable to their talents. The situation is especially bad among the Aos. A few educated Angamis have ventured into commerce, usually with disastrous results, borrowing money wildly and expecting that somehow their education will bring them enormous profits.

Foreign dress is spreading slowly, but steadily. For this the blame must fall both on certain departments of Government, who allow their employees to wear it, and on Missionaries whose active encouragement has not always as yet been reduced even to connivance. It is certainly definitely connected in the Naga mind with education, and a smattering of superficial knowledge is considered to entitle the possessor thereof to a pair of shorts, while a suit complete with watch chain and Tilly hat almost corresponds to a doctor's robes. The custom is bad from every point of view. It entails waste of money where money is hard to find. It encourages dirt, since no Naga can afford the changes he ought to have in the damp heat of Assam. It spreads disease in two main ways. Adults become more liable to chills and phthisis since they do not change their wet clothes, and children who are carried against wet “shirt waists” instead of against their mothers' warm backs suffer as a result. From the artistic point of view it is especially and utterly to be condemned. To substitute soiled and poor quality western clothes, or more often a caricature of them, for the exceedingly picturesque Naga dress is an aesthetic crime. More of the body is covered up, but I have yet to find that this leads to stricter morality.

Nagas who have taken whole-heartedly to foreign customs often build houses resembling the worst type of “shack”. A Naga house as all fittingly built houses should, seems to have grown out of the landscape. The corrugated iron roofs of the “foreign” houses are blots upon it. They are expensive and stuffy. The fashion has been encouraged, I fear, by the Baptist chapels, which as artistic productions are execrable, and, widely spread as they are, tend to kill the Nagas' unconscious but innate sense of architectural fitness.

Only two ancient customs have had to be put down by Government—the sacrifice of mithun by cruel methods, and head hunting. The suppression of the first is wholly good, and more humane methods of killing can be substituted without detriment to the rites. The suppression of head hunting, though necessary in any area which is fully administered, has probably not been for the benefit of the tribes. The very fact that, far from being an honour, it is a disgrace to be killed in war, makes all Nagas very careful of their own safety, and their wars were singularly innocuous affairs. In a war between two big villages each side might lose one or two men a year. The number of lives saved by the suppression of the practice is therefore negligible, and is far more than balanced by those lost through the spread of disease made easy by safe travelling everywhere. In addition to this there is a very real loss in virility and keenness. Unbroken peace is no better for Nagas than it is for any other race.

Realising that on the preservation of customs developed exactly to fit the environment and tested by centuries of use depends the whole fabric of tribal society Government has been at pains to preserve them to the utmost limit possible and to ensure that such change as must inevitably come shall not be destructive in its suddenness. In strong contrast has been the attitude of the American Baptist Mission. As religion plays a part in every Naga ceremony and as that religion is not Christianity every

ceremony must go. Such ceremonies as the great Feasts of Merit, at which the whole village, rich and poor alike, is entertained, and of which the religious aspect is far less important than the social, have not been remodelled on Christian lines, but have been utterly abolished among converts. This has been the fate, too, of all village sacrificial feasts. The place of these is not adequately taken by small parties meeting to drink tea. The suppression among Baptists of the ancient feasts in which all joined is not only a loss to the would-be hosts, but to the village as a whole, and not least to the poor, who always get their full share of good cheer at Animist festivals. To abolish these feasts is to do away with the very few occasions on which the awful monotony of village life is broken. They are, too, the natural Naga and Kuki way of distributing wealth. I have heard a Baptist teacher boast that his granaries were so full of the store of years that some of the grain was black with age. Had he been an Animist that grain would not have been left to rot uselessly but would have been eaten by his fellow villagers.

To any one who unable to reject some of the most hallowed passages in Scripture, regards fermented liquor in moderation as not only harmless but beneficial, the strong prohibition policy of the Mission cannot but seem a grave mistake. Few of its advocates attempt to justify it from Scripture. They use the arguments which brought the Volstead Act into being. Such an obsession has abstention from fermented drink become among converts that teetotalism is often regarded as the outstanding mark of a Christian. Among the Aos "teetotaler" and "Christian" are used as synonymous terms in ordinary conversation. The substitution of opium for rice beer is probably rare among Christians now, but as in America, a secret drinking goes on, with results that are morally evil.

It is at the big feasts that singing and dancing are indulged in, and full dress worn. These have been entirely suppressed among the Ao, Lhota and Sema Christians, the men of whom wear no ornaments at all, having stripped their heads from the necks, their ivory armlets from their arms and even the cotton wool from their ears. The women are more conservative and still often wear their beads, though I doubt if a girl would actually wear her ornaments at a Mission school. Angami men too are difficult to dislodge from their ancient ways. The best of them do not give up their picturesque dress and are quite ready to put on all their finery and take part in the ceremonial singing parties which are such a feature of their village life.

Of the material arts in these hills wood-carving is the chief. It is displayed on the houses of those who have given the great Feasts of Merit; on the "Morung" posts of the Aos, Konyaks and Lhotas, and on the big xylophones of the Aos. This is doomed to extinction as the power of the mission increases. Feasts of Merit are forbidden among them, and no attempt is made to induce rich Christians to decorate their houses in the old way. No Christian boy is allowed to go through his time in the "Morung" and they are not built any more in Christian villages. In such villages, too, the old xylophones can be seen rotting in the jungle.

The suppression of the wearing of all ornaments or tribal finery, of dancing, of singing (except hymns), of village feasts and of all artistic outlet is spreading an unspeakable drabness over village life. Old songs and old traditions are being rapidly forgotten. Told year in and year out that all the past history, all the strivings, all the old customs of his tribe are wholly evil the Naga tends to despise his own race, and no night of the soul is blacker than that.

The suppression of the "Morung", in which young Animists learn to be useful citizens is unwarranted by any good reason that I have ever heard. It is part of the tendency to abolish old things just because they are old, and substitute for the strong communal feeling which has enabled the tribes to survive for so long an individualism which is really foreign to them. Not only is this individualism wrapped up with the strong emphasis on personal salvation; it is also the direct and natural reaction against the destruction of all the old things that mattered in village life and all the old expressions of the artistic and social genius of the tribe. "My tribe has erred hopelessly" says the convert "all through the centuries it has tried to work out its destiny. I will work out mine, and mine alone". An Animist puts his village before himself. A Baptist puts himself before his village. No Semas are as prone to disobey their Chiefs as Christian Semas, and Christian Aos have often refused to take the part in village government to which their years and experience called them. A "Civilized" Naga is apt to call customary discipline restraint, and many of them are eager to leave their villages and live free of all control.

Times are changing and new influences and tendencies are appearing. Tribes and villages acting as units will be able to judge of them and resist them if need be. Individuals will find them too strong. Will the time come when these hills will be inhabited by scattered families, without pride in the past or hope for the future, without arts and without recreation, dressed in nondescript garments as drab as their lives, and busy only to win from the steep, rocky slopes enough sustenance to enable them to beget children and die?

Julian Huxley in one of his articles which he quotes in the introduction to his book *Africa View* sums up the exactly similar problem of that continent as follows:—"On the top of all this variety of nature and man there impinge Western Civilization and Western industrialism. Will their impact level down the variety, reducing the proud diversity of native tribes and races to a muddy mixture, their various cultures to a single inferior copy of our own? Or shall we be able to preserve the savour of difference, to fuse our culture and theirs into an autochthonous civilization, to use local difference as the basis for a natural diversity of development?"

(II) The effect on the Lushais of contacts with civilization by Mr. C. G. Helme, I.C.S.

1. It may be said in general that contact with civilization has made little or no difference to life in an ordinary Lushai village. For the important purpose of trade the Lushai Hills are not really in effective contact with civilization at all. They produce very little that has any exchangeable value and * difficulties of communication make the marketing of surplus produce practically impossible. Thus the ordinary effects of contact with civilization—the stimulus to produce, the ability to exchange, the rise in the standard of consumption are almost entirely absent. Domestic life, methods of cultivation, village habits and customs, food and drink, amusements—all with a few exceptions to be noted below remain as they were half a century ago. It is only in the relations between village and village, and between the Lushai Hills and the outside world, in religion and in education that any marked difference can be observed.

2. The introduction of settled government has not only prevented the Lushais from raiding the inhabitants of the plains on their borders, but has dispelled the constant fear in which they themselves lived of similar raids upon their own villages either from their neighbours or from more powerful tribes further inland.

3. The first Missionaries arrived in the Lushai Hills in January 1894, and the spread of Christianity has been extraordinarily rapid. I estimate the number of professed Christians at about one half of the population of the district. Conversion to Christianity operates as a powerful solvent of ancient customs which are gradually falling into neglect and disrepute. The new religion—adopted mainly in the form of Calvinistic Methodism—is effective chiefly in field of ritual observance. The standard of morality which was never low, remains the same.

4. The influence of Christianity has been strongly re-inforced by the fact that education has been left entirely to the Mission, and, except in two respects, education in general has had no influence apart from Christian teaching. The two exceptions are (1) Most Lushais, Christian or non-Christian, are now able to read and write.

(2) Higher education in these hills as elsewhere breeds a dislike for manual labour, and its growth and spread are increasing the number of unemployed and discontented youths.

5. These are the results in general of the contact of the inhabitants of these hills with civilization. Minor results are tabulated below:—

- (1) In a few suitable localities, the Lushais have adopted the system of wet rice cultivation.
- (2) The cultivation of fruit, coffee, tea has been introduced and taken up with avidity, and in this respect there has been a slight rise in the standard of comfort. The drinking of tea in its turn is leading to the general use of milk, formerly looked upon as excrement by the Lushais. The use of milk is said to be effecting a considerable reduction in the rate of infant mortality.
- (3) The use of quinine in combating malaria is now universal.
- (4) There is an obvious tendency to adopt clothes of European style, and to cut the hair short.
- (5) European games, especially football and hockey have been taken up and are played with great enthusiasm, alike on the part of the players and, in the towns of Aijal and Lungleh, of the spectators.

*There are no motorable roads in the Lushai Hills—only bridle paths.

APPENDIX B.

Notes on certain Hill Tribes of Assam.

(Some of the tribes dealt with in these notes have not yet formed the subject of a separate volume in the great series of monographs on the hill tribes of Assam published under the auspices of the Local Government.

For others—the Khasis, Garos and Lushais—separate monographs already exist but the notes now published give a considerable amount of additional information and have all been written by officers who have an intimate knowledge of the tribes of which they have written. The note on the Khasis and Syntengs is by a Khasi Officer. I regret that owing to lack of space I have had to cut out great deal of interesting information.)

(I) The Western Rengma Nagas.

(By Mr J. P. Mills I.C.S.)

1. The tribe is divided into a southern and a northern group, speaking different dialects. The groups intermarry. The southern group in turn is divided into (1) the big exogamous Kentennenyu clan and (2) the Azonyu group of clans. The Azonyu group in turn is divided into three exogamous groups of clans. The northern group is divided into some six exogamous groups of clans. Descent goes in the father's line.

2. There is no definite order of social precedence. In the southern group the Kentennenyu clan is vaguely regarded as senior, with the Samphinyu as the senior subclan of the Azonyu division. In the northern group the Mhatongza clan is vaguely regarded as senior.

3. There is no chiefly class.

4. The organization is democratic and very bad. Old men and men of position are listened to to a certain extent, but there is very little discipline in a village.

5. It is believed that the tribe was originally one with the Lhotas and travelled with them on their migration from Kheza-Kenoma to the south as far as Therugu Hill on the southern edge of the present Rengma country. There the main body of the tribe split off, though certain clans joined them later both from the Semas to the east and the Lhotas to the north. Some sixteen generations ago a body split from the village of Kitagha and travelling away to the east, became the present Eastern, or Naked Rengmas. Another section split off about three or four generations ago and settled in the Mikir Hills.

6. There is a certain amount of terraced cultivation in some of the southern villages. The art was learnt from their Angami neighbours. Terraces are built on steep slopes and revetted with stone.

7. Megaliths are of two kinds. (1) A rectangular stone platform is made near a path and on it is set up a monolith for the performer of the ceremony, a slightly smaller one for his wife, and a little one for each of his children. A son may set up one of the monuments in the name of his dead father if he has had a series of bad harvests. The Kentennenyu clan of the southern group, and the Mhatongza of the northern group do not put up these monuments.

(2) Alignments are very rare. One was set up in Phesinyu in 1929 by one Gwalu in honour of his father. It consists of 18 monoliths 9 to 18 inches high and represents the deceased Hongpung with his wife and children and all who owned him as master. In the past such alignments have been set up by childless people who wish thus to distribute their wealth at a feast and leave some memorial.

8. Circular, or, more usually, semicircular, stone seats are made by the sides of paths. Upright stones help to strengthen the wall. Sometimes a man makes one during life as a memorial to himself, and sometimes a widow or a son makes one as a memorial to a dead man. It is particularly common for a son to make one as a memorial to his father if he has been having bad crops, as these seats are believed to recapture the lost fertility of the parents. Any one may sit on them.

9. Houses are of wood, bamboo and thatch. Planks for the front wall and porch may only be used by a man who has given the first of the feasts of merit.

10. (a) The shape of the front porch of the house varies according to the distance the owner has progressed in the series of feasts of merit. In Tesophenyu a man who has completed the series puts up "house horns" of the Angami pattern, but smaller.

(b) A man who has given the feasts of merit wears a dark blue cloth with white bands and red lines at the edge. His daughter may wear a body cloth ornamented with circles of cowries.

11. It is very vaguely believed that the sun is male and the moon female. Both were once equally hot, but God (Songinyu) saw that men were troubled because they had no means of telling night from day and planted a figs tree (*urembi*), and a plant with long leaves (*alaphatung*) on the moon. These shade it and are the marks we see on the moon now. Orion's Belt represents men trying to attack a village. The belt itself is *Terison keyenyu* (the sentries) and the dagger *Byenyu* (the strangers, i.e., attackers). The Pleiades are called *Shenyu Pempi Kepenyu* (the star of the pounding table carriers). They are believed to be seven, but most people can only see six. Any one who can see seven will be very happy in his married life. A pair of stars (Castor and Pollux?) is called *Letung* (girl's stick) and represents a young man cutting a stick for his mistress. Venus, both as a morning and an evening star, is called *Shepfu* and is believed to influence the crops. There is a separate name for each fork of the Milky Way. The big fork is called *Zule* (the Diyung River), and the small fork *Serizu* (the Tulo stream in the Sema country). They had a quarrel over the killing of a mithan and parted. Shooting stars are merely falling stars.

An earthquake occurs when the sky has connection with his wife the earth.

Neolithic stone adzes are called *tsamphara duding* (axes fallen from the sky). They believed to come down with lightning. It is lucky to find one and the finder keeps it as a charm. They are hurled down by god (*soungingnu*) on any tree which he claims and wishes to fell. Thunder is the voice of god and in whatever direction it is heard most the crops will be best. The rainbow is the breath of a spirit. It rises from damp, haunted spots. If you point your finger at it you get ill.

An eclipse of the moon happens when a tiger tries to eat it. The sun is eclipsed when a great man dies.

12. The dead are buried in the village. Sometimes a man will ask to be buried outside the village, and if so, his wishes are complied with. The head is not separately treated. The grave is covered with a slab of stone, and if on a slope stone slabs will be used to support the sides and make a flat top. Ordinarily a burial is made alongside a former burial, till large paved platforms are formed. If a grave is made in the rains a shelter is built over it.

13. The soul of the dead man remains in the village till the Ngada ceremony which marks the beginning of the next agricultural year. Very occasionally a dead man goes to a home in the sky, but the vast majority go to the Land of the Dead under the earth. The Kentennenyu clan go to Sihama, a village to the west, and enter the Land of the Dead at a spot there which is not known. All other clans use the cave on Wokha Hill used by the Lhotas. All meet at the same destination. Including the present life a man has seven lives in worlds one below the other, each being an exact repetition of the one before. Finally those who can sing become crickets, and those who cannot butterflies.

14. The complexion is sallow. The hair is black, and usually straight, but occasionally slightly wavy. It is shaved all round the head. The heads of girls are entirely shaved till they are betrothed, when their hair is allowed to grow. The eyes are brown and slightly oblique. The nose is rather long. The head appears moderately round (no measurements have been recorded). The physique is strong, but slight.

15. Seed is sown broadcast and a spoon-shaped digger used to cover it. The hoe is an iron hoop derived from the primitive bamboo hoe.

16. A simple bamboo flute with two holes, one of which is used for mouth and other for the production of notes. Also jews' harp.

17. Weapons used are *dao*, spear and cross-bow (now almost obsolete). A few specimens exist of a short, heavy club which was used as weapon of offence in riots, and, held in the left hand to ward off *dao* blows, as a weapon of defence in serious fighting. Raw hide armour, consisting of cuirass, leg pieces and arm pieces, also used to be used.

Enemies' heads were kept for one night on the shelf of the carved post of the Bachelors' Hall to which the taker belonged. Next day they were hung from bamboos which were leant against the head tree.

(II) The Hill Kacharis.

(ii) These notes by Mr. J. H. Grace, I. P., Political Officer, Sadiya, and formerly Subdivisional Officer, North Cachar Hills, describe some of the traditions and customs of the most old fashioned and least spoiled villages in the North Cachar Hills.

1. A son may not marry into his mother's clan, nor a girl into her father's clan.

2. In the pre-Dimapur days there were only 7 male clans. Of these, the oldest clans were the Bodosa, the clan which had formerly been royal, the Thaosengsa, which was then the ruling clan, and the Hasyungsa, the royal collaterals but not ruling. The other clans were the Langtasa, Jigidingsa, Haflongphongsa, Shengyungsa. After the tribe left Dimapur there were 40 clans.

At Dimapur there were 13 clans of women. Certain clans had functional names :—

Female—Sagaodi—The clan of the Raja's mother.

Phraidi—The clan of the Prime minister's wife.

Male—Songyabsa—The royal cooks.

Nobidasa—The professional hunters.

Female—Siadima—The hereditary washers of the royal rice.

Anujiya—Hereditary ayahs to royalty.

Male—Bengyasa—Servants, slaves and menials to royalty.

Ngablaisa—Fishermen to royalty.

The Bodosa and after them the Thaosengsa were the royal clans. The Raja's mother might belong to any clan. When she was sent to the royal harem she was entitled to be called Makhamgupujik signifying that she was as beautiful and satisfying as the finest rice.

3. The organization of the tribe used to be autocratic but now-days it is democratic. There is a headman to give the final orders; a minister for land to advise the headman on all matters concerning lands and cattle; a head boy to keep the youngsters in order; and a head girl for the girls. None of these are hereditary offices.

4. Endle's book on the Kacharis gives a story of an origin from the north-west. The legend I have is as follows :—

"We lived in a land called Ilasaw Kamruli in the very high mountains of dazzling brightness. We lived in big villages of stone. Not far away was a river in a great valley which flowed from the west. We were driven out and got across on a raft fixed to a rope which ran from side to side. We got to a place called Khundilo where the river comes out of the mountains into a sandy plain. Here we settled at a place called Phrapdisari Prapongsari after a great tree. We were driven from that place by the Shengphongsarao who had long swords in wooden sheaths." Here the story continues as in Endle's book.

5. Houses are built entirely of bamboo with wooden posts and a thatched roof. Some houses have a small earthen plinth if the site is not level and this may be either stone or plank or faced with wood. Stones are used as seats, but their use is not privileged.

6. When a man dies his neighbours and relations enter his house and his widow or, if he had no widow, some old woman kills a cock (for a woman a hen) at the head of the deceased. She then says "father and mother who have died, take your child away." Then the corpse, which has been washed, is carried to a stream near the village and placed on a pyre of 12 layers of wood, and is burnt, the head to the west. The ashes are then thrown into the stream, and the people go back to the house. The widow, or old woman, puts a piece of gold or silver into a little bowl of water and with a leaf sprinkles those assembled one by one saying—"I have sprinkled, Go." Clean clothes are then put on. In the evening, if there is any rice in the house, the married youths and maidens collect wood and leaves and the rice is spread on a mat and pounded. A little is distributed to each house in the village where it is cooked; next day it is brought back to the house of the deceased. When all are assembled pigs, goats, cocks, hens and tortoises are killed, and a feast follows. The next day all go to where the corpse was burnt and scatter rice; then they go back to the house and get water which they sprinkle on the burnt-out pyre after which they return to the house of the deceased, where drink is supplied.

The married men then proceed to build a model house outside the village. The house is about 2½ feet high including the comparatively tall *chung*. There is a knotted stick up to the little verandah by way of a ladder, and at the foot there is a little dug-out. On the verandah is a small wooden seat and often a cloth. Several scarlet and black woollen squares are hung from the roof to frighten away evil spirits.

7. Sowing is broadcast. The implements of agriculture are generally short handled and small bladed; they consist of narrow bladed hoes, small trowels and an elementary sickle.

8. The bow is still used, and sharp as well as blunt arrows are used for hunting. I have found no traces of any practice of taking heads.

(III) The Biete Kukis of the North Cachar Hills. By Mr. J. P. Mills, I.C.S., from information supplied by Mr. A. H. Fletcher, I.C.S.

1. There are four clans—Chungal or Nampui, Darnei or Thanglei, Ngamlai and Kieto. A fifth clan, called Klangpa, is now extinct. Strictly speaking the clans are endogamous, but marriage between clans is not infrequent, the woman being received into the clan of her husband. Marriages between members of the Chungal and Darnei clans are common, and these two clans less frequently intermarry with the other two clans.

It is forbidden to touch the comb and hair oil of a member of another clan. If a man marries outside his clan he receives his wife into his clan by anointing her head with some of his own oil.

2. The Chungal and Darnei clans are definitely regarded as superior to the other two.

3. The Chief (*Khalim*) of the tribe is chosen from the Chungal and Darnei clans alternately. He holds office for life. Both his parents must be of the same clan.

4. Each village is run by a headman acting with village elders.

5. They point to the Lushai Hills to the south as their place of origin. They were undoubtedly pushed north into their present home by the Lushai invasion of the Lushai Hills in the 18th century. They belong to the old Kuki stock.

6. The megaliths which abound in some parts of the Biete country were not set up by them, but by previous inhabitants. As far as is known the Bietes never set up megaliths, but the closely allied Khotlangs on very rare occasions set up small, slender monoliths to commemorate feasts, and the Bietes may have done so in the past.

7. Houses are of wood and bamboo, and are thatched. Stone and planks are not used.

8. People dress as they like, save that a *Khalim* wears a silver or brass bracelet on each wrist and ear ornaments of a special pattern.

9. The sun is female and the moon male. Once the moon (which was the sun then) became so hot that it scorched the earth. It was therefore turned into the moon, and the then moon became the sun. How this change was effected is not known. The sexes were not changed.

Orion's Belt is called *Sijuchoi* ("Rat holes stars") Orion's sword is *Sivajun* ("Bhimraj stars"). The Pleiades are *Sirup* ("Six Stars"). Three bright stars close to the Pleiades are *Nunc: numen thorkhuol* ("Widow fencing a brinjal plant").

An eclipse occurs when the sun or moon faints for lack of water. They used to come down to earth to get water, but the dogs drove them away and now they dare not come.

Lightning is caused by a snake, which lives in a river, firing a gun.

The rainbow is searching for fish in streams.

10. The dead are buried. No coffin is made. A small platform is built over the grave and offerings of food and drink for the dead put on it.

The land of the dead is Ithikuo. No soul can reach it till the proper charm has been uttered by Kuolsam, an old man whom the soul meets half-way. Nothing is known of the life of the soul.

11. Sowing is usually broadcast. The agricultural implements used are the "dao", a small narrow triangular hoe, an adze and sickle.

12. The following are the musical instruments used :—drum, bamboo flute and lute with silk strings.

13. The true bow, as distinguished from the Naga cross bow, was once used but is now obsolete. The modern weapons are spears and *daos*.

Enemies' heads used to be stuck on poles in the village. A man had to bring in a head before he could marry.

(IV) The Khelma Kukis of the North Cachar Hills. By Mr. J. P. Mills, from information supplied by Mr. A. H. Fletcher, I. C. S.

1. The tribe is divided into thirteen, or possibly more, clans. Descent is reckoned from the father. The clans are strictly speaking endogamous. Though marriage with a person of another clan is frequent it is definitely regarded as entailing defilement. A man contracting such a marriage cannot perform the funeral rites of his parents. Each family therefore sees to it that one member at least marries within the clan.

A woman is not received into her husband's clan on marriage and cannot touch his comb and hair oil if she is of a different clan. In such cases her husband's sister has to be called in to do her children's hair. All clans are socially equal.

2. The organization is democratic. The head of each clan is known as the *Khalim*. The *Khalims* settle matters of importance.

3. The tribe belongs to the Old Kuki stock. It points to the Lushai Hills to the south as its place of origin. Thence it was driven north by the Lushai expansion of the 18th century.

4. Houses are of wood, bamboo and thatch. There are no restrictions.

5. A *Khalim* wears ear ornaments of a special pattern. Otherwise there are no distinctions in dress.

6. The sun is female and the moon male. The Pleiades are called *Sirup* ("Six stars"). Orion's Belt is *Jubarjon* ("Jar carriers"). Men are carrying an earthen jar home from the "jhum". Orion's sword is *Saidanchu* ("Rice basket pulling"). Three brothers are fighting over a rice basket. Venus as a morning star is *Sikovar* ("drawn star"). Venus as an evening star is *Koloi*. *Koloi* was a man whose head was taken when he was returning from a distant village with his bride. That evening he appeared in the west as a bright star. A shooting star is a star going to be married. The Milky Way divides the hot and cold halves of the sky. In the hot weather it is low in the sky but in the cold weather it is over head.

An eclipse is caused when the sun and the moon take the same path across the sky. Though there are ten different paths they sometimes make a mistake and meet.* A rainbow means that tigers and bears are likely to be particularly dangerous. Earthquakes occur when a race of evil beings living beneath the earth have a battle.

7. Poor people are buried and the rich cremated. No monument is erected. A tall bamboo with a piece of white cloth at the end is put up by a grave. If a man dies a violent death the cloth is red.

8. The souls of the dead go to *Marsi*, which lies above the earth. They travel on foot up a very steep path called *Marsihung*. A man called Pangam was once taken to his dead wife in heaven, hanging on to a wild cat's tail. He looked at the dead dancing, though she told him not to, and was sent back to earth. He related that the dead live in happiness, without hunger or thirst. They call bamboo leaves fish and rotten wood flesh.

9. Seed is sown broadcast. The implements are a narrow triangular hoe, a *dao*, axe and sickle.

10. Musical instruments are bamboo flute, Jews' harp and drum.

11. Weapons are the bow (now obsolete), spear and *dao*. Enemies' heads used to be hung up in the Bachelors' Halls. Now-a-days no heads are taken and no Bachelors' Halls are built.

(V) Notes on the Lushais by Mr. N. E. Parry, I.C.S.

1. The Lushais are divided into numerous clans details of which will be found at pages 125-127 of Colonel Shakespear's book "The Lushai Kuki clans". One of the most striking characteristics of the Lushais is their capacity for absorbing other races. This process began before they came under British rule and has continued ever since. Most of the tribes in the Lushai Hills district have been strongly influenced by the Lushais both as to their customs and their language and it may be said that the only villages which have maintained their tribal customs free from Lushai influence are the Lakher and to a lesser degree the Chin villages in the Lungleh subdivision. The Fanais, the Paites, the Thados and other Kuki tribes have all come very largely under Lushai influence and before many years have passed will be practically indistinguishable from the Lushais. This is partly due to the special gift for rule which characterises the Sailo chiefs and partly to the fact that the language taught in all the schools in the district except in the Lakher villages is Duliien the language spoken by the Lushais. The absorption of the Raites had begun and made great strides prior to the advent of British rule and now-a-days Raites can only be distinguished from other Lushais by their excessive love of talking and their litigious propensities.

None of the Lushai clans are now exogamous nor do they appear to have been so within recent times. Among the Sailos the favourite marriage is of first cousins and at one time it was usual for a Sailo always to marry a Sailo. Now-a-days, however, the younger chiefs have begun to take their wives from almost any clan; though if a suitable Sailo bride is forthcoming she is usually preferred. It can be stated quite definitely however that a young Lushai whether a member of the Sailo clan or not has the completest freedom in his choice of a wife and is bound neither by exogamy nor by endogamy. The position seems to have been much the same when Colonel Shakespear wrote in 1912 vide "The Lushai Kuki clans" page 50. The marriage of a brother and sister however is incestuous and is believed to ruin the village crops. I have known of two such marriages.

2. Practically the only social distinction that exists is that conferred on persons who have performed the Thangchhuah feasts. As these feasts are, I fear, becoming rapidly obsolete even these distinctions will shortly cease to exist. There is no marked division into classes with a definite order of social precedence and in this the Lushais differ markedly from the Lakher. The Sailos, the chiefly clan are universally looked up to and given precedence socially; apart from this however there is practically complete social equality among the people. That this state of affairs has existed for a long time and is not merely a result of British rule is shewn in Colonel Lewin's book "The hill tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers therein". Such distinctions as do exist seem to be due more to wealth than to birth. People who are well to do are often spoken of as "mitha" while poor people are referred to as "michhia". For all practical purposes, however, social distinctions among the mass of the people simply do not exist at all. There are, it is true, a few clans like the Panchhuah which formerly used to regard themselves as of a superior status and to demand higher marriage prices for their daughters. These distinctions however have practically disappeared. The tendency has been for the marriage price to become the same for all Lushais irrespective of clan, the Sailos alone retaining a higher rate. The return of the labour corps from France led to temporary but marked rise in marriage prices as the returned labourers had money to burn and were ready to pay any exorbitant price that the parents of the girls they fancied demanded. Thus contrary to all custom a girl's price became more dependent on her looks and the greed of her parents than on her birth and the customary rate of price. The chiefs highly disapproved of this breach of custom and as soon as money got scarcer a reaction occurred and a more or less definite rate of marriage price based on the most prevalent old rate was fixed for all girls.

3. The Sailo clan is the chiefly clan. This clan is descended from Sailova great-grandson of Thangura to whom all members of the clan trace back their genealogies. The early Sailos were gifted rulers who crushed out practically all the then existing chiefs, again excepting the Lakher

*It is difficult to believe that vague rumours from a Mission school have not given rise to this explanation.

and a few Chin chiefs in the south-east of the district, and established themselves all over the hills. To this day the Sailos are for the most part capable rulers and their villages are far better conducted than the few to which for one reason or another members of non-chiefly clans have from time to time been appointed as chiefs by Government. Formerly Sailos married practically entirely within the clan, though there does not appear to have been any definite rule compelling them to do so. Now-a-days however much less importance is attached to this by the younger generation, who are apt to marry any girl they fancy whether she be a Sailo or not and there are quite a number of chiefs who have married non-Sailo wives. This seems to be due partly to the fact that Sailo brides are much more expensive and partly to the fact that in the past many chiefs kept concubines belonging to other clans. Failing legitimate issue the children of these concubines have in some cases become chiefs, and being themselves of mixed parentage do not feel so strongly the necessity of finding Sailo brides. The fickleness of a Lushai's affections and the ease and frequency with which he can change his wife may also have had an effect, as the Sailos share this characteristic with the rest of the tribe. Still the fact remains that other things being equal a Sailo chief still prefers to marry a Sailo.

4. The Lushais have no indigenous terraced cultivation and attempts to introduce it have met with little or no success. I know of no genuine terraced cultivation carried out by Lushais. The only places where wet rice cultivation is carried on to any extent are in the broad Valley of Champhai and to a lesser extent at North and South Vanlaiphai, Lailiphai, Tuisenhar and a few other places where there are similar but less extensive valleys. Prior to the advent of the British no wet rice cultivation at all was carried out, the only method of cultivation known to the Lushais being *jamung*. Lushais were taught wet cultivation at Champhai by Santal coolies imported for the purpose.

5. Stone monuments are not common the usual memorial being a wooden platform (*lungdawh*) made of logs. Stone memorials (*lungphun*) are however put up for chiefs and formerly were erected for persons who had taken heads. The word for a memorial "*lungdawh*" which means literally "stone put" seems however to indicate that at one period the usual monument erected was of stone. The stone memorials consist either of a pile of stone (*lungdawh*) with a large upright stone (*lungphun*) in the middle or of a single erect stone (*lungphun*). The upright stones often have carvings of mithun's heads, gongs and guns showing the number of mithun slain by the deceased for the Khuangchawi feasts and the number of gongs and guns that he possessed. On the wooden platform are hung up the heads of all the game shot by the deceased in his lifetime. One stone monument on the path from North Vanlaiphai to Farkawn has a carving of a man holding four heads in each hand. I could not find out its history. Near Champhai are a number of these stone memorials the best known being Mangkhia's *lungdawh*, which is illustrated in Colonel Shakespear's book. Near Tachhip village is a large memorial stone to a Palian chief called Sibuta known as Sibutalong. Memorial stones are generally erected on the side of a path though I have seen them in the middle of a village and they may be erected anywhere that the person erecting them pleases. Now-a-days Christians often erect stone or wooden crosses in memory of their dead either by the side of path or over the grave. Another new custom is to erect a stone in memory of a hunting dog with an inscription extolling the animal's virtues and a list of the game he was instrumental in bringing to the bag.

6. Stone seats are but rarely found. There is however no objection to men using stone seats. Women never use stone seats as they believe that a woman who sits on a stone seat will give birth to a hone. This is known as "*Fa lungtat*" lit "child hone".

7. The materials used in building are wood, bamboo, cane, and for roofs thatch and palm leaves or if the two former are not available bamboo leaves, while now-a-days in Thakhting, the Aijal village, as many as can afford it use corrugated iron for roofs. Wood is used for the posts and cross beams and bamboos in one form or another for all the rest of the work. The whole framework of the houses is of bamboo and the floors and walls are of bamboo matting. Neither stone nor wood is ever used for walls, floors or roofs but there is no particular restriction on the use of these materials. The steps leading up to the houses are made of wooden logs laid like steps not merely of one wooden log, with steps leading up to it.

8. The only social distinctions are those conferred on people who have performed the Thangchhuah feasts often loosely spoken of as *Khuangchawi* and consisting of the following parts. *Chawng*, *Sedawi-chhun*, *Zankhuang*, *Mithirawplam*, *Sedawi-in-a-tlip*, *Khuangpui*, *Sedawi-in-a-tlip*, *Zawh-zaw-zo*. Persons who have performed these feasts can wear a special striped cloth known as a Thangchhuah cloth and a turban of the same cloth with a headdress of King crow's feathers. Men who had performed the feasts as far as *Mithirawplam* were allowed to assume these distinctions, though to attain real merit it was desirable to perform the whole series. In addition to the distinctive dress, those who had performed the feasts were allowed to make a window in the side wall of their house and to have a small verandah at the back of the house called *bazah*. Now-a-days the feasts are very rarely performed partly owing to the spread of Christianity and partly owing to their great cost. I do not know one of the younger chiefs who has performed the whole series and only a few who have begun it. Chiefs whether they have actually performed the requisite feasts or not wear the Thangchhuah cloths and the headdress of king crow's feathers on formal occasions. The restriction on the use of windows is no longer strictly observed and *bazahs* are rarely seen.

There were two other distinctive headdresses now completely obsolete. The *chhawndawl*, a plume of goats hair dyed red worn by a warrior who had taken a head and the *arkeztak*, which were plaits of red and black cotton made by the girls and tied round the hair knots of the men who had taken heads when they returned from a raid.

9. *The Sun*.—The Sun is a female and being but a timorous woman is afraid to wander abroad at night, while the moon who is a man has no such fears and is consequently seen at night.

The marks on the face of the moon are accounted for as follows.

In the middle of the moon is a huge *Ficus* tree (*Bungpui*) and the marks on the moon's face are its branches in which is seated a headless monkey. If any one sees this headless monkey he is sure to die. Lushais therefore avoid staring at the moon lest they should see the headless monkey and so come to an untimely end.

Madmen get worse with the waning moon, their wits vanishing as the moon disappears.

Eclipses whether of the sun or of the moon are caused by a mythical animal called an "awk" said to be the spirit of a Poi chief trying to swallow the moon. There are said to be clans of Poi chiefs but I have not been able to find out which clan is responsible for the "awk". Whenever an eclipse of the sun (*Ni-awk-lem*) or of the moon (*Thla-awk-lem*) occurs Lushais beat gongs and drums and make as much noise as they possibly can in order to frighten away the "awk" and prevent him from swallowing the orb. They fear that if the "awk" really swallows the orb there will be another darkness or "Thimzing" during which all human beings will be turned into monkeys or other animals as happened once before. Many of the animals we now know were human beings before the last Thimzing.

At lunar eclipse if the moon reappears from the shadow exactly opposite the spot where it first disappeared this is believed to portend an outbreak of cholera within the month.

The Stars.—Venus as an evening star is known as *Chongmawii*, as a morning star as *Hrangghuana*. *Hrangghuana* is *Chongmawii's* lover and is always pursuing her, sometimes he catches her up and they love one another and on these nights a Lushai lover is sure to attain his heart's desire. The story of these lovers is as follows:—

"While their respective villages were at war, *Hrangghuana* and *Chongmawii* were in love with each other and *Hrangghuana* used to visit *Chongmawii* every night. Each night when he left *Chongmawii* *Hrangghuana* used to slay one of the young warriors of the village, but one night he got killed himself. As soon as *Hrangghuana* was killed his slayer called out "whose lover is this youth, it is he who has killed so many of our young men". *Hrangghuana's* body was laid out just outside the village fence and as they wanted to find out whose lover he had been, the chief sent round the village crier to order all the girls to go down to the fields that morning. Accordingly all the girls went down to the fields and on the way passed *Hrangghuana's* corpse. *Chongmawii's* father was very proud of *Chongmawii* but *Chongmawii* was very afraid of passing her lover's corpse and hung back till the very last. She could not refuse to follow the others however and had to come along in her turn. When she reached the corpse however *Chongmawii* was unable to pass it and knelt down by it and wept bitterly. When *Chongmawii's* father saw this he himself slew her by the side of her lover and after this *Hrangghuana* and *Chongmawii* were turned into stars and still meet occasionally at the appointed season."

The *Plough* is called *Zangkhu* and represents a man who was killed in war. His slayers carried off his head and left leg and before his relatives could rescue his remains they were turned into stars. Four stars form his body and three his thigh and leg.

The story of *Zangkhu* is as follows:—

There was once a chief called *Zanga* and in his village there dwelt a man called *Kawlawia* who went on a visit to his maternal uncle in another village. While he was on this visit *Kawlawia* had a very bad dream to the effect that he was killed in war. *Kawlawia* told his uncle of this evil dream and the latter sacrificed a chicken and performed "thlahual" to call back and soothe *Kawlawia's* soul as he attributed the dream to *Kawlawia's* soul having wandered away from him. *Kawlawia* then uttered the following words:—

"Pu te vang Khua ah va zin ila tawn mang ah chhia, i tih ding emaw. Bawh ar in ran thla zuk hual ila thlaham tur serh khua a kham emaw."

When *Kawlawia* returned to his village, his maternal uncle accompanied him and escorted him to a point close to his village from which they could see the village memorials. At this point his uncle said "nothing can happen to you here" and left him and returned to his own village. Near the place where the escort turned back was a saddle called *Berva Kawn* and at this saddle a party was lying in ambush. They slew *Kawlawia* and cut off his head and one of his legs and thighs and carried them off without *Kawlawia's* uncle and friends knowing anything about it. Presently the *Tlaiberh* (bulbuls) began calling in the village "Kawlawia is dead, Kawlawia is dead" and the villagers asked them "where is he?" to which the *Tlaiberh* replied "on *Berva Kawn*". The villagers said "perhaps he really is dead, let us go and see" so they went out to see and found *Kawlawia's* remains on *Berva Kawn* and then the remains were turned into stars and can be seen to this day.

Orion's belt and *Sword* are known as *Ohkhreivung*. There are eight stars which represent an owl, a rat's nest and six rats' holes. The owl used to sit just above the rats' front door and catch the rats as they came out. One day however the mouse said to the rat "you are very foolish why do you not have a back door as well as a front door like we do, and then the owl will not be able to catch you". The rat accordingly made a back door as advised but as soon as he had finished it the great darkness called the *Thimzing* started and the owl and the rats' holes were all turned into stars.

A variant of the story relates that after the rats had found how to avoid the owl, their home was discovered by some men who proceeded to dig the rats' out. While they were doing this, however, their chief found that he had forgotten his tinder box and went home to fetch it but on the way was eaten by a tiger. The villagers surrounded the tiger but it escaped from the rings and ran away and is now the star called *Sikeisen*, which is the planet Mars. The chief's tinder box has given a name to another star which I cannot identify but which is known as *Simeitath*.

The *Pleiades* are called *Siruk* meaning the six stars.

The *Milky Way* is *Thlasik Kong* meaning the cold weather road.

The *North Star* is *Hmar Arsi Sen* meaning North Star Red.

Cassiopeia is called *Dingdi Puan Tuh*, which means *Dingdi* is weaving.

Dingdi was a girl who was being taught to weave by her mother, when the great darkness fell and they were turned into stars.

There are two stars called *Nufa Thambu In Chuh*, which represent a mother and her daughter quarrelling over a spindle.

Sikawikap consist of seven stars which represent a chief and two commoners playing at the *Kawi* game with the beans of *Entada Scandens*. The great darkness fell in the middle of the game and the players and their beans were all turned into stars. These stars are probably the Square of Pegasus and part of Orion's belt.

Si Chakai means the Crab Star.

Khiangte Zong Zim meaning the *Khiangtes* catching monkeys, is a constellation of about ten stars representing a number of members of the *Khiangte* clan who were all turned into stars at *Thimzing* while they were chasing monkeys. This constellation is identified by Savidge and Lorrain as a group of stars near Taurus in Aldebaran.

Pukula Thang identified by Savidge and Lorrain as the constellation of *Grus* represents a deer trap set by a mythical character called *Pukula*.

Si Rokhuai is a constellation formed by the conversion into stars at *Thimzing* of a long bamboo with a wild cat's skin hanging from it to dry.

Tandui Sathrua meaning the Sky Bow is formed by a number of stars including *Castor* and *Pollux*, *Sirius* and *Procyon*.

Si Vank Bawm means literally Star Pig's Basket. I cannot identify it. Nearly all the Lushai names for stars refer to persons or things that were turned into stars at the great darkness called *Thimzing*. Shooting stars are known as *Arsithlawk*.

Comets are called *Simeikhu* or the star with a fiery tail. "Once upon a time there was a man called *Chawngthanga* who was very ill and about to die. Before he died he said "before burying me if you look up to the sky you will see that I have turned into a comet". On the night that *Chawngthanga* died his friends looked up to the sky as he had told them and saw a comet, as *Chawngthanga* said they would do.

Parhelia are known as *Sarzam*. When seen in the east they are lucky and portend the taking of a head or the shooting of some large animal. When seen in the west they are unlucky and portend an unnatural death. It is unlucky to point at a *Sarzam* as he who does so will get broken fingers.

The Rainbow is known as *Ohhimbai*. It is made by a gigantic Spirit who stands up in a river bed and then bends over to drink. It is unlucky to point at a rainbow as the finger which points will drop off. The danger to the finger can be averted if after a person has pointed at a rainbow he at once points at a hen basket. If one end of a rainbow is seen just over a house, it is believed that the owner of the house will die prematurely. Earthquakes are caused by the beetle called *Pawngekkli*, which collects dung from the road to take home with him. Sometimes as he is rolling his ball of dung along he, by mistake, lets it roll over the edge of the world and thereby causes an earthquake. The edge of the world is the horizon which the Lushais call *Kawtkil*.

An alternative explanation of an earthquake is that it is caused by the sexual intercourse of the earth and the sky.

Another version of the beetle story is as follows. "The beetle having collected his ball of dung rolls it along over the earth until he comes to the sea. He enters the sea with his ball of dung and without letting go of it swims over to the other side of the sea and there presents himself before the creator of mankind and of the world and says: "All the people on the world have died and I have inherited their property" and shows to the creator the ball of dung that he has brought with him. The creator in order to see whether all the men in the world have really died or not shakes the earth which causes an earthquake.

Lightning is *Thumtea chem vilik* which means the flashing of *Thumtea's* dao. *Thumtea* is a mythical figure.

Thunder is *Puvana Thlengput Huuk Ri* which means the noise made by *Puvana* moving about a big plate. *Puvana* whose name means literally "old man in the sky" is the same as *Pathian*, which is the Lushai name for God.

A *Chhawifa* is a light like a meteor which is said to fly through a village burning brightly. A *Chhawifa* always starts from a house and is believed to be the spirit of a dying person. It is believed that the owner of a house from which a *Chhawifa* starts will shortly die.

10. The dead now-a-days are nearly always buried, the grave being made in front of the house. The body is wrapped in a dark blue cloth known as *puandum* and laid flat in the grave. Coffins are not used. Some personal articles such as a pipe, a bag or possibly a *dao* are often buried with the body. Christians are generally buried in cemeteries instead of in front of the deceased's house. People who have died bad deaths "*sariki*" having been killed by a wild animal, drowned or killed by a fall from a tree, died of cholera or in childbirth must be buried outside the village. If the first child in a family dies soon after birth, it is known as "*hlamzuih*" and is buried in an earthenware pot generally under the house. *Hlamzuih* are buried usually by the father and must on no account be buried by an unmarried person lest his future children should die in the same way.

There is one other way of disposing of the dead, which now-a-days at any rate is only followed by the chiefs because of its great expense, though formerly it seems to have been followed by all true Lushais. The body is placed in a coffin made by hollowing out a log, the opening being closed with a plank of wood. The coffin is placed against the wall in the deceased's house and a special hearth is built close to it. From a hole in the bottom of the coffin a bamboo tube is run through the floor and down into the soil below the house. A fire is lit on the hearth and is kept burning day and night until the corpse has been entirely desiccated, the coffin being turned round at intervals to ensure that the corpse is dried through and through. After about a month the coffin is opened to see what progress has been made and it is not until all the flesh has been dried off which may take three months or more that the skull and larger bones are taken out and placed in a basket which is kept on a shelf near the hearth. The smaller bones are placed in an earthenware pot and buried. When the collection of bones in the house becomes too large they also are placed in an earthenware pot and buried. While a body is being dried the widow is supposed to sit by it and a chief who is drying his wife's body is not supposed to leave his house until the process has been completed, though there is no formal "*hrilh*" the breach of which would entail penalties. The tube which is run from the coffin into the soil is to allow the decaying matter and gases given off by the corpse to escape into the ground. The job of keeping up the fire and seeing that the corpse is properly dried is an unpleasant one and the young men who help to do this have to be liberally supplied with food and drink. During the process the deceased's friends and relations come to condole with the survivors bringing with them *zu* and animals to be killed to accompany the dead man's spirit to the next world, which incidentally afford a feast for the living. *Vanphunga* is said to have taken six months to dry his wife's body. *Thumluia* who also dried his wife's body a few years ago only took about two months over it.

11. There are two abodes of the dead, *Mithikhua* and *Pialral*. To *Mithikhua* which means "dead men's village" go the spirits of all ordinary persons, while to *Pialral*, which means "across the *Pial* river" and corresponds to our Paradise go the spirits of certain privileged mortals who have specially qualified for admittance. Thus the spirits of persons who have performed the *Khuangchawi* feasts and are known as *Thangchhuah* go to *Pialral*. The spirits of men who have been especially successful with women, those who have enjoyed three virgins and those who have enjoyed seven women whether virgins or not are also admitted to *Pialral*. The last class of spirits that can claim admittance to *Pialral* are those of men who have killed a man and also one of each of the following animals:—elephant, bear, wild boar, wild mithun, sambhur, barking deer, hamadryad, flying fox and eagle; men who have killed these animals are also counted as *Thangchhuah*. No women are admitted to *Pialral*. The guardian of the lower world is *Pupawla* the first human being to suffer death. *Pupawla*, who may be compared with the Lakher *Chong chong pipa*, shoots with a pellet bow at all the spirits on their way to the lower world, but is not allowed to shoot the spirits of those who are qualified for *Pialral* by any of the tests already described. All other spirits, however, including the spirits of all women he is able to shoot and all the spirits that he shoots must go to *Mithikhua*. Those who are bound for *Mithikhua* first of all pass over the *Hringlang* hill, cross the *Lunglo* river whose waters are the waters of forgetfulness, pluck *hawilo* flowers (*Impatiens Chinensis*) which remove all desire to look back to the world and enter *Mithikhua*.

In spite of the fact that both Lushais and Lakhers believe that there are definite abodes to which spirits must go after death, it is none the less clear that both tribes believe to a great extent in the omnipresence of the spirits of the dead. Thus among the Lushais as well as among the Lakhers I have come across the belief that the spirits of dead children are sometimes born again in the bodies of their younger brothers or sisters. Lushais believe that spirits may migrate into hornets while Lakhers believe that they be flies. The Lakher sacrifice of *Laliachhia* is essentially a sacrifice to the spirits of their dead relations, while the Lushai feast called *Mimkut* has the same *raison d'être*. Again the Lushai *Mithrawplam* which is one of the series of *Thangchhuah* feasts is held in the honour of the ancestors of the giver of the feast. When a woman's husband dies, she has to set aside a small portion

of each meal for her husband's spirit for three months after his death. This is known as *Mithichawpek* and if during this period the widow misconducts herself with any man she is liable to all the pain and penalties of adultery as during this period she is held to be as strictly bound to her husband as if he were still alive. After every feast a Lushai has to set aside a small portion of meat, rice and *zu* for the spirits; this is known as *rawchhiak*. Lushais also used to place a little of the first fruits of every crop under the eaves of the house as an offering to the spirits of their dead parents. This offering is known as *Mithichhiak*. Lushais also believed that the spirits of the deceased come to watch the *Chapchar Kut* ceremonies. With the spread of Christianity these beliefs are gradually dying out but they still linger on among the more conservative. Among the Lakhers, however, the old beliefs have not yet been displaced. Lakhers place eatables on a grave until the memorial stone and post have been erected, also on newly planted memorial posts and again once a year at *Laliachhia*. Lakhers also believe that a woman's childlessness may be due to the fact that the spirits of her dead parents or of her husband's parents are displeased with her. All these examples, pointing as they do to a modified form of ancestor worship, show that though both Lushais and Lakhers believe that definite abodes are allotted to the spirits of the dead, they at the same time believe that the spirits of the dead can revisit their old haunts and exercise influence over living beings.

12. *Heads of enemies killed in war*.—The heads of enemies killed in war were brought back to the village and the *di* ceremony was performed over them. The purpose of this ceremony was to ensure that the ghost of the man slain should be the slave of his slayer in the next world. After the *di* ceremony had been performed the head was hung up on a tree outside the house where it could be seen. Any kind of tree was regarded as suitable for this purpose but a tree on which a head had been hung up was henceforth known as *Sahlam*. Once the head had been hung up on a tree no further notice was taken of it and it was allowed to fall down and decay. Heads were never buried. A young man who had taken a head was known as a *Huaise* or a *Pasaltha*. Both of these terms may be translated as "man of valour". Persons who had taken heads were entitled to wear the headresses known as *Lenchhawn* and *Chhawndawl*, the latter being reserved for specially heroic warriors.

(VI) Notes on the Garos by Mr. G. D. Walker, I.C.S.

1. Throughout the Garos and their cognates the Lynggams (Magams) there is a division into two great exogamous groups. These are called Sangma and Marak. Among the Chisak tribe of Garos in the north-east part of the Garo Hills and among the Garos and Lynggams in Gualpara, Kamrup, and Khasi Hills, the Marak group is frequently called Momin. In the same locality Sangma is replaced, but to a much smaller extent, by Areng and one or two other smaller clans. (Even among the Koch people, on the edges of the Garo Hills, a similar division exists, though the names used are not the same. The Tintiki clan of Koch use *Sinehung* and *Ajum* for Sangma and Marak. These Koches are Garo-like in origin, but have drifted a small way towards Hinduism. The Rabhas also have exogamous clans but have no generic names for them. They have subdivisions in two groups anyone of one subdivision being restricted in choice of a mate to a subdivision of the other group.)

The strictness of the Sangma-Marak division has been loosened of recent years, especially under the influence of contact with Christian missions. While it is still uncommon for a Momin to marry a Marak, yet the temptation to avoid social ostracism has induced Garos to treat a Momin as a separate exogamous group. The missionaries have not actively encouraged the breakdown of the old exogamous system, in fact modern missionaries respect it, and discourage union between Sangma and Sangma, but the solvent is at work nevertheless. To a Garo, for a Sangma to marry a Sangma is equivalent to incest, and a man who has married within his clan is called "*Madong*", meaning "one who has married his mother", an epithet which never fails to raise a laugh among the bystanders. It may be said therefore, that in spite of modernising influences the exogamous division of the Garos is very strict.

There are many subdivisions of each group. From careful enquiries carried on for a number of years I compiled a list*, which differs in many ways from the list given in Appendix A of "The Garos" by Playfair.

2. There is no definite division into groups or classes with a definite order of social precedence as between these classes. Any man who has acquired social status is called a "*nokma*", anyone else is an "ordinary man" (*ramram mande*). The husband of the owner of the village land is called *nokma*. So also is one who has given the necessary feasts, which entitle him to wear certain badges—among Chisaks in the north-east *jaksils* (elbow rings), and a red silk turban. Among Chisaks the standard of feast required is very low, and *nokmas* abound. In the rest of the hills only the very rich can give the elaborate feasts required. In some parts only a genuine *nokma* (*i.e.*, one who has gone through the expensive ritual of feasts and is called a *ganna nokma*) (*ganna* having the same force in this case as *genna* in the Naga Hills) can adorn his house with certain carved boards, and with a criss-cross pattern of bamboo slats in the walls at the forepart of his house.

3. There is no chiefly class or clan among Garos.

* Not printed.

4. The organisation of the Garos is more or less democratic. When a matter is in dispute, all concerned, including the women, assemble and debate, with feasting proportionate to the gravity of the issue. Generally the chair is taken by the *nokma*, if it concerns only one village, or by the *laskar* (a petty magistrate appointed by Government, generally on election by the *nokmas* of the charge), or even by the *mauzadar* (salaried Garo official who checks the assessment to house tax for a group of *laskars*).

5. *Traditions of origin*.—In the Garos by Playfair a tradition is given of migration from Tibet through the plains of Assam. This tradition is known only to the Chisaks (of the north-east of the Garo Hills and the plains of Goalpara and Kamrup). The vast majority of Garos have other traditions, but with education and the potency of the printed word, the Chisak tradition is getting wider credence.

Nearly all Garos say they came from the east. Within the Garo Hills the movement in the last 15 to 20 generations has been westwards up the higher valley of the Someswari (Simsang) and out into the low hills south and west of the main range of hills. The Rabhas and Koches and Garo tribes with Koch-like affinities appear to have been driven to the edge of the plains by the more active hillmen, the Abengs and the Matchis. As the foot-hills on the north of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills district are said to have been inhabited by "Garos" in descriptions of Assam less than a century ago, it would seem that the Khasis on the one side and the plains people on the other gradually squeezed the Garos westward. That a portion of the Garos in their wanderings may have tried to obtain a footing in the Bhutan Hills is quite credible; but I scarcely think that any but a very few travelled so far. For a nomadic tribe, given time and unbroken jungle, there is nothing incredible in that tradition.

6. There are no megalithic monuments in the Garo Hills, with the possible exception of the stone *rang* (gong) near Sokhadam (upper valley of the Krisnai). It is a front-shaped block of sandstone. If ever it stood as a basin it has been completely overturned. It is half-buried in the earth on a hillside, mouth downwards, and it is difficult to inspect it. I was baffled by the tradition that the local god would be annoyed and bring bad luck to the village if the *rang* were disturbed. The basin is almost perfectly hemispherical, 12' deep and 16' in diameter. The thickness of the lip varies from 8" to 12". It seems to have been a freak of nature, embellished by art; possibly a stone containing a "pot hole" worn out by the stream, and the rock containing it trimmed and shaped to facilitate its removal. I was not able to get any tradition as to how it came to be there.

I do not know if the "*asong*" or "*Khosi*" are "megalithic", because none of the stones are very large, though probably the largest obtainable. Every old village, and every new one which wants to acquire a separate status, has, in a grove on the village land, often a long way from its present site, a group of small flattish boulders planted upright in the ground. Originally it appears that the head of an enemy was buried at the place, and a stone put in the ground over it. Inside a village such groups of stones are occasionally met with, and each stone, originally at least, was set up when a head was brought in from a raid, but new ones, if any, added now-a-days, commemorate some big feast given by a *ganna nokma*.

Every year before seed-time each village has its commemoration of the *Khosi*, called in some parts the "*asong-tata*" ceremony. No one from another village may be present. If a new stone is to be added to the group it is done at this ceremony, being dragged by the *nokma* and his men from the river-bed, usually no great distance. Whether a new stone is added or not, all the existing stones are decorated with a criss-cross band of bamboo-strips to represent the "*khadisil*" or fillet, with brass-inset which adorned the brow of the warrior who brought back a head from a raid.

7. Stone is not used for seats. The only use of which it is put, except for *khosis*, is as a lid over the hole in the ground into which the ashes of the dead are put in the midst of the village. They are not sacred, everyone walks over them, and unless pointed out would pass unmarked.

8. The Garos use no stone in building. Whenever they can they use *sul*-wood for the main posts of their houses and granaries. The poorer villages have to contend themselves with bamboo. Thatching grass is nearly always available but in some places bamboo leaves are used for roofing. There are no social distinctions in the choice of material. In the mode of using it, bill boards and lattice work, there is a distinction as mentioned in paragraph 2.

9. (a) A *gannani nokma* can show his rank in the appearance of his house. For example in the front wall and the flank walls of the front verandah ordinary people have the slats horizontal and vertical, but the *nokma* may place these cross-wise, whether in the open work window ventilation (*mikchiwewa* or *mikchiwata*, literally, that which gets rid of tears) in the upper part of the front gable, or in the close woven wall proper. I have found on occasion ordinary people using this mode, but they had to do an annual sacrifice (with feast) for the privilege.

In house of Gobang (Abeng), a *nokma* of high standing, I found carved beams, across the front verandah and also across the main room. In the house of Raising (*natchi*), regarded as of still higher eminence, there are no carved beams, as he says it is not the custom in that part of country. [Raising has a *dani* (round leather dancing shield) and *jaksilt* (elbow rings), but Gobang has not.]

*It must be remembered that the earliest generation of British in Assam used "Garrow" as a term for all hillmen and applied it even to Kukis and Lushais.

Every man who is a *ganna nokma* may wear a red pagri. This is of silk with a fringe, and yellow embroidery, and is woven by the Khasis. Such pagris are common in the Chisak country where *nokmas* are three a penny, but very rare in the rest of the hills. The Chisaks alone among Garos wear *jaksils* when of the rank of *nokma*. These are plain bronze or brass hoops worn just above the elbow.

In the old days when the coloured loin cloth or *gando* was decorated with beads, as it rarely is now-a-days, only one who had taken a head could sport a fourth row of beads. Now anyone who has given the requisite feasts is at liberty to do so.

Only great land-*nokmas* are allowed to keep yaks' tails in the house, and, on bringing one in, the *nokma* has to perform a sacrifice called *gurerima* (holding a horse) but this is confined to Chisaks.

10. Some Garos hold that the sun and moon are brothers called *Saljong* and *Susime*. The moon is the elder. Others make them sisters, the sun being older. Some make the sun female. The moon is now less bright because the sun threw cowdung in his face. As the moon comes out only at night he (or she) has no chance to wash his (or her) face.

About the stars I have had difficulty in ascertaining to what stars certain names apply. For example, *Walsal*, meaning night-light, was Jupiter on some occasions, Sirius on others. And *Ja-munggot*, the moon's walking stick, "because it is always seen near the moon", may possibly be Mercury, at least Mercury was once pointed out to me as *Ja-munggot*, but on other occasions I got only vague answers.

There is no doubt, however, about the Milky way which they call "*matma rama*," the track of the buffaloes. Orion is "*wakripe*," the carrying of a pig, the bright stars in a quadrilateral being the carriers, and Orion's belt being the pig. It is also called "*churipe*," the carrying of the chu or rice beer. The belt is also called "*donggipeng-donggro*" (dwells north, dwells south), suggesting that Garos are aware that the belt at rising and setting divides north from south. The Great Bear is "*mangripe* and *mangganchi*," Alpha, Beta, and Gamma being "*mangripe*" the carrying of the corpse, and the other four stars being the "*mangganchi*" (or *delang*) the altar (of bamboos) on which the ashes of the dead are placed. These four stars are also called "*mangjabak*," (four stakes as used in making a stack of fuel).

The Milky Way, Orion and the Great Bear are all associated with the myth of *Susime's* mother, a person held in great awe. The story is detailed, but consists mainly in a description of her funeral to be taken, presumably, as the prototype of all funerals.

The Pleiades are called *dosadipil* which means a group of chickens; and the Hyades are called *dosuthat*, which means fighting cocks or *chekechet*, a Hajong fishing net; Venus is called *pringphang* when it is the morning star and *athamphang* when it is the evening star.

An eclipse is said to be due to the sun or moon being swallowed by an evil spirit or *nawang*. *Goera* is the god of thunder and lightning, and the flash is caused by the glittering of his *milam* or sword when he flourishes it. Celts (neolithic stone adzes) are called *Goera gitchi* which means hoofs of the lightning, as they are supposed to be of meteoric origin.

11. The Garos normally dispose of their dead by burning, either on the evening of the death or on the following evening at the latest. The ashes (bones as they call them) are put in a small hole in the ground at the place of cremation which is generally in the courtyard, in front of the deceased's house. A flattish stone is placed over this hole in the ground, and over the place a structure of bamboos is made in the form of an altar. At the four corners are set up *khimas* or curved wooden posts and a broken *rang* (gong) is hung up with rough models or miniatures of implements used by the deceased in his life-time. The *rang* (gong) is broken for the purpose and is never used again. A small scoop-shaped winnowing tray is placed upside down on the altar. In it a hole is broken to enable the spirit of the deceased to escape in due course. Offerings of food to the dead are placed by the altar for seven days; and at the next harvest, small sheaves of ripe grain are hung from the poles at the corners of the altar. In the following spring, about the time when the village ceremony is performed, the altar and everything it contains is burned up. It appears that the Garos believe that the spirit of the dead resides in or near the altar, but the final burning drives the spirit away for good and no further sacrifices are made on its behalf. In the case of death from cholera, *kala azar* or leprosy, the body is buried in a remote part of the village land. The body is placed in the grave lying on its back. *Kala azar* is a disease recently introduced into the Garo Hills. When it first appeared, people buried the victims in the courtyard but this was held to spread the disease, so *kala azar* cases are treated like those of cholera and leprosy. Anyone killed by a tiger is burned at the place where the corpse is found and not in the village. The idea appears to be that the tiger might attempt to follow the corpse to the village.

The Garos have no strong belief about the ultimate abode of the dead. When the final burning of the altar is over the spirit has departed, whither few Garos trouble to consider. They have, of course, an old wives story that the spirit of the dead finds its way ultimately to the hill *Chutmang*; but that hill is in no way sacred or regarded as haunted.

12. A head taken from an enemy used to be brought in and after a night of feasting taken to the place of the *khosis* and boiled. The flesh was put under a *khosi* and the skull taken and hung up in the latrine of the house of the *nokma*. One old man told me that there were 30 skulls in his father's

house. When the enemy ran away, sometimes the fingers and toes of the dead were taken, but the whole body was never taken. If there were no time to take the head, at least an ear was cut off if it could be done.

Another account says that warriors on their return used to march around the village square with the head. The head was boiled and the flesh was put in the ground in the village open space and a *khosi* was put over it. One *khosi* was put up for each head taken.

(VII) Notes on the Khasis and Syntengs, by Mr. Hari Blah, Extra Assistant Commissioner.

1. The Khasis are divided into the following groups:—

Khasis, Syntengs or Pnars, Wars, Bhois and Lyngngams and into an immense number of exogamous clans and sub-clans which are mostly to be found among the Khasis and the Syntengs. The above groups are not strictly endogamous nor are they strictly exogamous but generally Syntengs more often marry Syntengs than Khasis and *vice versa*. But marriages within the same clan or sub-clan belonging to the same group or to different groups are strictly forbidden, for instance a Khasi of the Diengdoh clan is forbidden to marry a Khasi of the same clan and a Synteng of the Lulu clan is forbidden to marry a Khasi of the Diengdoh clan as their first ancestress is traced to the same person and they thus belong to the same clan.

2. The clans are generally divided into the following classes with a slight variation in the different States:—

- (1) Royal clan—Ki Siem (Kings).
- (2) Priestly clan—Ki Lyngdoh.
- (3) Minister clans—Called the Mantris; the chief Mantri or Governor being called a Lyngskor.
- (4) The plebeian clans.

There is a definite order of precedence between the above classes in public and State affairs but there is no definite social gulf between them as inter-marriage between the different clans is not prohibited.

3. Each State has a chiefly clan, generally a royal clan or priestly clan, from which all chiefs are drawn. The chiefs are styled Siems or Lyngdohs. Heirship to the siemship or lyngdohship lies through the female side and not through the father's side. It is necessary for the chief's mother to belong to the chief or royal clan but the father need not be of the royal or lyngdoh clan. In one of the States the actual head of the State is a female who delegates her temporal powers to one of her sons or nephews who thus becomes Siem or Lyngdoh. A Siem is succeeded, unless disqualified, by the eldest of his uterine brothers; failing such brothers, by the eldest of his sister's sons; failing such nephews, by the eldest of the sons of his sisters' daughters; failing such grand-nephews, by the eldest of the sons of his mothers' sisters, and failing such first cousins, by the eldest of his male cousins on the female side, other than first cousins, those nearest in degree of relationship having prior claim. If there were no male heirs, as above, he would be succeeded by the eldest of his uterine sisters: in the absence of such sister, by the eldest of his sisters' daughters; failing such nieces, by the eldest of the daughters of his sisters' daughters; failing such grand-nieces, by the eldest of the daughters of his mother's sisters, and failing such first cousins, by the eldest of his female cousins on the female side, other than first cousins, those nearest in degree of relationship having prior claim. A female Siem would be succeeded by her eldest son and so on.

4. The organization is not democratic. A Khasi State is a limited monarchy, the chief's powers being much circumscribed. The States are ruled by a chief assisted by a *darbar* of their Mantris and Lyngdohs.

5. The tradition of origin is vague. According to one tradition the Khasis had some connection politically with the Burmese to whose King they used to render homage at one time by sending him an annual tribute in the shape of an axe as an emblem merely of submission. Another tradition indicates the North as the direction from which they migrated and Sylhet as the terminus of their wanderings from which they were ultimately driven back into their present hill fastnesses by a great flood after a more or less peaceful occupation of that district. It was on the occasion of this great flood, the legend runs, that the Khasi lost the art of writing, the Khasi losing his book whilst he was swimming at the time of this flood, whereas the Bengali managed to preserve his. The general tradition, however, is that they come from the East.

6. Terraced cultivation exists in flat valleys only. The bottoms of valleys are divided up into little compartments by means of fairly high banks corresponding to the Assamese *alis* and the water is let in at will into these compartments by means of skillfully contrived irrigation channels, sometimes a mile or more in length.

7. The following stone monuments are found:—

- (1) *Mawlynti* or *mawkjat* stones which are erected to serve as seats for the spirits of departed clansfolk on their way to the tomb of the clan, *i.e.*, when their remains are carried by their relations to the clan cromlech. These generally consist of 3 upright stones, the tallest being in the centre and a flat table-stone being placed in front. Some clans, however, erect more than 3 upright stones. The upright stones are not as a rule more than 3 or 4 feet high and are to be found in great numbers all along the roads or paths which lead to the clan cromlechs.

- (2) Stone cromlechs or cairns which serve the purpose of ossuaries. These cromlechs contain the bones of the dead and are built of blocks of stone, sometimes on stone platforms and sometimes resting on the ground. They are frequently of considerable size and are opened by removing one of the heavy stone slabs in front. They are generally square or oblong but are sometimes in circular shape also.

- (3) *Mawumkoi* or *Mawtyrut*.—These are erected to mark the sites of purificatory tanks which have been dug so that the remains of deceased persons may be cleansed from the impurities attending an unnatural death and to counteract the adverse influence of *Kz Tyrut* or the goddess of death upon the clan. The stones consist of a flat table-stone and in some cases upright stones also are erected.

- (4) *Mawbynna* are stones erected to commemorate deceased ancestors on the female side of the family and consist of 3, 5, 7, 9 or, in an exceptional case, of 11 upright stones with flat table-stones in front. The upright stones are called male stones and the flat table-stones female stones. It frequently happens that there are 2 flat table-stones in front of the upright stones, the one on the left being the first ancestress and the one on the right being the grand-mother of the actual family to which the memorialists belong. The flat table-stones are some 2 to 2½ feet from the ground. Sometimes immediately on either side of the large central upright stone there are 2 much smaller stones called *Mawksing* or the stone of the drum and *Mawkait* the stone of the plantain; the drum being used in all religious ceremonies by the Khasis and the plantain relating to their custom of feeding young children on plantains.

- (5) *Mawnam* are stones erected to commemorate the father and his brothers or nephews. These consist of 3 upright stones and one flat table-stone in front. The large central stone is called *U Mawthawlang* or the stone of the father and the upright stones on either side are meant to represent the father's brothers or nephews. The flat table-stone is the grand-mother of the father and not the first grand-mother of his clan.

8. The following stones are used for seats but their use is not privileged in any way:—

- (1) *Mawshongthuit* or stones in the uplands upon which weary travellers sit, are to be found alongside all the principal lines of communication in the district. They consist of upright stones of uneven numbers of great heights standing sometimes over 20 feet above the ground and flat table-stones in front of them. These flat stones or dolmens are sometimes very neatly hewn resting on stone supports, the top of the uppermost plane being some 2 to 2½ feet from the ground. This flat stone in a certain case near a bazar measures as much as 28½ by 13½ feet and is a foot or more in thickness.

- (2) *Ka kor*.—These are stone walls upon which weary travellers also sit and are to be found only in the War countries to the south and west of the district along all the principal lines of communication in those villages. These walls are either square or rectangular and are about 10 or 15 feet square in some cases. They are built on the paths which pass through the middle of these squares. The outer wall is higher than the inner wall which is used for seats on both sides of the path. The same kind of wall or seat is to be met with in the Kacha Naga country which is called "*rnei*".

9. Building materials consist of wood, stone, bamboos, reeds, canes, thatch, slate and palm leaves. Posts are of wood and walls of stones or planks. It was genna in ancient time to build a house with stone walls on all four sides, to use nails in building a house and to use more than one kind of timber in building the hearth.

10. (a) The social position of individuals is not indicated in the shape or material of their houses except that the Chiefs' houses are usually bigger than those of ordinary villagers and in some cases chiefs erected sacred houses called *Iingsad*. It was considered genna to build a house with resinous timber which only the Siems' family can use.

(b) Social position is indicated to some extent in the pattern and colours of the clothes they wear. Only members of chiefly families or rich people on ceremonial occasions put on a silk turban called "*spong khor*". The chiefs sometime use this kind of silk for their duties also. A scarlet broad cloth indicates authority as such cloths are usually presented by, at least, the Siem of Cherra, to his Mantries at the time of his coronation. There is no prohibition on other people wearing these clothes but in practice they do not do so as they cannot afford them.

11. The Sun (*Ka Sngi*) is a woman while the Moon (*U Bnai*) is a man.

They are two out of the four children of a rich gentlewoman. The moon was as bright as the sun but he was a wicked young man for he began to make love to his elder sister *Ka Sngi*. When the sun became aware that *U Bnai* harboured such an incestuous and wicked intention towards her she was very angry and covered his face with ashes. Since then the moon has given out a white light only as his former brightness was covered with ashes.

A halo round the sun or the moon is believed to foretell some pestilence or other calamity.

Comets are called *Khur dih duma* (smoking stars) and portend the death of Kings or some great personalities.

The Milky way represents the trade communication, *i.e.*, trade will prosper in the direction it runs.

An earthquake is supposed to be a gigantic giant who when he moves his small finger only a slight shock is experienced but when he moves all his fingers a severe shock is felt. The severity of the shock depends on the force with which he moves his fingers. Eclipses of the sun and moon are due to these orbs being swallowed by toad (*Hynroh*). On such occurrence tins and other articles are beaten and other noises made in order to make the toad in the sky spew out the sun or moon.

Lightning (*Ka Leilih*) is the sword of a god called *U Pyrthat* and thunder is the noise made by this god. The god generally strikes dangerous snakes and centipedes and also those people who commit incest (*sang*) with this sword. Oaths are sometimes taken on *U Pyrthat*.

Hurricanes are caused by a devil called *U Kyllang*.

The Rainbow is called *Sim Pylliem* and is supposed to fish in streams. It represents a fishing rod.

12. The Khasis burn their dead. As soon as death is certain the body is bathed in warm water from three earthen pots and is reverently laid on a mat where it is dressed in a white cloth. The waist cloth and turban being folded from left to right and not from right to left as in the case of the living. An egg is placed on the stomach of the deceased and nine fried grains of *riew-hadem* or Indian corn are tied round the head with a string. A cock is sacrificed, the idea being that the cock will scratch a path for the spirit to the next world. A sacrifice of a bull, or of a cow in case the deceased is a woman follows. A small basket is hung up over the head of the corpse, the basket containing pieces of the sacrificed animals and a dish containing eatables and betel-nut and a jar of water are placed near the head of the corpse by way of offering refreshment to the spirit of the departed. Food is given each morning and evening that the corpse remains in the house and each night the corpse remains in the house guns are fired, drums are beaten and flutes are played. If it is intended to burn the body on a masonry pyre a bull is sacrificed. If the body is placed in a coffin a pig is sacrificed and if it is intended to adorn the pyre with flags a fowl is sacrificed. The corpse, which is wrapped up in mat or placed in a coffin, is laid on a bamboo bier called *Ka krong*. Cotton or in the case of a richman, silk cloths are tied cross-ways over the bier if the deceased is a male and in the form of a parallelogram if it is a female. The funeral procession is preceded by various purificatory ceremonies. On nearing the pyre the dead body is exposed to view and laid on the pyre, inside the coffin, if one is used, with the head to the west and the feet to the east. Logs of wood are placed around the body and the egg is broken by being thrown on the pyre in the direction of the feet of the corpse. Fire is applied to the pyre, first by the *Kur* or members of the clan and then by the children, if any, of the deceased. After another fowl is sacrificed three arrows are shot from the bow, one to the north, another to the south and a third to the East.

When the body has been thoroughly burnt the fire is extinguished with water and the bones are collected by the relatives in three trips. The bones thus collected are carefully wrapped in a piece of white cloth by the female relatives and the party sets out to the bone repository called *Mawshyieng*. On reaching it, a sacrificer washes the bones three times and then places them in an earthen pot tying up the mouth with a white cloth. He then places them inside the cairn and shuts the door. The bones are eventually taken out and placed in the common stone sepulchre of the clan, the removal thither being an occasion of much feasting and dancing which continues often for several days. A coffin is called *Ka Shyngoid* (manger) and in former days used to be hollowed out of the trunk of a tree. In the case of the disposal of the corpses of the Siems of Cherra State this coffin is enclosed in an elaborately carved wooden shell called *Lyukhasan* which was placed on a bier and on top of it was placed a large conical canopy resembling in shape a Muhammadan *tazia*. In Mariaw and Nongstoin States a large wooden coffin is used, painted white, with ornamentations on the outside and standing on four legs. This coffin is not burnt on the funeral pyre. The bones and ashes of the dead in Shella are in some cases kept in a cavity hollowed out of a post made of the heart of the jack-fruit tree and erected for the purpose. The bones and ashes are afterwards removed to a cromlech as is done among the Khasi uplanders.

The only cases in which dead bodies are buried are cases where persons have died of cholera, small-pox or other such infectious or contagious disease. The bodies are dug up again and burnt with all the customary rites when fear of infection or contagion is over. The head is never disposed of separately from the rest of the body.

13. It is believed that the spirits of the dead, whose funeral ceremonies have been duly performed go to the house or garden of God; hence the expression "he who is eating betel-nut in God's house." The spirits of those whose funeral ceremonies have not been duly performed are believed to take the forms of animals, birds or insects and to roam on the earth; but this idea of transmigration of souls, has been probably borrowed from the Hindus. The spirits of the wicked go to a place called *Ka Nurok ka ksew* (dog)—a place of punishment.

14. The following agricultural implements are used:—

A shoulder-headed hoe called *mohkhiew*, an axe for felling trees called *u sdie*, a large dao for felling trees called *ka wait lyngun*, two kinds of bill hooks called *ka wait prat* and *ka wait khmut*, and a sickle called *ka rashi*. All the tools are made in the village forge. The hoe is fixed into an iron head-piece provided with a wooden handle while the axe is fixed into a hole made in the wooden handle the spike at the base of the blade being run through the hole and protruding an inch or two on the other side of the handle. The dao, the bill hooks and the sickle are fixed into a hole made in the wooden handle to which are attached one or two woven bamboo rings called *ki kshah*.

15. Treatments of heads taken from an enemy—

Heads taken from an enemy used to be fixed to the top of wooden shafts in some public place round which an altar was built. The warriors then danced round the altar. The heads and shafts were later on planted outside the village near some public road or outside the village gate on the main village path.

The Syntengs or Pnars.

The Syntengs or Pnars are very closely allied to the Khasis. In language, religion and customs the differences are extremely slight and the same may be said of their general cast of features.

The following differences may be enumerated:—

2. The clans are generally divided into the following classes:—

- (1) Royal clans—*Ki Siem*.
- (2) Priestly clans—*Ki Lyngdoh*.
- (3) Officers' clans—*Ki Doloi* and *Pators*.
- (4) Plebeian clans.

There is a definite order of precedence between the above classes in public and state affairs but there is no definite social gulf between them as intermarriage between the different classes is not prohibited.

3. There is only one chiefly clan of family from which all the Siems and Rajas of Jaintia are drawn. The chief's mother or sister must belong to the royal clan as in the case of the Khasis. A Kongor or a husband for the Siem's sister is selected from the other clans or classes.

4. The upright stones and the flat table-stones at Nartiang are called "*Ki maw jong Siem*" and it is said that in the days of the Jaintia Kings only the Raja could sit upon the great flat stone.

5. Orion's belt is called *Ki Rah thar i.e.*, carrying loads with a bamboo piece over the shoulder as is done in the plains.

The Pleiades are called a "*Tharu Syiar*" i.e., a fowl cage with chickens inside.

Face of the moon. It is said that an old man pounding paddy in the moon can be seen on a clear moon.

A bright star appearing on the outer side of a young moon is alleged to portend death during child birth while a bright star on its inner side portends the death of a person by being eaten by a tiger.

The rainbow is called "*Ka Sain thylliej*" i.e., a snake with a tongue.

6. A plough (*Ka Lyngkor*) and a harrow (*Ka iuh moi*) are used in the Jaintia Hills. The land is made into a thick paste in the Jaintia Hills by means of the plough. Doves of cattle also are driven repeatedly over the paddy fields until the mud has acquired the right consistency. The seed is then sown broadcast in the wet mud.

7. Heads taken from an enemy were treated in the same way as among the Khasis but skulls of famous enemies are preserved. It is said that the skull of the Siem of Malngiang—an enemy—was mounted with silver and preserved in the house of the Jaintia Rajas for many generations.

*APPENDIX C.

On Some Castes and Caste-origins in Sylhet.¹

By Professor K. M. Gupta, Ph. D. (Lond.), of the Murarichand College, Sylhet.

The bulk of the sources of information about castes is of the nature of tradition. The epigraphic records constitute the most authentic evidence, but their number is very few and the references contained therein are indirect. The literary accounts, such as the *Dharmasāstras* (specially, the *Parāśara-samhitā*, and the *Vyāsa-samhitā*), the *Purānas* (specially, the *Brahmavaivartta* and the *Padma*), the *Kulagranthas* or *Kulapañjikās*, etc., are vitiated by partiality, fabrication of fact and lack of historical sequence and criticism. In the genealogical accounts (*vamsāvali*) of some of the prominent families of Bengal and Sylhet we have another source of information, but these accounts too, in most cases, contain unauthentic history.

Castes and sub-castes are still in the process of formation, and confusion of castes is but a normal though slow phenomenon of present-day social life. Two typical cases of caste-formation in the present generation are known to me. In the Jaintia pergunah a Brāhmana family from the Brahmanbaria subdivision of the Tippera district settled down some seventy years ago on a Brah-mottara grant of the Jaintia Rāj. Two brothers only now survive in the family, and as its habitat is situated in a very out-of-the-way place, matrimonial relations cannot be easily effected with other Brāhmana families of the same status. The elder brother set up sometime ago a sort of marital relation with a female member of the Kumār caste living in the neighbourhood. As a result of this the family is now reduced to the position of a Varna Brāhmana. In the other case a 'Brāhmana' Manipuri of Srimangal has introduced the Bengali system of naming in his family, inasmuch as he calls himself a 'Chatterjee'. In course of the second or the third generation, I am sure, the family will merge itself into the Bengali Brāhmana community, claiming decent from some mythical ancestor.

Brāhmanas.

The Brāhmanas may be considered under four different sections, *viz.*, the Vaidika with its sub-group, the Sāmpradāyika; the Rādhi and the Vārendra; the Varna-Brāhmanas; and the Grahavi-pras or Ganakas. None of these sections with perhaps the exception of a few classes of Varna-Brāhmana claims to have originated in the district. Most believe themselves to be settlers from outside.

The *Vaidika-Sāmpradāyikas* are regarded as the earliest of the Brāhmana settlers of Sylhet and the tradition goes that they migrated from Mithilā (North Behar). As a matter of fact they follow the Smṛiti of the Mithilā school in preference to that of the Bengal school. It is significant in this connection to mention that the Mithilā school is the older of the two. Three *Kulagranthas*—*Vaidika-samvādinī*, *Vaidikapurāṇvṛtta*, and *Vaidika-nirnaya*—written in modern times allege that a king of Tripurā named Ādi-dharmāphā brought five Vaidika Brāhmanas from Mithilā in 641 A. D. in order to assist him in his performance of a Yajña ceremony. The king finally persuaded the Brāhmanas to settle down in Brah-mottaras granted by him. This gift, it is further alleged, was recorded in a copper-plate now lost. We are further told that in 1195 A. D. another migration from Kauanj followed and a king of Tripurā granted by a copper-plate charter extensive lands to one Nidhipati.² But there is no evidence to show that the copper plate ever existed,³ although it is possible that a historical background lies behind this tradition. New light is however thrown on the problem of migration of the Vaidikas to Sylhet by the discovery of a series of copper-plates in the Pañcakhand pergunah of the Sylhet district. The students of Indian history are grateful to Mm. Pandit Padma-nath Bhattacharyya Vidyavinod for publishing the inscriptions in the *Epigraphia Indica*. The Nidhanpur copper-plate inscriptions⁴ of King Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa, dated circa 650 A. D., record the renewal of the grant of an extensive Brah-mottara to some 200 Brāhmanas of different gotras and padavis (family titles) by king Bhūtivarman, great-grandfather of Bhāskaravarman, about 500 A. D. For reasons stated in the separate note attached I take it that the inscriptions relate to the settlement of a big batch of Brāhmanas in and about modern Pañcakhandu

¹ This article was written specially for the Assam Census Report but has already been printed, by permission, in the Indian Historical Quarterly for December 1931.

² The following abbreviations have been used in this paper:

EI=Epigraphia Indica. IA=Indian Antiquary. IB=Inscriptions of Bengal (V. R. Society, Rajshahi). EH=Smith's Early History of India (4th Edition). PI=People of India by Bisle. VK=Visvakosa by N. N. Vasu. CR=Census Report. SI=Srihatter Itivṛtta by Acyuta Chandra Tattvanidhi. BJI=Banger Jatiya. Ithasa. IHQ=Indian Historical Quarterly. SII=South Indian Inscriptions by Hultzsch.

³ Banger Jatiya Itihās (Brahmanakanda) by N. N. Vasu, part II, 185-186, SI, bk. II, pt. I, pp. 53 and 64, Gait's History of Assam, 268.

SI, bk. II, Ch. I, 67; Vaidika-samasya by Mahendra Chandra Kavyatirtha (Silchar).

⁴ EI, XII, 65-79; XIX, 115-125, 245-250.

in Sylhet about 500 A. D. and onwards.¹ The kings of Kāmarūpa which included Sylhet seem to have adopted a systematic policy of inviting Brāhmanas to their kingdom. It is apparently for this reason that Kāmarūpa became a centre of Brāhmanical faith, and the Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang, writing in the seventh century A. D. informs us that the Devas were worshipped there and Buddhism had no hold whatever.² Now, wherefrom did the Brāhmana settlers come? From an examination of the names of the donees we come across the following padavis: Ghosa, Deva, Datta, Dāma, Sena, Soma, Pālita, Kunda, Pāla, Dāsa, Bhatti, Bhūti, Nāga, Mitra, Nandi. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar tells us that most of these padavis are still to be found among the Nāgara Brāhmanas of Gujerat and that the padavi Nāgara is to be met with in the name of a Sylhet Brāhmana of the 15th century A. D.³ We further note that the tutelary deity of the Nāgara Brāhmanas was, and still is, Hātakesvara.⁴ It is highly interesting to note that in several places in Sylhet, *e.g.*, at Churkhai, Pañchakanda and Gutātikar Hātakesvārā-siva is worshipped.⁵ Hātakesvara-siva is also known as Hattā-nātha or Hattānātha-siva, and I have no doubt that the very name Srihatta (Sylhet) is derived from the name of this sept-deity of the Nāgara Brāhmanas. The conclusion is irresistible that the emperors of Kāmarūpa pursued a systematic policy of colonising Sylhet with Nāgara Brāhmanas and thereby introducing orthodox Hinduism⁶ in the outlying parts of the empire. The original seat of the Nāgara Brāhmanas was the Sapādalaksa (Siwalik) hills in the Punjab and it is likely that they were settled in Mithilā about the time of Bhūtivarman.

As a matter of fact among the Maithil or Tirbūtiya Brāhmanas of Behar there is a section called Nāgar.⁷ It is thus highly probable that the Nāgar Brāhmanas of Mithilā colonised Sylhet. A section of the Vaidik Brāhmanas of Sylhet calls itself Sāmpradāyika. As far as I know there is no special significance of this expression. I have therefore a suspicion that it is only a modern literary infiltration of the long-forgotten significant term Sapādalaksa. Sapādalaksa Brāhmanas, we note, are mentioned in the Karatoyā-māhātmya.⁸

The Rādhi Brāhmanas of Sylhet, as can be gathered from the genealogical accounts of some families, migrated to the district from Rādhi (roughly Bardwan and Hooghly). The small community of the Vārendra Brāhmanas similarly migrated from Vārendra-Bhūmi (North Bengal). No definite date can be assigned to these migrations. In a few cases genealogy takes us back to the 15th or 16th century A. D. But perhaps the Marhattā raids, popularly known as 'Bargir-hāngāmā' of the 18th century caused these migrations. The Varna-Brāhmanas are those Brāhmanas who cater for the religious and spiritual needs of the so-called depressed classes. This group consists of two sections, one formed by the selection of certain persons by a particular caste, and the other is that of the Brāhmanas who have degraded themselves to the extent of attending to the needs of the low castes. This latter class is also known as 'Patita-Brāhmanas' or sometimes as Srotiya-Brāhmanas. The Nāthas or Yugis (Yogis) who at one time were regarded as a weaving caste, select even now from amongst themselves their own priests whom they called Mahāntas or Mahātmās. Some of the Yogi-Brāhmanas are now claiming themselves to be of a different origin and are assuming the padavis 'Sarmā' 'Chakravarti' etc. Similarly, a body of Māli-Brāhmanas are calling themselves simply Brāhmanas and are trying to merge themselves into the higher caste.⁹ The small community of the 'Gour-Govindī' Brāhmanas attached to the 'Pātar' caste of the Sadr Subdivision has been probably formed by selection. Most of the Varna-Brāhmanas are apparently indigenous. There is no evidence to show that they migrated here from some other place.

The Grahavi-pras or Ganakas or Āchāryas who pursue Astrology (including Astronomy) and kindred mystic lore for their main occupation claim to be Brāhmanas, and are also known as Sākadvipi Brāhmanas, that is Brāhmanas of Saka origin. According to tradition Ganaka was born of a Sākadvipi father and a Vaisya mother.¹⁰ The Sakas penetrated into India from the north-west from about the middle of the 2nd century B. C. onwards.¹¹ The route of migration followed by the Sākadvipi Brāhmanas from Western India to Sylhet was probably through Bengal. The Hindu society required and still requires their services for multifarious ceremonies and rites. In the caste-scale the Ganakas and Grahavi-pras occupy a low position among the Brāhmanas.

¹ After having written this paper I came across Mr. Ghosh's valuable contribution on the grant of Bhāskaravarman and the Nāgara Brāhmanas published in I. H. Q., 1930, No. 1, pp. 69-71. I am agreeably surprised to find out that our conclusions are materially the same; there are however certain new matters which I have tried to bring to light.

² Watters, Yuan Chwang, II, p. 186.

³ I. H. Q., 1930, p. 69.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ SI, bk. I, ch. 9, 123.

⁶ Cf. Avakirna-varnasrama-dharma-pravibhāgya in line 35 and prakasitāyadharmalokah in line 37 of the Nidhanpur Plate of Bhāskaravarman (EI, XII, 75).

⁷ PI, 163; VK, XV, 405.

⁸ I. H. Q. 1930, no. 1, 70, 1, p. q., December 1931.

⁹ CR. (Assam), 1921, vol. III, pt. I, 147.

¹⁰ VK, V, 196-197; SI, bk. I, ch. 7, p. 71; Jati-puravṛtta by Pandit Suryakumar Tarka-sarasvati (Silchar), 93, Sambandha-nimaya by Lal-mohan Vidyānidhi (Calcutta, 1909), 657.

¹¹ BJI (Brahmana-kanda), bk. II, pt. 4; IA, XL, 18.

Vaidyas and Kayasthas.

The distinction between the two castes, however wide it may be in Bengal, is not at all noticeable in Sylhet, and free marital relations are established between them. This is very significant from the standpoint of history. The intelligentsia of the two communities are trying to establish claims to be regarded as Brāhmanas or Ksatriyas,¹ and in their attempts to study history from their own particular view point, important facts of social history have been either lost sight of or twisted. Thus, in spite of the fact that the Sena kings of Bengal call themselves 'Brahma-Ksatriyas',² they are regarded as Kayasthas by one class of writers,³ and as Vaidyas by another class.⁴ Now, we note that all over the Punjab, Rajputana, Kathiawar, Gujerat and the Deccan there is a caste called 'Brahmakatra', which as pointed out by Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, was originally constituted of Nāgar Brāhmanas.⁵ We may thus regard a section at least of the Vaidyas and Kayasthas as belonging to the same stock, that is, Nāgar Brāhmanas. If the arguments put forth above are sound, the Brāhmanas, Vaidyas, and Kayasthas should be regarded as originally belonging to the same stock. It is very well known that the terms 'Kayasthas' and 'Vaidya' at one time indicated only two functional groups of scribes or royal courtiers and physicians respectively. Speaking about Sylhet we thus note that in the Nidhanpur copper plate inscription the word 'Kayastha' is used in the sense of scribe or some royal functionary,⁶ and no caste is meant. It is also a matter of common knowledge that nowhere except in Bengal the Vaidyas are regarded as a distinct caste. The second Bhatera copper plate inscription, dated Circa 11th or 12th century A. D. tells us of one Vanamali-kar, "the light of the Vaidya-vamsa."⁷ The expression 'Vaidya-vamsa' does not necessarily imply 'Vaidya-jāti' or 'Vaidya' caste, but apparently a family that produced physicians. In spite of his family tradition to be a physician Vanamali, however, served the king as 'Rāja pattalika' (Keeper of Royal Documents), an office akin to that of a Kayastha. In Sylhet thus no clear-cut distinction between Vaidyas and Kayasthas grew up from historical times. Sylhet was also unaffected when in the twelfth century A.D. king Vallālasena of Bengal introduced 'Kulinism' to prevent confusion of castes. This accounts for the reason as to why the Vaidyas and Kayasthas of Sylhet are looked down upon by the Bengal castes.

The padavis of the Vaidyas and Kayasthas are also to some extent the same. Thus, to mention a few instances, Sena, Gupta, Dutta, Nāg, Dās, Palit, Candra, Kar, Nandi, Kundu, Pal, Dhar, Deva, Som, Raksit, Aditya, Indra, Adya, Bisvas, Rajavamsi and Guha are looked upon as both Vaidya and Kayastha titles.⁸ It is noteworthy that most of these surnames with the additional common epithet 'Svāmi' were in vogue among the Brāhmanas of Sylhet of about 500 A.D.⁹ Even now the above-mentioned titles (without the epithet 'Svāmi') prevail among a certain section of the Vaidika Brāhmanas of Cuttuck, Midnapur and the Deccan.¹⁰ This coincidence of padavis or paddhatis among the Brāhmanas, Vaidyas and Kayasthas may be accounted for thus: originally the same caste, the Nāgar Brāhmanas, pursued the three respectable professions of priest-craft, medicine and Government service. But the functional differences created a tendency towards a split specially when people of the Dāsa caste (see below) began to be admitted into the ranks of royal courtiers. The situation was accentuated by the 'hypogamous' marriage custom (anulomavivāha) that, I suppose, prevailed among the Nāgara or Vaidika Brāhmanas of Sylhet. We notice that the males of the Maithil or Tirhutia group of Nāgar Brāhmanas are even now allowed to marry the females of a lower caste under the 'Anuloma' custom.¹¹ The issue of such marriages occupy a lower rank than their fathers 'but a higher rank than their mothers'. Such a sociological phenomenon may have slowly taken place through the centuries that passed between Circa 500 A. D. and our own times. Movement of families or individuals from one place to another combined with the drawing up of faked genealogies easily covered up, as they do now, such caste-origins. The real padavis, Sena, Datta, Soma, Palita etc., were transferred from fathers to sons, while fathers themselves retained in contradistinction only the epithet 'Svāmi' or its equivalents Gosvāmi, Bhattācharyya, Chakravartti, etc. It is exceedingly interesting to note that even now a section of the Kayasthas (or Vaidyas) of Sylhet uses the padavis, Svāmi and 'Gosvāmi'. In the padavi 'Purakāyastha' or 'Purkāt' (meaning the head scribe or chief courtier),¹² which is so common among the Brāhmanas and Kayasthas of Sylhet, there is probably a

¹ VK., III, 578 and XIX, 523, BJI., Kayastha-kanda; Vaidya-jatir Itihās by Basanta Kumar Sen-Gupta; Kayastha Purana by Sasibhasan Nandi.

² Or, Karnata-Ksatriyas. IB., III, 46, 101.

³ See p. 720, n. 5.

⁴ Ibid. EH., 435-436; EL., XII, 11.

⁵ EL., XII, 75, line 49 (Cf. Lekhayita in line 59).

⁶ PASE., 1880, 153, lines 24-25; Rajapattalikah krti vaidyavamsa-pradipah sri-vanamali-karah. I intend to publish a revised reading of the inscription. For a discussion of the date of the Bhatera plates see EL., XIX, 278.

⁷ VK., III, 578, (Kayastha); Vaidya-jatir-itihās, vol. I, 233ff. See also Candraprabha quoted in vol. II, 3.

⁸ EL., XIX, 121-125 and 248-250. Compare the state of things in Bengal about the 11th century A.D. In the Rampal copper plate of Sriçandra the padavi of a Brāhmana family is Gupta-Sarman (IB., 5, lines, 27-28). In the Belava plate of Bhoja Varman, dated c. 11th or 12th century A.D. we find the name of a Brāhmana family with the title Deva Sarman (IB., 21, 11, 43-45). See also I. H. Q., 1930, No. 1, p. 63.

⁹ VK., XIX, 487, 490; the titles in vogue in these places are Kar, Dhar, Rath, Nandi, Dasa, Pati, Bhadra, etc.

¹⁰ PL., 215; VK., XV, 405.

¹¹ The Purakayasthas of Sylhet seem to correspond to the Jyestha-Kayastha or Prathama-Kayastha of the Damodarapur plates (EL., XV), or of the Pala inscriptions (see Gaudakshamāla). Compare also 'Mahakayastha' of the Ramganj copper plate of Isvaraghoshā (IB., 153, 1, 15).

survival of the caste-affinity described above. It is possible that the disciples of the Brāhmanas mentioned in the Nidhanpur plates, whatever their caste might have been, assumed the padavis of their preceptors, who, in contradistinction to their clientele, called themselves 'Svāmi' or its variants.

Finally, we should note that the migrations of Vaidyas and Kayasthas from Bengal as well as close association with Bengal have been accentuating the distinction between the two castes.

Dāsas and their sub-castes.

It has been pointed out above that in early times (between Circa 500 A.D. and 1100 A.D.) the distinction between the Brāhmanas, Vaidyas and Kayasthas was not acute and was based more or less upon functional differences. The ranks of the Vaidyas and Kayasthas, on account of their respectability and professional value, were swelled by accretions from the lower ranks through the adoption of certain common padavis such as, Datta, Dāsa, Sena. In earlier times, I think, the humbler ranks went by the general name 'Dāsa', i.e., of the 'Dāsa-kula' which stood in contrast to the Deva-kulas or Devas or the twice-born formed by above-named three castes. In the 2nd Bhatera copper plate inscription we read of the 'conscientious' Sri Mādhava, the scion of the Dāsa-kula and of 'Sri-Vanamali-kar, the light of the Vaidya-vamsa'.¹ In these expressions it is noticeable that Sri-Mādhava does not bear any family surname. We only know that he belonged to the Dāsa caste or clan. He was however an educated man as the expression 'conscientious' (vivekī) implies. In the case of Sri-Vanamali-kar his family surname as well as his family-rank is mentioned. Evidently there is an indirect reference to their belonging to the two 'kulas', one to the Dāsa-kula and the other to the Deva-kula. An interesting survival of this broad distinction between the two kulas is still noticeable. In Hindu marriages or other religious ceremonies either of the expressions 'Deva' or 'Dāsa' is used according as the performer of such ceremonies is a twice-born or not, in connection with the uttering of sacred formulas (mantras). A Dāsa in Sylhet now-a-days may be a Vaidya (with the additional padavi Gupta), a Kayastha, a Kaivartta (or Jālika), a Māhisya (or Cāsi-Kaivartta) or Hālika, a Sāhā, and a Śudra. Under what category then shall we reckon an educated man like Sri-Mādhava of the Bhatera plate? It is thus apparent that the Dāsakula or Dāsa clan or tribe or caste was subdivided into a number of sub-castes whom we may consider under the following five groups:

1. The wealthy and the educated among the Dasakula sought rank among the Vaidyas, Kayasthas or even among the Brāhmanas as Varna-Brāhmanas (e.g., the Dāsa-Brāhmanas). The padavi 'Dāsa' was and still is a convenient doorway to allow passage to these ranks. This also explains why a section of the Dāsas of Sylhet claims rank above the Kayasthas.

2. *Sāhās and Sundis*.—The trading section came to be called Sāhās or Sāhus (Sāu) as well as Sundis. The words 'Sāhā', 'Sāhu' are connected with the words 'Sādhū' (and 'Sārtbhavāha') implying tradesmen.² When the appellations Sāhā and Sāhu, so widely in vogue in Bengal and other parts of India from early times³ were adopted by the Dāsas, it was not difficult for the authors of the Kulapanjikās to connect them with some ancient Indian caste or sub-caste. Thus a section of the Sāhās still carrying on trade call themselves Vaisyas or Vaisya-Sāhās, while others identify themselves with the Kayasthas or even with the Vaidyas.⁴ The Sundis⁵ occupy a lower rank than the Sāhās, wine-distillation being their main occupation. There is however a tendency among them to use the padavi 'Sāhā' and to claim rank with the Vaisya-Sāhās.

3. *Cāsi-Kaivarttas or Māhisyas or Hālika or Hālva dāsas*.—The section that took to cultivation came to be called the Hālikas or Hālva-dāsas or Cāsi-kaivarttas or Māhisya-dāsas or simply Māhisyas. As Māhisyas, this section claims descent from the Māhisaka tribe referred to in the Mahābhārata; the Māhisakas however appear to be Mlecchas, that is, non-Aryans.⁶ Nevertheless they were a very powerful caste or clan, and so far as Bengal is concerned they are strongly represented in Midnapur, North Bengal (specially Rajsahi and Pabna), East Bengal (specially Mymensingh), Jessore and Nadia. From historical times the Māhisyas occupied an important position. Students of Indian history are well acquainted with the successful rebellion led by the Cāsi-kaivartta caste under Divya or Divyoka against King Mahipāla II of Varendra (North Bengal) about 1080 A.D.⁷ One of their royal lines ruled at Tamruk as late as 1654.⁸ Some of the leading families of Sylhet claim to represent the old Māhisya caste. It is quite possible that some migrations took place specially from Mymensingh which is so contiguous to the district. Some of the Patnis who happen to be cultivators are calling themselves Māhisya-dāsas to the considerable chagrin of the educated section. The Jāliā Kaivarttas are also adopting this padavi. The number of the Māhisya-dāsas are apparently on the increase. The decennial census operations have been accelerating the speed of this upward movement.

¹ PASE., 1880, p. 153, line 31: Vivekī Sri-Madhava dasakula-vatamsah; and line 25: Vaidyavamsapradipah Sri-vanamali-karah.

² The word may have been derived from Sanda (bull or bullock) as well. See VK., XXI, 527.

³ VK., XXI, 526.

⁴ SL., bk. I, ch. 7, 89; BJI., Vaisya-Kanda, vol. I, 358-363.

⁵ Apparently derived from Sunda, liquor (Jalipuratattva, 112).

⁶ VK., IV, 497-498; XIV, 700.

⁷ EH., 415-416; Gaudarājamāla, 48.

⁸ VK., IV, 498.

4. *Kaivarttas or Jālika or Jālū-dāsa*.—The Kaivarttas or Kaivartta-dāsas have been following the profession of fishing and, to some extent, that of boatman. They have their counter-part in the Mahimā's or Maimā's among Muhammadans of the district. The Kaivarttas are mentioned in ancient Indian literature as of mixed origin; and in the Manusamhitā (X. 34) they are given the epithet 'Dāsa'.¹ From their ethnographical distribution it appears that along with the Nama-sūdras they were the earliest inhabitants of Bengal and of Sylhet.² A section of the Kaivarttas of Sylhet are gradually becoming Vaisnavas, a sectarian caste. The Jālikas occupy a lower rank than the Hālikas.

5. *Sūdras*.—A non-descript body under the name Sūdras or 'Sūdra-dāsas' may also be regarded as belonging to the Dāsa-kula. It is justly pointed out that the term "Sūdra" is now used "to denote a considerable number of castes of moderate respectability, the higher of whom are considered 'clean' Sūdras while the precise status of the lower is a question which lends itself to endless controversy".³ In Sylhet 166,000 were reported to be Sūdras in the census of 1921.⁴ This large number, we note, was due to many Patnis, Jālā-Kaivarttas and others having assumed this caste-name. As far as I know some Nama-sūdras are also assuming the padavi 'Sūdra-dāsa'.

A Sūdra group known generally, as 'Golāms' (domestic slaves) owes its origin to a sort of concubinage between a high caste male and a low caste female employed as a maid servant. These assume the padavis Singh, Dāsa, De, Deb, Pal, Pait, Sena, Dutta, Raksita, Bhāndāri, etc., and often bear the family cognomen of 'Pati', 'Dādi', etc. They were known at one time as Sūdras, and though this epithet still survives, to some extent, the general tendency on their part is to call themselves Kāyasthas. With the progress of education and culture, the 'Golām' class is fast disappearing.⁵ As compared with the Sūdra-dāsas, Kaivartta-dāsas or Nama-sūdras the Golām caste is considered 'clean'.

Note on the location of the Brahmottara mentioned in the Nidhanpur plates.

As the Nidhanpur copper plate inscriptions form an important landmark in the early social and political history of Sylhet and their learned editor is disposed to believe that the donated land lay not in Sylhet but somewhere in North Bengal, a discussion on the issues raised seems necessary. The Brahmottara was situated in the Chandrapuri-Vishaya and was named Mayūra-sālmalāgrahāra.⁶ In the description of the boundaries we come across the names, Gānginikā or Gāngini and Kōśikā.⁷ For reasons stated below we are convinced that the grant relates to a place in and about modern Pāñchakhandā where the plates were discovered.

First, it is well known that the find-spot of a copper plate, charter is almost invariably the locality of the grant made therein.

Secondly, it is true that the charter was issued from the Mahārājādhirāja's camp at Karnasuvarna and the word 'Gāngini' occurs in another inscription, referring to a locality in Karnasuvarna, but it does not follow from this that the grant under consideration should therefore belong to a region near Karnasuvarna. It is noteworthy that in North Sylhet which includes the pergunah of Pāñchakhandā there are at least nine or ten places named Chāndpur (Chandrapur) within a radius of about 20 miles from the headquarters station. This raises a presumption that the ancient Chandrapuri-Vishaya, that is, the division or district of Chandrapuri included a portion of the modern district of Sylhet. The river 'Kōśikā' is very likely represented by the modern Kusiyārā which passes by Pāñchakhandā, the find-spot of the plates.⁸ There is also a place called 'Gāngini' (colloquially, Gāngni) on the river Kusiyārā in the same pergunah and near Nidhanpur. About six or seven miles from Pāñchakhandā there is also a watery marsh (vil) called 'Gāngni-vil'. The inscriptions nowhere state that Gāngini was a river and not a 'vil'. During the rainy season such 'vils' (also called locally 'hāors' if sufficiently big) become vast sheets of water. When the water recedes at the end of the season considerable quantity of land becomes available for cultivation. This is apparently referred to in the expression: gāngini-upachitaka-kshetram.¹⁰ As to the name of the village 'Mayūra-sālmalāgrahāra' it is well known that in making an 'agrahara' grant (i.e., grant to Brahmanas) a new name was sometimes given to the village.

¹ VK., IV, 495-500.

² CR., 1901 (Ethnographic App.). For their transformation from a tribe into a caste see PI., 126. Cf. the tradition preserved in the "Datta-Vamsāvali" by Kavi Gopinath Datta of Sylhet (18th century):

জানহু ঐহটে নামে আছ পূর্বদেশ।

ব্রহ্মপুত্রের পূর্বে হানি আছে নবিশেষ।

শ্রেয়সি না ছিল কেহ মরল কেবল।

ঐহটে বনভি করে এই মোক-বত।

চক্রপাণিভূত by বনভূত কুমার লেন (p. 82).

³ PI., 114.

⁴ CR., 1921, Vol. III, Pt. 1 (Assam), 147.

⁵ Cf., the Sūdra caste of Bengal and the Shagirdpesha of Orissa (PI, 84). See Sambandha-nirnaya (Lalmohan Vidyanidhi) 209.

⁶ EI., XIX, 118, nes 5-7.

⁷ EI., XII, 75, lines 45 and 47 with footnote 19. I accept the reading Kosika. EI., XIX, 120, lines 53-54.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The name Kusiyārā may have resulted from a combination of the names Kosikā and Barāk, names of the same river at two different places (Kosi + Barā = Kusiyārā).

¹⁰ EI., XIX, 120.

or villages alienated.¹ Such a name is therefore likely to exist in documents only. But even then analogous names are still to be met within North Sylhet. Thus, in the Bhatara copper plate inscription we read of Mahurāpura (modern Maurāpur).² Thus on the strength of similarity of place-names we may take it that the grant relates to a locality in Sylhet.*

But why should Mahārājādhirāja Bhāskaravarman issue the edict from Karnasuvarna (part of North Bengal)? It appears that while the emperor was camping there, very possibly about 650 A.D., Mahārāja-Jyeshthabhadra³, the local governor who had apparently the Chandrapuri-vishaya under his control, informed his suzerain about the loss of the charter granted by Bhutivarman.⁴ The emperor accordingly issued his commands to the Vishayapati or Vishaya-nāyaka Śrīkṣhī-kunda and other officials (Adhikaranas) of Chandrapuri to renew and execute the grant in the then prevalent scripts which were different from those of Bhutivarman's time.⁵ This interesting picture of an well-ordered administration (where the official gradation was Mahārājādhirāja, Mahārāja, Vishayapati or Vishayanāyaka and the Adhikaranas which apparently included the Nyāyakaranika, Vyavahāri, Kāyastha, Bhāndāgārādhikṛita, Mahāsāmanta, etc.) shows us that the emperor need not have been present on the spot of the grant, especially as it was a mere renewal of an old grant and it could have been carried out from anywhere. Thus the order issued from the camp at Karnasuvarna does not signify that the locality of the grant should be sought there.

Thirdly, was Sylhet included in the empire of Kamarupa? Apart from the evidence of the find-spot of the copper plates there is a tradition widely prevalent about the inclusion of Sylhet, Tippera and part of Mymensingh and Dacca in Kamarupa, and people point to certain places in these districts as king Bhagadatta's place.⁶ The boundaries of the empire of Kamarupa as given in the Yogini-tantra⁷, a work of a very late date no doubt, seem to include Sylhet. To explain it away as indicating the scriptural region of Kamarupa is not sufficient. There is every likelihood of the tradition having a historical and political background. I fail to find the mention of Śrīhatta in the Yogini-tantra as an 'independent political entity,' as the editor would have us believe.⁸ The name occurs in the Yogini-tantra, Uttarakhandā, Patalas 1 (page 112), 2 (page 119), 6 (page 179) and 9 (page 215), but in none of these places any political entity is implied; religious importance or value is only indicated. The contention that Hiuen-Tsang, by referring to Shihkhatolo meant the independent kingdom of Śrīhatta.¹⁰ has to be given up as being absolutely devoid of reason in view of Mon. Pinot's revelations.¹¹ From a 9th century Tantra manuscript we learn that Matsyendra Nāth (Minanātha) was an inhabitant of Chandradvipa (Eastern Bengal) and from an 11th century commentary on a Tantra work we note that the saint came from Kamarupa.¹² This discrepancy can be explained by taking Eastern Bengal (including Sylhet) as belonging to Kamarupa. It should be remembered that Matsyendranātha lived much earlier than the 11th century A.D. (probably in the 9th century A.D.) As to Pāñchakhandā belonging to the kings of Tripura in 641 A.D.¹³ it is to be noted that the copper plate grant that is alleged to have been issued never saw the light of day.¹⁴ Even if we take it for granted that a king of Tripura made a grant in 641 A.D. it does not preclude the possibility of the emperors of Kamarupa possessing Pāñchakhandā about 500 A.D. (the time of Bhutivarman), losing it about 640 A.D. and regaining it a few years after. As to the argument that the name 'Śrīhatta' is not to be met with in the Nidhanpur plates all we may say is that Śrīhatta was not yet an independent state, and the name, if existent at all, did not signify much. The first mention of Śrīhatta as an independent state, in the existing state of our knowledge, probably occurs in the Bhatara copper plate inscription of about 1049 A.D.¹⁵ It is also to be noted in this connection that the name 'Śrīhatta' apparently originated from the name of Hattanātha-Siva or Hātakesvara-Siva, the sep-deity of the Nāgara-Brahmana settlers of Sylhet. The Nidhanpur plates need not thus mention Śrīhatta.

¹ EI., XV, 70ff. (pt. II); SII., III, 397 note 1; SII., II, no. 76; SII., III, no. 205. This subject is discussed in detail in my forthcoming: 'Land-system in South India between c.800 A.D. and 1200 A.D., (Punjab Sanskrit Book Depot).

² EI., XIX, 281, line 30.

³ I should not be willing myself to accept this evidence as conclusive. Chandpur (Chandrapur) is a common name not only in Sylhet but in Bengal and as for rivers—who can tell where the course of the Brahmaputra, let alone the Kusiyārā, was 1300 years ago?—C. S. M.

⁴ EI., XII, 66.

⁵ Bhāskaravarman as Jyeshthabhadra's sovereign had the title 'Mahārājādhirāj' (EI., XIX, 118, line 4).

⁶ EI., XIX, 118, lines 7 and 8. I accept the reading: Mahārāja-Jyeshthabhadravijayastya (Ibid., 121, footnote 2).

⁷ Cf. EI., XII, 76, line 54.

⁸ EI., 68; SI., Bk. II, Ch. I, 10-11.

⁹ Jivānanda (Calcutta) Edition, 80. Cf. XII, 68, footnote 1. Jivānanda reads Kunjagiri in place of Kanjagiri.

¹⁰ EI., XII, 68.

¹¹ Cf. Watters, Yuan Chwang, II, 183-189; EI., XII, 67; JRAS., 1929, 1-6.

¹² See JRAS., 1922, 451-452.

¹³ I.H.Q. 1930, No. 1172-81.

¹⁴ EI., XII, 67 SI., Bk. II, Ch. 4, 56 note.

¹⁵ Vaidiksamasyā SI., Bk. II, Ch. 5 note pp. 67-73 I.H.Q., 1930, No. 1 64-66.

¹⁶ EI., XIX, 280, lines 5 and 29.

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