

THE STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE
BENGAL NATIVE INFANTRY WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO PROBLEMS OF DISCIPLINE
(1796 - 1852)

by

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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT	3
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES	5
INTRODUCTION	7
CHAPTER I. The origin and early development of the East India Company's Bengal army	12
CHAPTER II. The European officers of the Bengal native infantry (1796-1852)...	97
CHAPTER III. The native soldiery of the Bengal native infantry (1796-1852)...	193
CHAPTER IV. The mutinies	310
CHAPTER V. Conclusion	455
MAP	478
APPENDICES	479
BIBLIOGRAPHY	488

ABSTRACT

The first chapter of this thesis describes the origin and gradual growth of the Bengal native infantry forces in the period of almost continual war between 1757 and 1795, and the fashioning of a disciplined force, with elaborate codes of regulations, from the military adventurers of Mughal Bengal.

The second chapter deals with the army regulations of 1796, the reasons behind the measure and its effect upon the European officers. The other Government orders relating to the service condition of the European officer cadre of the Bengal sepoy establishment during the period from 1796 to 1852 are therefore discussed, and their consequences considered.

The third chapter describes the changes in the service conditions of the sepoys in the same period 1796 to 1852 and the reactions those changes provoked.

The fourth chapter narrates the gradual extension of the Company's territory, the rapid increase in the number of the sepoy regiments, and the changes in the nature of their duties which followed from the absorption of all North India into the Bengal Presidency. The part played by the native regiments in the campaigns of conquest are described, and the mutinous incidents which occurred in the course of those campaigns. The occasion, cause, and outcome of the mutinies are discussed in detail, so as to establish that sepoy dissatisfaction was growing steadily in the last 25 years of the period under study.

The fifth chapter seeks to answer the question why the Bengal native infantry found it necessary to mutiny, and to estimate the relative importance of the grievances to which vent was given in mutiny.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES.

- Adj.- Genl. - Adjutant General.
- B.M. Add.Mss. - British Museum additional manuscripts.
- Carroll's Bengal Code 1817. - The Code of Military Standing regulations of the Bengal establishment 1817. (Commonly known as Carroll's Code).
- Cons. - Consultations.
- C.H.I. - Cambridge History of India.
- D. - Despatches.
- E.I.U.S.J. - East India United service journal.
- E.Mss. - European Manuscripts.
- For. Sec. - Foreign Secret
- G.L. - General Letter.
- G. O.C.C. - General Order by Commander-in-Chief.
- G.O.G.G. - General Order of Governor-General.
- Grace Bengal regulations 1799. - The Code of Military Standing regulations of the Bengal establishment with supplement 2 volumes. Compiled by Captain H.Grace. 1791-99.
- H.C. - House of Commons.
- H.L. - House of Lords.
- Home Misc. - Home Miscellaneous series records.
- L. - Letter.
- M.C. - Minute of the Bengal Council.
- M.D. - Military Despatches sent to Bengal series records.

M.L. - Military Letters received from Bengal series records.

Mily. Cons. - Military Consultations.

Mily. Misc. - Military Miscellaneous records.

Mily. Progs. - Military Proceedings.

Mily. Secy. - Military Secretary.

Orme. Mss. - Orme Manuscripts.

O.V. - Orme various.

Oxford - The Oxford history of India. Third edition.

P.P. - Parliamentary Paper.

Regs. - Regulations.

S.L. - Separate Letter.

Sec. - Secret Department records.

Sel. - Select.

INTRODUCTION

7

The Bengal sepoy army of the East India Company had a very humble beginning. From the few native levies which were raised in 1757, the army developed into a body of men trained and disciplined on the European model, over 50,000 strong. They shouldered and executed a task, undreamt of at the army's foundation, the conquest for the East India Company of all North India. In effect, "an army was built up from the people of India themselves, which in the end brought its own country under the sway of its foreign masters."¹

Sepoy units were first raised by the East India Company in Bombay and then at Madras, the Bengal Presidency only raising its first sepoy units in 1757. The three Presidential armies developed independently under the three Councils, their size matching the territorial expansion and the requirements of the individual Presidencies. Although Bengal's was the latest born, it came to surpass the others in rate of growth and in ultimate size, called as it was to bear the main burden of the Company's military effort in India, from Assam to Sind.

In the period to be reviewed the Bengal sepoy army took part in virtually every major campaign of the Company, and in the process accumulated unavoidable testimonials to

1. E.W. Sheppard - A short history of the British army, p.264.

its valour and fidelity and a multitude of honours. Yet, from 1824 onwards that same army showed itself to be an increasingly unreliable instrument in the hands of the Government of India, until the evidence of unrest being ignored it rose in 1857 in a mutiny which first shook British power in India and then destroyed the army itself.

Why did the revolt of 1857 take place? Numerous articles and books have been written on this question and listing a great variety of reasons for the outbreak. But if the causes of that outbreak are to be understood it is necessary to look back upon the whole process whereby the Bengal army was created. This thesis therefore, attempts to analyse in detail the problems of organisation and structure of the Bengal sepoy establishment and the reaction of such regulations, service conditions and the like, on the discipline and morale of the officers and men of the Bengal army during the whole period 1795 to 1852. It has been sought in this way to establish the stages by which both the officers, and sepoys of the Bengal native infantry became discontented and disillusioned with the service, and to explain the causes for the mutinies in which that discontent was displayed. It will also be shown that though the more far-seeing occasionally voiced warnings about the growth of discontent, only a few, most noticeably Bentinck tried to provide remedies for grievances, and only partially succeeded. The financial needs of the Company, a growing lack of sympathy with and under-

9

standing of the Indian sepoy, and a self-confidence fed by continuous success and expansion, led in most cases to a refusal to heed the warnings, and so to the final disaster of 1857.

Though the contrasts between the organisation of the Bombay, Madras and Bengal armies, and in their record of service are instructive, it soon became apparent that to attempt a survey of all three must restrict a general survey of the sepoy armies to a period so narrow as to permit no understanding of developments in time. For rather different reasons no attempt has been made to study the irregular infantry units, the cavalry and artillery wings of the Bengal native army. The objection to studying the irregulars, is found in the very fact that they were irregular, both in the sense that they were not governed by those military codes which ruled the regular regiments, and that they show no continuity of existence. To seek to establish the impact of the changes in structure, organisation and regulation on these regiments over a period would be a futile task. The effort has been made, however, to provide a full picture of the regular Bengal native infantry - the actions in which it took part, the manner of its growth, the service condition of its officers, European and Indian, and of its men, the benefits it provided, the failings which caused discontent and mutiny.

As for the period covered in this thesis, that was dictated by the fact that only in 1796 did the rapid, haphazard growth of Clive's original forces give way to some regularity of organisation and by the wish not to become involved, by proceeding beyond 1852, in the very complex issues raised by the mutiny of 1857.

In writing this thesis both official and unofficial sources have been used. The military letters sent to and from Bengal, the army orders and regulations issued by the Government in India, the military consultations, the reports of the enquiry committees, as well as the biographies, autobiographies of the army officers and other narratives have all been used. The opinions of the press in India have also been considered.

"The Structure and Organisation of the Bengal
Native Infantry with special reference to
Problems of Discipline (1796-1852)"

CHAPTER IThe Origin and Early Development of the
East India Company's Bengal Army.

The succession of Siraj-ud-daula to the Subadari of Bengal in 1756 led to a political revolution in that province and to a radical change in the policies of the East India Company in Bengal. Under his predecessors Bengal had been one of the most stable of the Mughal provinces, little disturbed by the war of succession at the centre, ~~and free in the main, from the inroads of the Marathas.~~ But his accession led to campaigns against possible rivals to the Subadari, to conflict with groups of older Muslim nobles of his father's day and with leading Hindu officials and merchant-bankers, and to a rapid worsening of relations with the English Company. Under such circumstances the Company's agents at Calcutta, who hitherto had not felt it necessary to follow the example of Bombay and Madras in enlisting Indian levies for factory defence, thought it necessary to prepare to defend the factories against any attack. Since the number of European soldiers sent by the Company from England was always very limited, it was necessary for the Calcutta Council to recruit, train and admit to the Company's army natives of the country. The purpose of this chapter will be to trace the growth of these first Indian forces into the Bengal native infantry

army, and to discuss the problems which arose out of this growth.

The first hurried recruitment of local levies by the Bengal agents of the Company proved inadequate, for Siraj-ud-daula, turning aside from his march against his rival, stormed and captured the English settlement at Kasimbazar in 1756. The garrison at Fort William, then consisted of 264 men including the Topasses.¹ There were also two companies of militia, 250 men each, raised from this Company's servants and the European, Portuguese and Armenian residents of the town. There were also natives, the Peons or Buxaries² as they were then generally called. As the Nawab was evidently proceeding to attack Calcutta, some preventive measures had to be taken quickly. Orders were issued that "batterys (sic) should be erected in all the roads leading to the Fort at such distances as could be anywise defensible with the small number of troops we had, that the inhabitants should be immediately formed into a body of militia...and likewise what sepoy and peons could be got to be formed into a body under the command

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1. Hobson-Jobson, pp. 933-4 gives the following explanations, from various sources, of the word Topasses: "Black foot soldiers, descended from Portuguese natives" and "Topasses are either the mixed produce of Portuguese and Indian parents or converts to the Portuguese from the Indian faith".
 2. Buxaries - "Apparently used in much the same sense as Burkundazze or a matchlock man...from the possible circumstances it can be suggested that such men were recruited in the country about Baksar (Buxar), the Shāhābād district which up to 1857 was a great recruiting ground for sepoy". Hobson-Jobson. p.136

of some Europeans."¹ The Bengal Council also took measures to conscript men - measures which "occasioned a general grumbling and discontentment" - and the total of the force in Calcutta was hurriedly increased to 1500 men.² Unfortunately, the Council, misjudging Siraj-ud-daula's power and resolution, held that it was "capable to stand out against any number of a country enemy",³ and so neglected the training of the native corps that they had raised. The native units, raised on such very sketchy foundations and inadequately trained in the event proved to be of poor military quality.

The one new feature was that they were placed under European officers whereas in Madras the sepoy, though well trained and grouped into companies,⁴ were left under the command of their own native officers, rather in the manner of the Mughal mansabdari system. (In Bombay, though sepoy companies were formed the Council never had any real faith in their fighting capacity).⁵

After ransacking Kasimbazar, Siraj-ud-daula advanced on Calcutta and the storm of Fort William. The Fort was not in a good state of defence and though an opposition was put up

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1. Letter from Capt. Grant. Fulda 13 July, 1756. B.M.Addl. MSS. 29, 209.p.39
 2. Robert Orme - A History of the Military transactions of the British Nation in Indostan Vol.ii, p.59.
 3. Letter from Capt. Grant. Fulda 13 July, 1756. B.M.Addl. MSS. 29, 209, p.39
 4. W.J.Wilson - History of the Madras Army, vol.i, p.8.
 5. P. Cadell - History of the Bombay Army, p.49

by the European troops, the mass desertion of the native 'peons' on the second night of the battle, left them with very little alternative but to withdraw or surrender. The Fort was deserted by the Governor of the Presidency, Drake and by the Commander (Captain Minchin) who along with the women and children fled on board ship to Fulda and sought help from the Dutch. The Fort fell to Siraj-ud-daula on 20 June, 1756 and the Council was left without any defensive post in Bengal.

After this disaster help was sought by the Bengal Council from both Madras and Bombay. The Madras Council was then expecting an attack from the French. But after some hesitation and at some risk, the Madras Council decided to come to the rescue of the Bengal Council by sending troops, even though this meant that "all garrisons upon the coast were drained to strengthen the detachment preparing for Bengal."¹ The detachment consisted of both Royal and Company's troops, its strength being nearly six hundred Europeans (officers included) and 940 sepoy,² and was under the command of Colonel Clive who was assisted by Admiral Watson. The Madras sepoy were armed with "matchlocks, bows and arrows, spears, swords, bucklers, daggers or any other weapon they could get."³ And if their equipment was thus of a very mixed nature, their military training and discipline also was

1. Bengal in 1756-1757 Ed. S.C.Hill. vol.i, p.118.

2. Letter from the Governor and the Select Committee at Fort St. George to the Secret Committee of the East India Company. 11 October, 1756. Home Misc.vol.94, p.292

3. Wilson - op.cit. vol.i, p.72.

rather haphazard and uncertain.¹ Nevertheless, the Madras sepoy force had so proved itself in the field under Clive² that it was sufficiently relied upon to form a major element in the relief force.

Its staunchness and discipline were fully tested on the voyage to Fulta. The passage, estimated to be of six weeks duration, took over two months to complete. "When the forces came from Madras, by the unexpected length of the passage, they were greatly reduced for the want of provisions in so much that there was no rice left for the Gentoo seapoys (sic) and nothing to serve out to them but beef and pork, but though some did submit to this defilement, yet many preferred a languishing death by famine to life polluted beyond recovery."³ Reinforcements from Bombay did not arrive until January, 1757 and so it was with the Madras sepoys alone that Clive advanced from Fulta, - which he had reached on 16 December 1756, - took the Mughal batteries on the river, and drove the Nawab from Calcutta in January 1757. Siraj-ud-daula was compelled to make peace, restore Calcutta, pay compensation and renew the rights and privileges of the Company in Bengal.

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1. Even in 1755 gardeners and other servants of the merchants and officers of Madras were included in the lists of the Madras sepoys. Letter from John Smith to Orme, Devacottah, 31 December 1755. Orme MSS. O.V. 289, pp.53-59
 2. Wilson. op.cit. vol.1, p.72.
 3. L. Scrafton - Reflections on the Government etc. of Indostan. p.11.

The services of the troops were not yet at an end, however, for Clive had to take into account not only the hostility of the Nawab but also the fact that war had been declared with France and that Bussy was in the Northern Circars, within 200 miles of Calcutta. The Nawab of Bengal was suspected of having contracted an alliance with the French. Clive could not, in such a situation, return to Madras as had been planned. He realised that the situation in Bengal in 1757 resembled that in the Carnatic a few years before, and that "had there been a Dupleix in Bengal, he would have supported Siraj-ud-daula as a French Nawab". Clive therefore made ready to set up an English Nawab in Bengal if opportunity offered.¹

Hitherto the Bengal agents had been trying peacefully to prosecute the trade and commerce of the Company. They had had no ambition to establish an empire or to maintain a considerable military force to defend one. They had been most reluctant to be involved in wars with the Indian powers, as peace to them meant the continuance of what for years had been a prosperous trade. But forced into war to secure the very existence of the Company's activities in Bengal, they had now to prevent the defeated but still hostile native power from falling under the influence of the French. For that, the Bengal Council required armed forces, and that urgently too. As recruits from England were impossible to get in time,

1. J.T.Wheeler - Early records of British India. p.259

Clive turned his attention to the other military material which was available at hand. He began recruiting a sepoy force as had been the practice at Madras, and selected a few hundred natives "with due regard to their physical and other military qualifications."¹ These men were not the native inhabitants of Calcutta but were military adventurers who had come to Bengal in the service of the Afghans and the Mughals. "The Muslim conquest of the Province, the actual independence of the Nawabs of the Court of Delhi, the frequent changes in the Government and the continued hostility between the various princes in the country invited many adventurers from the north to come down in search of service."² They came from Bihar, Oudh, the Doab, Rohila Kund and even from beyond the Indus and so satisfied the demand for troops of the Bengal subadars. But as soon as each immediate occasion for their service had passed away, they were thrown on their own resources. It was from such men, or their descendants, that the first battalion of Bengal sepoys was assembled. Hence, Pathans, Rohillas, a few Jats, some Rajputs and even Brahmins were to be found in the early sepoy battalions of the Bengal Presidency.³

In order to bring the tactics and discipline of these sepoys as far as possible into line with those of the European soldiers, Clive furnished his new battalion with European arms and accoutrements. The men were clothed in European fashion

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1. A. Broome - History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army. p. 92.
 2. Ibid., p. 93.
 3. Ibid., p. 93.

and were drilled and disciplined under non-commissioned European officers. The command of this new sepoy battalion was given to Captain Richard Knox, who had come up from Madras with Clive.

The Bengal sepoy battalion was thus organised and trained under European officers and in the European way. This innovation of Robert Clive was found to answer in a most satisfactory manner and before long it was adopted by the other two sister Presidencies.

The outbreak of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) had introduced a new element into the situation. After organising the native battalion and thus augmenting his strength Clive was eager to attack the French at Chandernagore. The Nawab was known to be friendly with the French. The news of Ahmad Shah Durani's capture of Delhi had however forced the Nawab to seek British aid to keep the Afghans out of Bengal. Accordingly when Clive sought his leave to attack the French, he gave an indecisive answer which Clive interpreted as his permission.¹ Fortified with this permission and by the arrival of a Bombay detachment consisting of Topasses and European troops², Clive attacked Chandernagore in March 1757 and after stiff fighting took it.³

But even after the defeat of the French at Chandernagore the Company did not feel free from danger. The Nawab was

1. H. Dodwell - Dupleix and Clive. p.129

2. Cadell - op.cit. p.64

3. Dodwell - op.cit. p.129

hostile to the English - he protected the defeated Law and other Frenchmen - and the question of peace or war with the English Company now rested with him. Clive was also aware that though vanquished in Bengal, the French were still in strength in Hyderabad and his forces and the ships of Watson might at any time be recalled to meet pressing dangers in the south.¹ In his efforts to solve the problem, he resorted to intrigues, for he had come to know that many of the Nawab's officers were dissatisfied with Siraj-ud-daula and desired a revolution in the Government. The Seths, Rai Durlabh, Omichand and Mir Jafar, known to be already conspiring, were sounded out and a plot was set on foot to overthrow and replace the Nawab. On 12 June 1757, the English troops together with the Madras and Bengal sepoy contingents² marched against the Nawab from Calcutta. So thoroughly did treachery pervade all ranks of the Nawab's army that Clive marched with little opposition. Battle was joined on the ground of Plassey on 23 June, 1757 and Siraj-ud-daula was defeated. Mir Jafar was proclaimed the Subadar of Bengal and Siraj-ud-daula, who was captured after a few days, was murdered by the order of Miran, the son of Mir Jafar.

The skirmish of Plassey marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the Company. Hitherto, Englishmen in Bengal had been nothing but merchants, humble applicants for

1. Cambridge History of India Vol.V, p.147.

2. Journal of Military proceedings on the expedition to Muxadabad, Orme MSS. O.V. 20, p.35

trading privileges. But after their victory of Plassey, they were a force to reckon with and were respected even by the Mughal Court at Delhi. Clive by his victory secured for the Company a large sum of money as compensation for the losses at Calcutta and the zamindari of the Twenty-four Parganas. Moreover Clive soon realised the limitations of Mir Jafar and was concerned to ensure punctual payment to the Company by the new Nawab and his continued reliance upon the Company. He therefore felt compelled to interfere in the management of the Subah.

For this reason, Clive had to increase the armed forces of the Presidency. As regards the European troops he could hardly do anything more than write to the Directors and impress upon them the necessity of sending out more recruits. Until they should arrive, he turned his attention to utilising the resources within his reach and he raised a second sepoy battalion in August 1757. By taking this measure Clive also sought to solve another problem. There had been severe mortality in the European ranks at Calcutta and Chandernagore because of the bad climate, fatigue and exposure. Besides this, the great amount of prize money obtained by the troops at Plassey¹ had encouraged them to plunge into "every description of debauchery."² The consequence was that by October 1757 only 150³ of the men who had come to Bengal from Madras

1. Orme - op.cit., Vol.ii, p.275

2. Broome - op.cit. p.274

3. Only five men of the 230 who had come with Major Kilpatrick remained alive. Broome - op.cit., p.185

remained alive.¹ Such losses, so difficult and expensive² to make good, made it essential to use Indian troops as far as was possible. That Clive did.

The political situation in Bengal remained as serious as before. It was rumoured that Raja Ram Narain, the Governor of Bihar, had allied himself with the wazir of Oudh, had declared his independence and was marching towards Murshidabad from Patna. To meet this new threat, Nawab Mir Jafar proceeded late in 1757, towards Patna, Clive accompanying him with a detachment of about 550 Europeans and the first and second Bengal sepoy battalions.

No war, in fact, was fought at Patna. Miran, Mir Jafar's son, was appointed governor of Bihar and Ram Narain accepted the position of deputy. But Clive realised that if the uneasy peace was to be maintained more force was needed, and he therefore raised a third battalion of sepoy from the Bhojpur district .

It was as well that he did so, for by the end of 1758 the news had reached Bengal from Madras of the fall of Fort St. David to the French, and Clive felt compelled to send part of his army under Colonel Forde to the Northern Circars. With Forde went 500 Europeans and two of Clive's three Bengal sepoy

1. J. Long - Selections from the unpublished records of Government 1748-'67. p.114
2. The Bombay diary of 11 April 1737 records, "Our Honourable Masters are at great expense to supply us with European soldiers, including the outlay on those who die before their arrival here. Every man they send stands them in between £16 and £20." Bombay Gazetteer. Vol. XXVI, pt. iii, p.83.

battalions,¹ together with three troops of the Madras sepoy who had come with him in 1756.² Clive, therefore, had to raise yet another sepoy battalion for service in Bengal.

In their internal organisation, Clive's Bengal sepoy battalions differed from those of Madras and Bombay mainly in their officering. The command of each battalion was entrusted to a European Captain, a Lieutenant and an Ensign acted as Field Officers, and two Subalterns, assisted by a Sergeant-Major and a few Sergeants, were entrusted with the task of disciplining the sepoys. The native Commandant took post in front with the Captain, while the native Adjutant remained in the rear of the battalion with the Subalterns. The battalions were made up of ten companies, two of which were Grenadiers, each company being composed of a Subadar,^(a) three Jamadars,^(b) five Havildars^(c) (one of whom was a colourman) four Naiks, two Drummers, one trumpeter and seventy sepoys. Dressed and drilled in European style, each company had its distinctive colour which also carried the emblem of its Subadar. The Grenadiers, as a mark of distinction, had a Union Jack in the upper corner of their flag.³ Because of the insufficient numbers of European officers, Clive could not at

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1. The Bengal sepoys, later to be described as so very prejudiced against crossing the sea, embarked on this occasion without a murmur.
 2. R.O. Cambridge - An Account of the War in India, between the English and French, on the Coast of Coromandel, from the year 1750 to the year 1760; p.40.
 - (a) A native rank in infantry and in regular cavalry equivalent to a captain.
 - (b) A native rank corresponding to a subaltern.
 - (c) A native sergeant in regular cavalry or infantry.
 3. Capt. J. William - An Historical account of the Bengal army. pp. 4-5.

first fill all the posts of the sepoy battalions and so for some time the complement was not the same in each.¹ After seeing the success that Clive had achieved with this new organisation the Presidencies of Madras² and Bombay³ decided to follow suit, and plans were set on foot in 1759 to reorganise their sepoy battalions in a similar fashion.

While Clive was thus busy in reorganising his forces, the political atmosphere in Bengal remained uneasy. The Shahzada, the eldest son of the Emperor of Delhi, in an effort to establish his claim to the throne, fled from Delhi, collected a band of soldiers, and advanced to attack the provinces of Bihar and Bengal. Clive was again called upon by Mir Jafar for help in removing the danger. To this Clive acceded, but with two battalions of Bengal sepoys already at Madras he decided that it was necessary to raise yet another sepoy battalion to supplement the force at Fort William.

The Company's army together with that of the Nawab met the forces of the Shahzada at Patna and after a brief battle the Shahzada was forced to retreat with heavy loss. Returning to Calcutta in June 1759, Clive found that he had to deal with yet another danger which, for some time past, had been threatening the Company's position in Bengal. The increase of the political and commercial influence of the

1. Broome - op.cit., p.274
2. Wilson - op.cit., Vol.I, p.68.
3. Bombay Gazetteer. Vol.XXVI, Pt.iii, p.134

English Company in Bengal had caused jealousy and dissatisfaction amongst the Dutch, and it was believed that Mir Jafar would not be averse to using them as a powerful check against the English. Then in August 1759, a Dutch vessel arrived in the Hugli river and rumours got abroad that the Dutch Government at Batavia was despatching a powerful armament to Bengal.¹ The Nawab of Bengal, at the request of Clive, asked the Dutch to avoid any form of hostilities, the Dutch ship left Bengal, and everything seemed to be quiet. But in October 1759 a Dutch fleet again made its appearance in the Hugli. When questioned by Clive Mir Jafar informed him that "he had granted them certain indulgence as regards their trade and they had agreed to send away the ships."² But the Dutch fleet showed no signs of departure and instead it was rumoured that the Dutch agents were enlisting sepoy at Chinsurah, Kasimbazar and Patna.³ To admit the establishment of a rival force in the province meant the ruin of English influence and power in Bengal. Clive, with his usual foresight, realised the potential danger of the situation and decided to seek a solution in a show of force. However, England was then at peace with Holland and Clive found himself to be in an awkward position. All he could do was to await an opportunity to defend the Company's interests. Fortunately for him it was the

1. John Malcolm - Life of Lord Clive. Vol. I, p. 75.

2. Broome - op.cit., p. 263

3. Ibid., p. 264

Dutch themselves who started hostilities by seizing English ships and attacking the English factories at Fulta and Raipore. Clive now considered himself free to act and several skirmishes took place of which the most decisive was that at Biderra,¹ a place between Chandernagore and Chinsurah.² The action was very short and in half an hour the Dutch force was completely routed and they sued for peace. Thus, an affair which had seriously threatened the English interest in Bengal ended for them in the most satisfactory manner. And once again, Clive had won the day with a mixed body of troops, with European soldiers of the garrison and the sepoy of the 5th Native infantry battalion.³

By the end of 1759, after the ransacking of Chandernagore, the repulse of the Shahzada and the defeat of the Dutch, the influence of the English Company in Bengal was unchallenged by any other power. "The Subadar was of their making; their troops formed the only effective military force in the province; in so far as it might be expedient, their will was the determining voice in his counsels".⁴ In comparison the situation in the Presidency of Madras continued to be

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1. "Biderra does not appear on any map. Probably it is Bhadreshwar," S.C.Hill - Catalogue of Orme Collection, p.243
 2. Letter from Francis Forde to Clive, 25 November 1759. Orme MSS. O.V. 292. pp.115-116
 3. Dodwell - op.cit., p.270

fluid. The war between the French and the English was still in full swing there, though it was evident that French influence was declining.

Before he left India in January 1760, after establishing the English Company as the sole effective power in Bengal, Clive took yet another step to properly organise his newly established Bengal sepoy battalions. Hitherto the deficiency of European officers had led to their very unequal distribution amongst the sepoy battalions. By calling several officers from Madras, Clive, by the end of 1759, was able to attach to each battalion its full complement of European commissioned and non-commissioned officers.¹ He also increased the strength of each company to 100 men and thus each of the five battalions consisted of 1000 sepoy.²

While the Bengal sepoy battalions were thus steadily progressing in organisation, efficiency and strength under the guidance of Clive, the Directors at London were criticising the very maintenance of troops by the Bengal Council. They complained that the Bengal agents seemed "so thoroughly possessed with military ideas as to forget [that] their employers [were] merchants and trade was their principal object."³ The Court had apparently failed to grasp the

1. There may have been some reluctance amongst the officers to join the sepoy battalions, for an additional two rupees a day was now added to the pay of the subalterns in the name of drill money. Williams - op.cit., pp.4-5
2. Broome - op.cit., p.274
3. G.L. to Bengal, 23 March 1759. D. to Bengal, VI, No.898.

revolutionary nature of the changes in the political circumstances and the urgency of the need to defend the English possessions in Bengal, for it observed, "were we to adopt your several plans for fortifying, half of our capital would be buried in stone walls."¹

Such an attitude in the Directors was perhaps not entirely unexpected. Not merely were they merchants with only trade in mind but they were Englishmen, and Englishmen under the Parliamentary and Puritanic influences² had a suspicion of standing armies and regular troops.³ Even the English Government raised troops only when peril was imminent - and hastily disbanded them the moment peace was in sight. As A.M.Davies commented, "when England signed the treaty of Utrecht, it must have seemed to the world ---that she had deliberately let slip the opportunity to make herself the greatest military power in the world. All was at that moment in her grasp - the road to Paris lay open to Marlborough's victorious army - yet her rulers had thought only of peace and their own domestic affairs."⁴ Had the Court had its way, a similar abandonment of opportunity and power might have been witnessed in Bengal.

In spite of this censure from the Directors, who failed to realise how far the merchant status of the East India Company in Bengal had been replaced by that of a political power, the Bengal Government did not forsake their

1. G.L. to Bengal, 23 March 1759. D. to Bengal, I, No.898.

2. Wilson - op.cit., Vol. I, pp.3-4.

3. C.M.Clode - The Military forces of the Crown, Their Administration and Government. Vol.II, p.1.

4. A.M.Davies - Clive of Plassey. p.30.

policy of maintaining a standing army, for they were already caught "in a current that was to bear them at a rapid pace down an ever stronger, ever-widening stream of empire. Again and again they might try to stay their course by clinging to what seemed like solid land, but each time the current proved too much for them and every time they made mooring a fresh flood came down and swept them on."¹

It must be admitted, of course, that the Directors had good cause for concern. However ill placed to see and grasp the change in the character of the Company's operations in India, they were well placed indeed to observe the financial effects of raising troops and waging war. "The war with France, the expenses of convoys, increased shipping hire and the losses of India men to privateers were already placing the Company under strain---".² If the Bengal Council would but consider, the Directors wrote in 1760, "the heavy demurrage incurred by ships detained by accident or otherwise in India, the immense expense at Madras, with very scanty returns, your own charges very great, those of Bombay beyond all bounds, our settlements in Sumatra, at the same time requiring large sums to put them in some state of security against enemies and dangerous neighbours,"³ they would surely share the Director's surprise at the difficulties surmounted,

1. Davies, op.cit., p.251.

2. L. to Bengal. April 1760. Peter Auber - Rise and Progress of the British Power in India. Vol. I, pp.71-72.

3. L. to Bengal. April 1760. Ibid. Vol.I, p.72

and at the un murmuring generosity of the Proprietors in consenting to reduce their dividend 25 per cent".¹ But such a strain should not continue for, the Directors went on, "with all our economy and care, unless our servants studiously" attended "to lessen their charges and increase our advantages, the burden" would be "too great for us to bear much longer."²

There was moreover, a particular reason why the Court of Directors should adopt such an attitude. The Court at that time was dominated by Lawrence Sullivan, a Bombay man who had made "a comfortable fortune from private trade," a man whose experience had been of trade and not of the politics and conquests in which Madras and Bengal were now involved. Bombay in his day had been a home of the commercial spirit, and Sullivan was a product of this atmosphere.³ Although he might have realised that the conquest of Bengal would lead to some advantage to the trade of the Company, he was against the Company's acquiring any sort of political responsibility or maintaining any considerable military force. To him that meant only increased expenditure and a consequent decrease in the dividends of the Company.

Further the very completeness of the success of the Company's army on the Coast of Coromandel, of the political arrangement for securing their possessions in Bengal, and of

1. L. to Bengal. April 1760. Auber - op.cit., Vol.I, p.72.
2. L. to Bengal. April 1760. Ibid. Vol.I, p.72.
3. L.S.Sutherland - The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics. p.62

the measures taken for the reduction of the Sidi at Surat led the Home Authorities to consider that "the military forces at each of the Presidencies were nearly if not altogether equal to the defence of their possessions."¹ The Directors, in fact, had been rather dazzled at the cheapness of their unexpected successes. Hence their refusal to count the probable ultimate cost of empire or to take adequate measures for the defence of their valuable acquisitions.

That being the case, the attitude of the Directors towards the armed forces in Bengal was, if parsimonious, understandable. They wrote to Calcutta in April 1760, ordering that "the fixed garrison at Calcutta should not be more than 1500 Europeans, (~~#~~the blacks at your discretion)".² Nothing could show more clearly how little the military revolution in India had touched the imagination of the Directors than this off-hand reference to the sepoy forces which had already played and were increasingly to play a major part in the military exploits of the Company in India.

After the departure of Clive, the new Governor Vansittart and his Council found the financial situation in Bengal to be extremely critical. With his treasury nearly exhausted, the Nawab Mir Jafar could not be depended upon to

1. "Review of the Military History of the Hon'ble East India Company arising out of the political circumstances of Hindustan and of the French schemes of acquiring territories in India from 1744 to 1795." (completed only to 1761) Home Misc. Vol. 91A, p.1305.
 2. L. to Bengal April 1760. Auber- op.cit., Vol.I, p.72

pay the arrears of his promised award to the Company. Vansittart could hardly expect any monetary help from London either, since Clive had earlier informed the Home Authorities (in 1757) that Bengal would need no supplies of money from home for over three years.¹ Indeed the Home Authorities were under the impression that the vast wealth which had been acquired in Bengal would meet the expenses not only of Bengal, but of Bombay and Madras also.² This assumption was far from true, as neither in 1757 nor in 1760 was there enough money in the treasury of the Nawab to meet the demands of the Company and from the first governorship of Clive to that of Vansittart the Bengal Presidency was in a critical financial condition.³ The feeling gradually grew that under the ineffective rule of Mir Jafar there was little hope of economic improvement, while his political duplicity annoyed and alarmed the Company. In an effort to solve the problem Vansittart tried to persuade Mir Jafar to hand over real power to Mir Kasim. This, Mir Jafar refused to do; preferring instead to abdicate and so allow Mir Kasim to be placed on the throne of Murshidabad. The new Nawab agreed to pay the arrears of Mir Jafar and £200,000 in cash as the token of his gratitude to the Calcutta Council, and to cede the three districts of Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong to the Company for the maintenance of its troops.³

1. Sutherland - op.cit. p.75

2. Ibid., p.75

3. The Oxford History of India, p.471

On the death of the Emperor of Delhi in 1759, the Shahzada declared himself Emperor under the title of Shah Alam II, and asked the provincial rulers of his Empire to acknowledge his Imperial title. The Nawab and the English Company of Bengal refused to do so, and appeared to be in open rebellion against the Emperor; Shah Alam, with the help of the Nawab Suja-ud-daula of Oudh, set out to invade Bengal. The conflict that ensued between the forces of the Company and the Nawab of Bengal on the one hand and that of the Emperor and the Nawab of Oudh on the other continued till 1761, when the forces opposing the Company were forced to withdraw under successive defeats. In these actions two native sepoy battalions, the third and fourth Bengal Native Infantry, took part with credit and were in the field for a considerable period. The Bengal Council once again considered the remaining military establishment to be insufficient for the administration and management of the Company's territory, and two new sepoy battalions were accordingly raised in 1761, one at Patna and another at Chittagong. Thus, by January 1762 there were seven battalions of sepoys under the Government at Fort William.¹

The news of the war with Shah Alam II and of the placing of a new Nawab, Mir Kasim Khan, on the throne of Murshidabad reached England in 1762. The increasing political activities and the consequent rise in the military charges of

1. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy.
1773 H.C. p.508.

the Bengal Government greatly displeased the Directors. In a letter of 19 February 1762 they warned the Government at Fort William that it should be more careful to avoid constant wars and only on the ground of absolute necessity should any new measure involving extra military expenditure¹ be undertaken. Nor did they object to the constant wars in Bengal solely because of the consequent military charges; as traders they had a vested interest in peace for, as they said, it was only "from a quiet situation of affairs in Bengal" that they could "hope to have the benefit of the large revenue" which they had "in possession of. A permanent tranquility in Bengal and isolation and neutrality therefore must be the constant object in view".² Peace in Bengal was their primary ambition. If they could secure their "possession and privileges in Bengal, preserve the peace of the province and the Nawab in the government, and prevent the borders from being invaded or disturbed by the neighbouring Rajahs or other Powers", they would think that the forces were judiciously employed in answering these principal points." For they were "by no means desirous of making further acquisitions, or engaging" their "forces in very distant projects unless the most absolute necessity should require it to answer one or other of the principal views before mentioned".³

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1. L. to Bengal, 19 February, 1764. para.24. D. to Bengal.Vol.2E.
 2. S.L. to Bengal, 17 December 1764. para. 33. D. to BengalVol.2E.
 3. S.L. to Bengal, 13 May 1763. para.29. D. to Bengal.Vol.2E.

In addition to such warnings and advice, the Directors in their attempt to reduce the military expenditure at Fort William once again fixed the number of soldiers to be maintained in the Presidency. While agreeing that the territorial acquisitions in Bengal, "could not be preserved without a respectable military force," the Directors laid down that as peace was now established the Bengal military forces should consist of from 2500 to 3000 European infantry, 200 cavalry; 300 artillery (all Europeans) and 5000 sepoy¹. The Court strictly required the Bengal Council to carry out the plan granting its Bengal agents the right to deviate from it only if it were really necessary and provided a full explanation² were given.

A review of the attitude of the Home Authorities of the Company from 1759 towards their army in Bengal would indicate that the Directors were gradually realising the implications of the local situation. In 1759, "their idea of a sufficient military force for Bengal was three hundred Europeans and no more"³. In 1760 the garrison at Fort William was allowed to be increased to 1500 Europeans in addition to native troops,⁴ and in 1763 they provided for 3500 Europeans and 5000 sepoy in the Bengal army establishment.⁵ Moreover, in spite of all the criticisms and warnings

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1. G.L. to Bengal 30 December 1763. Para.19. D. to Bengal. Vol. 21.
 2. G.L. to Bengal 30 December 1763. para.24. D. to Bengal. Vol. 21.
 3. G.L. to Bengal 23 March 1759, No.898. D. to Bengal. Vol. I
 4. L. to Bengal. April 1760. Auber - op.cit., Vol. I, p.72
 5. G.L. to Bengal. 30 December 1763. para.26. D. to Bengal. Vol. 21.

that had been voiced the Bengal Council was left, from 1763 with the power of changing the military plan of the Court if it was demonstrably necessary.

The necessity of such a flexible policy was soon to be proven, for by 1763 the Council at Fort William again became involved in war, this time with Mir Kasim Khan. To meet this emergency several new sepoy battalions were raised in that year at Burdwan, Midnapore, Chittagong and Calcutta. Indeed by February 1763 when the war with Mir Kasim was only imminent the Bengal native establishment already consisted of ten sepoy battalions and according to the army list there were 10,000 sepoys in the Bengal army.

Though the figures would suggest that each of the ten battalions in existence in February 1763 consisted of 1000 sepoys and that each battalion would have the same complement of European officers, such was very definitely not the case. The battalion at Patna had 2803 native soldiers on its strength, while that at Malda had only 57. The proportion of European officers also varied according to the number of the sepoys. Thus there were three Captains, three Lieutenants, two Ensigns and eleven Sergeants with the sepoy battalion at Patna but each of the battalions at Dacca, Malda and Kasimbazar was under the command of a Sergeant.¹ In spite of Clive's efforts the Sepoy battalions very evidently were still ad hoc creations, varying widely in numbers and in officer strength according to the temporary importance of their duties or

1. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy 1773.
H.C.p. 514.

station.

War with Mir Kasim broke out in June 1763 and in July 1763 Mir Jafar Khan was restored to the throne of Murshidabad. In the midst of this campaign, the Bengal Government, as in 1756, had again to ask for help from Madras and Bombay. The Madras Government, then busy suppressing the rebellion of its agent Muhammad Yusuf Khan at Madura, was itself in want of troops¹ and could not render any help. The Bombay Government however, was able to send two European and two sepoy infantry companies and a company of artillery to Bengal.² A series of battles were fought and the Company's force gained impressive victories over Mir Kasim, who at the end of 1763 fled to Oudh.

The flight of Mir Kasim by no means ended the struggle, for the Nawab of Oudh and the Emperor Shah Alam, then in Oudh, agreed to help in his restoration. The Company, faced with this new coalition of enemies, had hurriedly to raise new forces. Four new sepoy battalions were raised in 1764, at Murshidabad, Midnapore, Burdwan and Monghyr,³ and these were mainly employed to protect Fort William, which had sent most of its garrison to fight with Mir Kasim.

By January 1764, the Company's field force, consisting of the European troops of the Presidency and six sepoy battalions, were encamped under the command of Captain

1. Wilson- op.cit., Vol. I, p.169
2. Three years gleanings. E.I.U.S.J./1838. p.15 / January
3. Broome- op.cit. pp. 408- 410.

Jennings at Sawant¹ on the border of Bihar and Oudh. Its ally, the Nawab Mir Jafar Khan, was only a short distance away, waiting to meet the enemy. All of a sudden, on 30 January 1764, the European troops refused to obey the word of command on parade. They stated that in July 1763 Mir Jafar Khan had promised a donation to the troops on the successful completion of the campaign against Mir Kasim Khan. Moreover, they had been promised that a portion of the donation would be paid to them as soon as the army had reached the river Karamnasa.² That river they had reached a month ago and since then they had undergone much fatigue and privation in driving the enemies of Mir Jafar Khan out of the province. The European troops now claimed that until this donation was paid, and the promise fulfilled, they would perform no duties.³

Captain Jennings was taken aback at this sudden and general outbreak of the European troops. He was not certain "as to how far the sepoys who had equal cause of complaint,"⁴ were concerned in this demonstration. Hence, without attempting to punish the mutineers, he tried to persuade them to return to their duty. Admitting that the mutineers were justified in their complaint he assured them that he would write immediately to the Calcutta Council for redress. He also

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1. Sawant - "Then called Sant on the bank of the river Durgawati". Ibid., p.403.
 2. Karamnasa - The river formed the boundary between Bihar and Oudh. Dodwell. op.cit., p.150
 3. Charles Carracioli - The life of Robert Lord Clive. Vol. I. p. 387
 4. L. from Capt. Jennings. 1 February 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 13 February 1764.

stated that a supply of money was already on the way to Patna and that on its arrival the army would get a part of the promised money. Captain Jennings' tactful handling had the desired effect and the mutineers, satisfied with all these assurances, went back to camp.¹

Captain Jennings informed Calcutta at once, and asked for a speedy remittance of the necessary money. But the mutineers did not wait for the reply from Calcutta. On 11 February 1764 the European battalions with all the non-commissioned officers assembled on the parade ground. Captain Jennings again tried to pacify the mutinous troops by offering to collect all the money available from the officers in the camp and the Nawab for distribution amongst the men. But the European troops, paying no heed to the assurance, marched instead towards the Nawab's camp on its way to Patna.²

While the mutineers had been marching to the Nawab's camp, their European officers had been attempting to bring them to reason, and by the time the troops had arrived there, the officers had succeeded in persuading the greater part of the Englishmen in the battalions to return to duty.

The sepoy battalions had hitherto stood firm and held aloof, and Captain Jennings marched them against the mutineers in an attempt to persuade the latter to return to

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1. L. from Capt. Jennings. 1 February 1764. Bengal Sec.Progs. 13 February 1764.
 2. L. from Capt. Jennings 13 February 1764. Bengal Sec.Progs. 23 February 1764.

camp, "promising full pardon to all and a speedy payment of the promised donation". He, too, had some success.

Unhappily, however, the sepoy battalions themselves soon became infected by the example of the Europeans and joined the mutineers on the march. It was with much difficulty that about half the sepoys were eventually persuaded by their officers to return to their lines.

What made the situation more serious was that the mutineers were carrying on a correspondence with the European soldiers under Mir Kasim Khan. It was suspected that "the French portion of these mutineers intended to join the army of the Nawab of Oudh and to make themselves the masters of the country"¹.

Captain Jennings, realising that it was useless to follow the mutinous troops any more, came back to the camp at Sawant. With him returned the officers and the loyal European and native soldiers. Eventually it was found that "5 Sergeants and 152 rank and file of the European battalion, almost all Frenchmen, 16 of the European cavalry and about 100 natives,"² had proceeded to Allahabad to join the Nawab of Oudh.

The Bengal Council, in its report to the Court about the mutinous behaviour of the European troops, observed, that they had been "alarmed with an accident as sudden as unexpected and which had well nigh exposed these provinces to fresh

1. Broome - op.cit., p. 416

2. L. from Bengal 27 February, 1764. Home Misc. Vol. 97, p.304.

disturbances and thrown your affairs into greater danger than all the strength of your enemies."¹

Indeed the time which the mutineers had chosen for their demand was evidently a critical one for the Bengal Government. They had deserted right in the middle of a war, throwing all semblance of attachment or discipline to the winds. But considering the manner in which the Company's European troops were recruited this non-military behaviour should cause little surprise. As early as in 1760 Major Scott had informed the Court that "among the 900 raw highlanders", who had been sent to India as recruits, there was "not one soldier" who could speak English or even use a Firelock --- The men's inducement to enlist was a promise that they might carry ten women in each company."² William Kaye commented thus upon the recruiting of the Company's soldiers in England: "the refuse of the streets was swept up and shovelled at once into the ships. Embarked as rabble, they were expected to land as soldiers."³ Worse still, "a very large proportion" of the European troops, "were foreigners, either Dutch, German or French."⁴ From such men so recruited, the military virtues or any consideration for the Company could scarcely be expected.

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1. L. from Bengal 27 February 1761. Home Misc. Vol. 97, P. 304
 2. L. from Scott. 26 March, 1760. Home Misc. Vol. 95, p. 373
 3. W. Kaye - Lives of the Indian Officers. Vol. I, p. 109
 4. Broome - op.cit., p. 411.

The main reason for the comparative success of the Officers in preventing their men from deserting altogether was the promise of an early distribution of the Nawab's donation. This actually took place, for on the arrival of the soldiers at the camp at Sawant one lac of rupees offered by the Nawab was promptly paid to them.

Strangely enough the payment of money gave rise to further complications. While the share satisfied the mutinous European troops the sepoys were displeased with their relatively low share of the reward. Nor was this surprising, for whereas each European Sergeant received 80 rupees, each Corporal 60 rupees, and each private 40 rupees, the sepoy Sergeants (Havildars) were offered only 12 rupees each, the Corporals (Naiks) nine rupees each, and the sepoys only six rupees each.¹

The sepoys registered their protest by refusing to receive this comparatively small sum. Like their English comrades, the native soldiers decided to stand against the authorities and "on the 13th of February 1764, 9 o'clock in the forenoon, in the invitation of the Europeans they assembled under arms on their several parades."² The white troops, apprehensive of the prospect of having to share their spoils, "were most anxious to show their sense of, and to

1. Orderly Book. B.M.Addl. MSS., 6049. p.90

2. L. from Capt. Jennings. (no place was mentioned) 13
13 February 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 27 February 1764.

atone for their past misconduct and the only difficulty was to restrain their violence, and prevent their falling upon the Sipahis for presuming to follow the example they themselves had afforded."¹ Fortunately for the Company nothing serious happened. The sepoys, on whom the Government were of necessity greatly dependent, were in their turn pacified but only after more concessions had been made.

Realising the gravity of the situation Captain Jennings raised the sepoys' share and by this new arrangement Rupees 40, 30 and 20 were awarded respectively to each Havildar, Naik and Sepoy.² This new measure seemed to satisfy the sepoys and order was restored. Nothing is recorded as to who paid for this increased award to the native troops. Perhaps, as the Nawab had promised the argued donation, it was he who had also to meet this extra expenditure.

Two serious and threatening mutinies in the Bengal army were thus averted and the Government was again rendered free to pay attention to its enemies, who were busy marshalling their forces. The Nawab of Oudh and the Emperor were proceeding to invade Bihar in support of Mir Kasim. The Bengal Council, in order to face the imminent campaign, sent the entire sepoy forces up to Patna in a campaign, of a scope hitherto unknown in the Presidency. The united forces

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1. L. from Capt. Jennings (no place was mentioned)
13 February 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 27 February 1764.
 2. L. from Capt. Jennings 13 February 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs.
27 February 1764.

of the Nawab of Oudh, the Emperor, and Mir Kasim, supported by the Rohillas, had crossed the river Son and had entered Bihar. The Company's troops, a grand total of about 19,000 men, "the largest Indian army the English had ever had in the field,"¹ had reached Buxar. In April 1764 the enemy crossed the river and the two forces stood face to face.

No full scale engagement took place, however, for after skirmishes, in which the Nawab had the worst of the struggle Shuja-ud-daula decided to withdraw. The Bengal Council urged that his retreat be at once followed up. But Major Carnac,² pointing out the insufficiency of the troops and the approaching rainy season, desired to wait. The Council at Fort William thrust aside his objections: "the rains," they wrote, would "not be any impediment to the operations but on the contrary, with regard to the receiving provisions and stores, rather a convenience from the advantage of the rivers," and ordered that he should pursue the enemy.³ Again and again the Council urged the Major to proceed. On the 14 June 1764 Vansittart wrote: it was "absolutely necessary to proceed against Suja-ud-daula, without loss of time, nor stop until" the Company's Government "convinced him that it was capable of acting offensively as well as defensively."⁴

1. Broome - op.cit., p.440.

2. Major Carnac, a Major in the Royal Army, had been nominated to the command of the Bengal army in December 1763 on the death of Major Adams. Broome - op.cit., p.421.

3. Correspondence between Major Carnac and Bengal Council 11 June 1764. Home Misc. Vol. 198, p.50.

4. Correspondence between Major Carnac and Bengal Council 14 June 1764. Home Misc. Vol. 198, p.56.

Regarding the insufficiency of the force the Bengal Council asked for the opinions of the other field officers and expressed its readiness to send immediate reinforcements. They even raised three new sepoy battalions and added these to the establishment of the Bengal army.¹

On receiving these letters Carnac did prepare to march but before he could do so, orders came from England dismissing him from the Company's service for his opposition to Vansittart in 1761.² Carnac gave up his charge in the midst of the campaign and the command of the army devolved upon Hector Munro, a Major in His Majesty's regiment at Bombay.

Major Munro established the headquarters of the army at Bankipore and at Patna and distributed the troops at Futwah, Monier, Dinapore, Manjee, Chuprah and Monghyr,³ which were in the neighbourhood of Patna.

While thus marshalling his army for the next action, Major Munro became aware that signs of discontent still existed amongst the native battalions. Their unrest was scarcely allayed by a reduction to half batta⁴ - imposed in the interests of economy - which was carried into effect

1. Williams - op.cit., pp. 142 - 149, 153.

2. "In 1761 Major Carnac was recalled by Vansittart - an order which was not immediately obeyed." Dodwell - op.cit., pp. 209 - 211.

3. Broome - op.cit., p. 455

4. Batta - An extra allowance made to officers, soldiers or other public servants when in the field, or on other special grounds. It is difficult to arrive at the origin of the word - but most probably originated in the Portuguese practice. Hobson-Jobson. p.72.

though, as was reported, "the army was in great difficulty for want of provisions."¹

The first station at which open signs of insubordination were shown was Patna. Major Pemble, the Commanding Officer of that station informed the Council at Fort William that Major Adams had promised the sepoy that on their achieving victory their cartouche boxes would be filled with money reward. But as that promise had not been fulfilled, and as "the batta was now taken off and as they had not received the proper share of prize money the sepoy had determined to march off with fixed bayonets and loaded arms."²

Once more the answer to ill-discipline was found in concession. Major Pemble, in command of the Patna sepoy restored the issue of full batta and persuaded the Government to sanction the measure. But regarding complaints that the prize money had not been equitably shared the Council observed "Prize money was an indulgence that none had a right to ask and it had been divided according to the approbation of the Nawab who gave it" and hence it could admit "of no alteration."³ It was further added that "Indulgence such as prize money will never be permitted again in any army in India and the sepoy and the soldiers will be treated on the same

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1. Letter from Champion to Vansittart. Patna. 4 August 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 20 August 1764.
 2. L. from Pemble to Bengal Council. 3 August 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 13 August 1764.
 3. L. from Vansittart to Munro. Ghyraity. 12 August 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 13 August 1764.

footing and that it expected the sepoy to behave soldierlike."¹

Meanwhile, however, insubordination had spread. The sepoy of Captain Scotland's battalion (1st sepoy battalion) at Monier seized their arms and imprisoned their officers. Major Stibbert marched from Patna with reinforcements and on his arrival at Monier compelled the mutineers to return to their lines and to release the arrested officers.²

The mutineers surrendered without any opposition, and were immediately made prisoners and taken to Chuprah. At Chuprah, they were marched to the parade ground where all the troops stationed in the cantonment were arranged in parade formation with their arms and field guns. The mutineers were granted permission to have their say and justify their action. They blamed the Grenadiers and their native officers as the instigators. Twenty five men were identified as ringleaders and they were tried by a general court martial, constituted by the native officers of the 6th sepoy battalion. The Court was warned by Major Munro that "if proper sentence was not passed, no regard would be paid to the same and proper notice would be taken of them."³ With its sense of justice thus quickened, the Court sentenced the guilty soldiers "to be

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1. L. from Vansittart to Munro. Ghyratty. 12 August 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 13 August 1764.
 2. L. from Stibbert to Vansittart. Monier. 7 August 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 20 August 1764.
 3. L. from Munro to Vansittart. 16 September 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 24 September 1764.

blown away from the guns."¹

In the presence of the assembled troops, Major Munro had eight of the condemned men blown away at Chuprah. Five more were sent for execution in the like manner to Monier, six to Bankipore and six to Begumpore. The 1st Battalion was thus disbanded with dishonour. The discharged sepoy were incorporated in the five junior battalions with the warning that they were at liberty to accept the terms of the service or lay down their arms and go to "Suja-ud-daula or the Devil".²

This harsh punishment backed by the stern warning crushed the spirit of discontent amongst the native troops of Bengal and order was restored. The Bengal Council in a General Order expressed its regret over the incident and the consequent disgrace of the mutinous battalion at Manjee. But it was made clear to the sepoy that the decision of the Council regarding prize money was final and that any protest or opposition to the orders of the Commanding Officer would make the sepoy liable to severe punishment.³

It had, perhaps, been necessary to proceed to such bloody extremes not merely because the Nawab was still in the field, but because the sepoy had to be taught European standards of discipline. Irvine has written, of the late Mughal army: "being a body of mercenaries it inevitably

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1. L. from Munro to Vansittart. 16 September 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 24 September 1764.
 2. L. from Munro to Vansittart. 16 September 1764. Bengal Sec. Progs. 24 September 1764.
 3. Bengal Sec. Cons. 24 September 1764. No. 112

consisted of men who only served for what they could get, and ready at any moment, when things went badly to desert or transfer themselves to the highest bidder."¹ The Maratha troops "had no scruple in changing masters as often as it was convenient to them or their recruiting officer."² Even when Siraj-ud-daula advanced in 1756 to capture Calcutta he had to "pay the army six months' pay, indeed they refused marching without it."³ From following such examples the Company's sepoys had sternly to be dissuaded.

Yet the sepoys had some legitimate grievances. Their batta had been halved, their pay cut, they received a meagre share of the prize money of which they had had such high hopes and this despite the great difficulty in procuring supplies. The Bhojpur district having been a scene of war and disturbance for a long period, was completely devastated. The hilly districts of South Bihar were unproductive. The Ghazipur district was under the Raja of Benares - ~~a feudatory of the Nawab of Oudh~~ - and no supplies could be obtained from it. Again, Saran district, though under the Nawab of Murshidabad, was so badly managed that it was hard to get supplies. The army was thus entirely dependent upon supplies from Patna. "Our present land carriage from Patna," Captain Jennings had

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1. W. Irvine - The Army of the Indian Mughals. p.297
 2. S.N.Sen - Military System of the Marathas. p.205
 3. Narrative of the capture of Calcutta in 1756 (no signature).
B.M.Addl. MSS. 29, 209. p. 12

informed the Council in Calcutta had raised "the price of rice etc. in the Bazar a hundred per cent more than the Patna market, besides the uncertainty occasioned by the merchants selling at different places in the road."¹ Champion had confirmed this in his journal "Our provisions" seemed to come in from hand to mouth having no more than two days provisions² Major Carnac had also written to the Government asking for speedy supply from Bengal. With prices nearly doubled, the sepoys were in great distress and "could scarcely live upon their pay."³ To ease this situation the Council had ordered its agents at Burdwan, Purneah, Maldah and Dinajpore to despatch grain and other necessaries as soon as possible to Patna⁴ but this measure did not bring any immediate relief to the sepoys stationed at the different camps.

A reaction on the part of the sepoys was only to be expected under such circumstances, especially when they had Major Adam's promise^{(a) 5} still ringing in their ears and the example of the Europeans' successful mutiny before their eyes.

After thus enforcing strict military order and discipline in the army, Major Munro proceeded to meet the enemy. On the 22 October 1764, he fought and won the important

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1. L. from Jennings to Bengal Council. 28 February 1764. Bengal Sel. Cons. 19 March 1764. No. 29
 2. Champion's Journal. 20 March 1764. Home Misc. Vol. 198. p.252
 3. Broome - op.cit. 428.
 4. Bengal Sec. Con. 8 March 1764. No. 54.
 - (a) See p. 46
 5. This was a period when the word of a Commanding Officer was more important than regulations. Just as the Maratha troops felt that they "had nothing to do with the State but looked for pay, promotion and preference to the Jagirdar under whom they immediately served" (*) the Company's sepoys also looked to their regimental officer.
- * Sen - op.cit. p. 12.

and stubbornly contested battle of Buxar. Mir Kasim had escaped to Rohilkund before the battle was fought and Shuja-ud-daula first fled to Allahabad and then to Rohilkund after his defeat. The Emperor Shah Alam, representing himself as having been a state prisoner of the Nawab of Oudh at Benares, desired to be taken under British protection. To this the Council acceded and Major Munro with a detachment marched towards Benares to assure the Emperor of British protection. Shuja-ud-daula was pursued through Oudh, and on 3 May 1765 his last stand at Kora, where he was supported by Holkar's Maratha forces, ended in his final defeat. Meanwhile Mir Kasim had passed into obscurity, and the Emperor had been installed in Allahabad, under British protection. All Oudh was at the Company's disposal, and the Calcutta Council toyed with the idea of granting it to Shah Alam and of thus becoming the power behind the imperial throne.

In Bengal, too, events had permitted a further consolidation of the Company's power. In February the restored Mir Jafar had died, and his successor Nazim-ud-daula had only been recognized on condition that he appointed a British nominee as his acting deputy.

In England, however, the successful outcome of the struggle was still unknown. The news, "Bengal has again become a scene of bloodshed", had reached England in 1763 and had at once caused the Company's stock to sag. In 1764, "when news of Mir Kasim's resort to arms became public, the uneasiness rose to alarm and even to panic."¹ Clive had entered Parliament at

1. Sutherland - op.cit., pp. 116-117.

that time, but a vigorous debate was going on there and within the Company about his acceptance of the Jagir. The news of this fresh turmoil in Bengal enabled him to win a complete victory over his opponents. So much so that the Court of Proprietors insisted on sending Clive to Bengal with supreme military and civil powers. Consequently, in May 1765, Lord Clive arrived in Bengal to restore the situation. He found however that the Company's army had already been victorious everywhere and that "the highest political authority of all India now was a suppliant for British charity."¹ He also found the dazzled Council in Bengal in danger of being involved in a war for Delhi in which the Company, whose primary interest was trade and commerce, could not really be interested.

Clive restored the necessary measure of realism. Oudh he restored to Shuja-ud-daula, less the districts of Kora and Allahabad, upon payment of a war indemnity of fifty lakhs of rupees. To the Emperor he allotted Kora and Allahabad² with a tribute of twenty-six lakhs of rupees a year - and in return secured the imperial grant of the Diwani of Bengal. Since the Company's nominee Muhammad Reza Khan was already empowered by Najm -ud-daula to exercise all the powers of the Nizamat, the whole administration of Bengal thus came under the Company's control. "The Company became 'Nabobs' in fact, if not in name, perhaps totally so without disguise".³

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1. P.E.Roberts - History of British India p. 155
 2. Ibid. p. 160
 3. Ibid. p. 158

Clive thus solved the difficult problem of where to stop. He was legal master within Bengal of all functions that could concern the Company. He had secured the borders of the province from external threat by his treaties of alliance with the Emperor and the Nawab of Oudh. He had also resisted the dangerous temptation to involve the Company by an advance to Delhi in the wider politics of India.

In that the Company was very much behind him, for their prime concern was to reduce the heavy costs of war. To the representation by the Government at Fort William made in 1764 about "the indisputable necessity of keeping up such a body of English troops at the settlement as might of themselves be a sufficient security for their possessions,"¹ and to their warning against too much reliance on the sepoy, the Court had turned a deaf ear. Instead, it was demanded that Clive should cut down all the military expenditure in Bengal, "experience having shown that an influence maintained by force of arms" was "destructive of that commercial spirit", was "ruinous to the Company and oppressive to the country."² The Court therefore urged Clive "to conciliate the affections of the country powers, to remove the jealousy they"might "have conceived" of the English "ambition and convince them" that the Company aimed "not at conquest and dominion, but security in carrying on a free trade." Indeed the Directors would have gone

1. S.L. from Bengal, 17 September 1764. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773. H.C. p.577

2. Third report of the Sel. Committee 1773. H.C. Ap.67.

beyond economy to renunciation: "The sacrifice of conquests," the Directors stated, which they "must hold on a precarious tenure, and at an expense more than equivalent to their revenues", was "of little consequence" to them.¹

Since some force had obviously to be maintained, the more so since the acquisition of the Diwani involved the Company in revenue collection which often needed the backing of force Clive set about making that force efficient. In August 1765, he divided the entire Bengal army into three Brigades which were placed in the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Robert Fletcher, Colonel Richard Smith and Colonel Sir Robert Barker respectively. Each Brigade consisted of six sepoy battalions, one European infantry regiment, one troop of cavalry and one company of artillery. Each Brigade was thus made a complete force by itself. The Commanding officers of both European and native infantry battalions who had hitherto been directly under the Commander-in-Chief, were placed under Brigadiers with the intention of closer supervision.²

These three Brigades were stationed at three different centres in the Presidency. The 1st Brigade was at Monghyr (300 miles from Calcutta) and met the requirements of the Presidency and Murshidabad. The 3rd Brigade remained at Bankipore (near Patna) while the 2nd Brigade was stationed at Allahabad (200 miles beyond Patna) to render assistance to the Nawab of Oudh.

1. Third report of the Sel ~~...~~ Committee, 1773, H.C. Ap.67.
2. Broome - op.cit., p.533

"Though the greater portion of each Brigade was concentrated at these headquarters, they furnished the necessary details for the several outposts such as Lucknow, Jaunpore, Chunar, Benares, Midnapore and Chittagong."¹

By the new arrangement, the sepoy battalions were equalised in their complement of privates and European officers. In addition to the Captain, who remained in command of a battalion, there were two Lieutenants, two Ensigns, three European Sergeants and three Drummers. The posts of a native Commandant and a native Adjutant were retained in each battalion, which was also made up of ten companies as before. The establishment of a sepoy company was fixed as one Subadar, three Jamadars, four Havildars, four Naiks, one trumpeter, three tom-^(a)tom players and 69 privates.²

Considering the great expense incurred in maintaining so large a force, the Bengal Council decided that "the Company should only stand charged for such a part of the forces as were necessary for the defence of their own fortifications and territorial possessions and that the Government [of the Nawab] should be charged with the rest."³ One Brigade, they decided, was sufficient for the protection of the Company's fortifications and this was to be paid from the revenues of Calcutta, Chittagong, Burdwan and Midnapore, while the cost of the rest of the army would be charged on the Dewani revenues.⁴ Clive

1. Broome, op.cit., p.534.

(a) Indian Drum.

2. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy. 1773. H.C. pp.559-60

3. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy. 1773. H.C. p.578.

4. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy. 1773. H.C. p.578.

was thus able to satisfy the Home authorities, as in the books at least he reduced the military expenditure of the Company.

The reorganisation of the army into Brigades was admirably calculated. English troops were everywhere incorporated with native troops. By distributing the three Brigades at three different centres, the defence of the more distant districts was secured. Monghyr, situated between Bihar and Bengal, covered all the passes into the country. Troops at Allahabad were ready to beat back any attack from the Marathas, while the garrison at Bankipore could command the rivers Gandak and Son. Besides, by distributing the forces thus widely, the Company avoided yet another disadvantage. It had appeared from the late disturbances in the army that assembling too many battalions and regiments in one place frequently led to trouble, as it terrified the inhabitants of the region and frequently caused the price of provisions to rise. Spreading out the troops avoided this drawback and as the Directors said the new brigade structure was "a happy contrivance."¹

For reasons of internal security, Clive further proposed that the sepoy force of each Brigade should be composed of an equal number of "Gentoos and Mussalmans" and that a rivalry in the standard of discipline between them should be encouraged.² The Committee of Secrecy approved Clive's suggestion and observed that "if it were only on the principle of

1. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773. H.C.p.578.
2. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773. H.C.p.549.

"Divide et impera", the Moormen and Gentoos should be separated into distinct companies. Besides, the obvious reasons, other advantages might result from it, by detaching all Mussalmans or all Gentoos, into any particular country, as might be expedient in war or to conciliate their affection by rendering it more satisfactory to the inhabitants in times of peace."¹

The question of batta, which in future was to lead to so many disputes between the Company's Government and the Bengal Officers, now drew the attention of Clive. In all the three Presidencies, the army officers of the Company were allowed an extra monthly sum when in the field in addition to their basic pay in garrison. This allowance was known as batta. While full batta was a field allowance, half batta was also allowed at certain up-country stations and was meant to cover increased expenditure in the field or at an out-station. In Bengal, further allowance was paid, which provided in effect a double batta. This double batta had been awarded by Nawab Mir Jafar Khan after the battle of Plassey. During his reign, the army was constantly in the field, and in consequence the double batta was continued. Mir Kasim Khan, after obtaining the throne at Murshidabad, also confirmed this grant. But in 1760, when the Company received the three districts of Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong for meeting its military expenses, in lieu of cash payments from the Nawab's treasury - from the day

1. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy. 1773. H. C. p. 550.

when the burden was upon the Company - the Directors repeatedly issued orders to discontinue the double batta. The Bengal Council, being always engaged in war during that period, however, never considered it advisable to obey, arguing that it would be "a measure which could not fail to create a feeling of discontent in the army on whose services at the time they were so entirely dependent."¹

But by 1765 when Clive arrived, war had been brought to a close in Bengal and he decided without further prevarication to carry out the Directors' commands. An order was issued that from the 1 January 1766, double batta was to be withdrawn from the army except for the 2nd Brigade stationed at Allahabad, "which on account of the high price of provisions at that station and the expense of procuring the necessary European articles at so great a distance from the Presidency [town] were to be allowed the double batta in the field and the old original single batta in cantonment or in garrison, until they should be recalled within the province."² This advantage was extended to all the troops who should be employed beyond the river Karamnasa. Single or full batta was allowed to the army when marching or in the field and half batta for service in cantonment or in garrison with the exception that at Calcutta and its subordinate factories - Barrackpore, Berhampore and Dinapore - no batta was allowed. Instead

1. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy. 1773. H.C. p.581
 2. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy. 1773. H.C. Ap.I. p.672.

quarters at public expense were provided to the officers at these stations.

The Bengal Council informed the Directors about this new arrangement and stressed the economy that would follow. The Council however confessed that the Government needed "to devise a means of their (the officers) living cheaper and of supplying them with liquors and other stores at a more moderate price than those articles had usually been furnished" and admitted that "until the charges for equipage of the field in this climate were diminished by some public regulation the Allowance¹ of a Subaltern would scarcely maintain him in the station of a Gentleman."² The Council had therefore decided, they reported, that every Lieutenant attached to a sepoy battalion should be granted an extra allowance of 62 rupees and every Ensign 50 rupees per month as sepoy allowance.* Further, an extra allowance of 40 rupees per day was sanctioned to each Colonel commanding a Brigade to enable him to support the expense of a public table and in general to maintain his dignity. The Council had decided that in the Colonel's

1. Pay and batta allowed per month to the officers of the Bengal Sepoy battalions. (rupees)

		<u>Pay</u>	<u>Field batta</u>	<u>Addl. Allowance *</u>
Captain	...	124	186	<u>granted</u>
Lieutenant	...	62	124	62
Ensign	...	50	93	50

H. Strachey (Secy. to Lord Clive)-Narrative of the Mutiny of the Officers of the Army in Bengal in 1766. Ap.5.

2. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy. 1773. p.581

absence, the next senior Field Officer was to enjoy the Colonel's batta as also the table allowance. The Government was also to supply officers on the march, with tents according to their rank and with boats when proceeding by water.¹

Clive further tried to improve the financial condition of the officers by proposing that they be allowed a portion of the profits of the Government monopoly of the salt trade. On 3 September 1765, he sent his plan to the Directors and suggested that of the profits of the monopoly some twelve or thirteen lacs should go to the Company, and that the rest should then be divided into sixty shares, to be distributed amongst the senior civil and military officers of the Bengal Presidency. For example each of the three Colonels of Brigade would be allotted two shares, the three Lieutenant-Colonels two-thirds of a share each and the four majors each one third of a share.²

While submitting this plan, Clive emphasised the necessity of rewarding the Company's superior servants, both civil and military. "Considering that the late great advantages of unlimited trade" had been cut off, he expected that the Court of Directors would grant "their servants their Share of Benefits, as a Recompence for their Attention and Assistance in the Management of the important concerns of these Provinces.

1. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy. 1773. H.C. p. 581
 2. Fourth report on the nature, state and condition of the East India Company. 1773. H.C. Ap. 36.

On the other hand", he said that the servants should "look upon these emoluments as a Gift from the Hand of their Employers offered to them annually in Reward of their fidelity", which would "certainly be withheld from them, if ever their authority should be resisted, . --." ¹

The Directors did not approve Clive's proposal as they were too alarmed by the effects of English engagement in the inland trade in the past. "The vast Fortunes acquired in the Inland trade", they said had "been obtained by a scene of the most tyrannic and oppressive conduct, that ever was known in any Age or Country...and your Lordship" would "not therefore wonder, that after the fatal experience we had of the violent Abuses committed in the Trade, that we could not be brought to approve it, even in the limited and regulated Manner laid down in the Committee's proceedings." ² But they did agree with Clive "on the propriety of holding out such advantages to our chief servants, civil and military," as might "open to them the means of honourably acquiring a competency in our service." ³ The Directors therefore in 1767 granted to the officers an annual commission upon the Diwani revenue, by which the Commander-in-chief was granted $7\frac{1}{2}$ shares, the Colonels and the Lieutenant-Colonels were allotted $2\frac{1}{2}$ shares and $1\frac{1}{2}$ shares

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1. Fourth report on the nature, state and condition of the East India Company. 1773. H.C. Ap.43.
 2. L. to Bengal. 17 May 1766. Fourth report of the Committee of Secrecy, --- 1773. H.C. Ap.45.
 3. L. to Bengal. 17 May 1766. Fourth report of the Committee of Secrecy, --- 1773. H.C. Ap.45.

respectively per person and the Majors $\frac{3}{4}$ of a share of the total available. To remove all complaints regarding the withdrawal of Double batta the subaltern officers were granted an allowance or gratuity at the rate of three shillings per day for a Captain, two shillings for a Lieutenant and one shilling for an Ensign.¹

Before these orders had arrived from England, the new arrangement regarding the withdrawal of batta had come into force from 1 January 1766. Memorials, protesting against the cut, had immediately been sent in from each Brigade and to these Clive had replied that the Court's order was positive and no modification of the regulation would be allowed. No further sign of discontent was apparent and the Bengal Government remained under the impression that the new arrangement would not lead to any disturbances amongst the army officers.²

A generous gesture by Clive himself might also have been expected to reconcile the officers to the cut. Mir Jafar, who died in 1765, by his will, left some five lacs of rupees to Clive. Since at that time the order of the Company against the receipt of presents had not yet been published, it would have been open to Clive to pocket the money. Rightly thinking, however, that the example would have been an unhappy one to set, Clive chose to use the money to form a fund for wounded

1. L. to Bengal. 20 November 1767. para. 114. D. to Bengal. vol. 3
 2. Ninth report from the Committee of Secrecy. 1773, H.C. Ap. I.

and disabled European officers and men of the Company's army.

While Clive was thus busy in promoting the interests of the Army officers of the Company, secret meetings and consultations were being held in each Brigade upon the issue of double batta. All the European officers determined to compel the Government to a renewal of the batta by a general resignation of their commissions - and did so "without regarding the probable consequences to themselves or to the public, and unanimity, they doubted not, would ensure success."¹ The plotters decided "to refuse their usual advance of pay by the month of June".² In each Brigade a Committee of Correspondence was appointed with full authority to answer all letters regarding the batta question. The day for the general resignation was fixed as 1 June 1766. Everything was kept so secret that "even the Field Officers upon the spot entertained not the least suspicion of what was going forward."³

On the 19 April 1766, the officers of the 3rd Brigade (nine Captains, twelve Lieutenants and twenty Ensigns) sent a memorial to the Bengal Council pointing out that the wages of their servants, the price of food and the cost of other necessaries of life were higher in Bengal than in Madras or Bombay and therefore requesting the Government to continue with the double batta. Clive decided to ignore this memorial

1. Strachey - op.cit., p.7.

2. Ibid., p.7.

3. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy. 1773.H.C.Ap.I.

as it was not sent through the Brigade Commander Sir Robert Barker.¹

On the 28 April Clive received yet another letter from Sir Robert Fletcher, this time reporting that the officers of the First Brigade had resolved to resign their commissions.² General Carnac also received an anonymous letter that the officers of the 2nd Brigade were preparing to resign their commissions.³ Clive then realised that a mutinous spirit had silently spread throughout the European forces and prepared himself to face the situation.

Indeed, such a spirit amongst the European officers had far less justification than had the sepoy unrest so severely suppressed by Munro. Double batta had been an exceptional, temporary grant by the Nawab Mir Jafar, which might well have been ended without compensation, for despite the statements of the Bengal officers, it was more than doubtful whether the costs of servants, provisions etc. were any higher in Bengal than in Madras particularly for the up country stations.⁴ As the Ninth report pointed out provisions were "much cheaper in Bengal than on the coast of Coromandel" and again regarding European articles "expenses of transporting necessaries from Calcutta to any port in Bengal" could not

1. Strachey- op.cit., Ap.6.

2. Ibid., Ap.6.

3. Ibid.; Ap.10.

4. In 1757, the Directors had urged that batta should be greater in Madras than in Bengal "where all the necessaries of life are so much cheaper";
L. to Bengal. 11 November 1757. Para.73.
D. to Bengal. Vol.I.

"be so great as on the coast of Coromandel, because the whole country" was "intersected with navigable rivers". The real trouble was that Calcutta, the capital, encouraged extravagance: in the words of the Ninth report "luxury was boundless, and hence arose the imaginary wants and the real distress of the officers on the Bengal establishment."¹ Even had costs been as high as the memorialists stated, the Company's grant of free quarters, tents, boats, etc, together with the commission on the land revenue for the senior and the sepoy allowance for the junior officers had made very ample amends for the loss of batta.

Clive certainly did not believe that the officers had any legitimate grievances and resolved to suppress their mutinous behaviour by force. He knew that a few of the officers had already acquired comfortable fortunes and the resignation of their commissions was "a matter of indifference; but many on the contrary, he knew, there were, whose circumstances, whose youth, whose extravagance could not bear that they should voluntarily deprive themselves of the only means of present subsistence."² Clive therefore applied to Madras for every officer who could be spared and prepared to call the Bengal officers' bluff. He ordered the Brigadiers to send down to Calcutta every officer who displayed the smallest intention to mutiny. Clive himself boldly proceeded to the three Brigade stations, Monghyr, Patna and Allahabad. At Monghyr, he found

1. Ninth report from the Committee of Secrecy, 1773. H.C.Ap.I.
 2. Strachey - op.cit., p.167

that 42 officers had already resigned their commissions. He also learnt that the European soldiers wanted to follow their officers and they had submitted their resignations on the 13 April. It was only the appearance of two battalions of sepoys with fixed bayonets, that had thrown the European soldiers into confusion and prevented them from causing trouble. Clive first ordered the officers who had resigned to proceed to Calcutta and then addressing the whole Brigade asked the troops "to behave with regularity and sobriety". He also addressed the native troops through an interpreter and "ordered double pay to be issued to them for the months of May and June."¹

From Monghyr, Clive proceeded to Patna. Four of the officers who were active in the plot were sent down to Calcutta and the rest were pardoned.

The 3rd Brigade was then stationed partly at Allahabad and partly at Serrajepore² awaiting an attack from the Marathas. On 6 May, six of the officers resigned at Serrajepore and the rest expressed their intention to resign on the 1 June. The officers at Allahabad declared their determination to resign on May 20 and thus to coerce the Government into granting them double batta. Instead, they heard of the firm resolution of Clive, of his having summoned officers from Madras to replace those who had tendered their

1. Strachey - op.cit., p.34.

2. 104 miles distant from Allahabad - Ibid., p.46

resignations and of the shipping of officers who had resigned down to Calcutta. In the face of such vigour and determination, their courage failed and they asked for pardon. Thus the mutiny collapsed. Subsequent enquiry proved that Sir Robert Fletcher had instigated the officers to stand against the Government. He was tried by Court Martial and was cashiered. Six of the officers were likewise sent to England. The rest were reinstated.¹

With this display of firmness-warmly applauded by the Directors - the second governorship of Lord Clive ended in 1767. He left for England on the 29 January 1767 leaving Verelst, his successor, with what seemed excellent prospects for peace. The sepoy army had become an efficient body of troops² and the Europeans had been brought to order.

In 1768, the Court again advised the Bengal Council to decrease the number of sepoys arguing that "an establishment of fifteen thousand sepoys would be far superior to any country force" which could "be brought against the provinces..." and it "would be best answered by your paying them regularly, using them with humanity and giving the battalions as many European commissioned and non-commissioned officers as the service" could "afford."³

The first of the Directors' wishes - that the Bengal

1. Ibid., p. 129

2. L. from Richard Smith to Orme - 7 January 1767.

"Some of our sepoy battalions would astonish the King of Prussia and they astonish me." Orme MSS.O.V.Vol.17.p.13.

3. G.L. to Bengal. 16 March 1768. para.42. D. to Bengal. Vol 4.

force be reduced in size - could not be complied with, for while the war with Haider Ali and the Marathas continued in the Deccan, Bengal had to lend her troops to the other Presidencies. The despatch of Bengal sepoy to Madras in 1768 was so ill managed that it could scarcely be said, either, that the request for humane treatment of the sepoy was heeded.

Some of the Bengal sepoy sent to Madras in 1768 went the whole way by sea with a call at Vizagapatnam. They were so distressed by the want of provisions and of water on board ship and by the excessive overcrowding that they refused to go any further by sea and marched instead from Vizagapatnam to Madras. On arrival there, the Bengal sepoy found conditions no less difficult. As General Joseph Smith had reported, at one point movement against Haider Ali became impossible because the troops had for days been without rice.¹ These sepoy battalions returned to Bengal in 1770. Bad luck continued to follow them for two grenadier companies were lost at sea on the way back.

The majority of the Hindus, of whatever caste they might be, were averse to travel outside the borders of India and still more to a passage by sea. But, as has been noted before, both Bengal and Madras sepoy, Hindu and Muslim, had on occasion agreed to passage by sea from one Presidency to another, in time of war. If in later years, they proved increasingly reluctant to travel on ship-board, much of that

1. Wilson - op.cit., I, pp. 239 - 242

reluctance can properly be attributed to their experience of inadequate administration. Short supply of essential and suitable provisions and water on board ship and gross overcrowding made the natural dislike of an unknown element turn to positive hostility. As the Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy puts it "from the horrid inconsiderate...cruel management of the last embarkation to the Deccan, not a Gentoo" would "ever venture on board a ship again."¹

This reluctance of the native soldiers to travel by sea greatly complicated military planning, the more so because Bombay and Madras had to rely on Bengal's support in any major conflict.² Such was the case in 1778 when Bombay had to be helped by Bengal and six sepoy Battalions made the perilous, and famous overland march under Goddard. Similar was the situation in 1781 when five Bengal battalions marched in January from Midnapore and reached Madras in August 1781. So great was the suffering on these marches that the battalions lost half their number on the way by sickness, death and desertion.

Nor did the Directors' order that the sepoy forces should be well paid prove any less difficult to obey, for the ten or twelve years from 1770 onwards were years of financial crisis for the Company. In India, Bengal had to serve as a

1. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy. 1773. H.C. p. 549
 2. Review of the military history of the Hon'ble East India Company arising out of the political circumstances of Hindustan....1744-1795/6. Home Misc. Vol. 91A, p.1305

financial as well as a military support to the other Presidencies of the Company, for the Madras territories had been fought over ever since Aurangzeb destroyed Golconda and Bijapur while Bombay was still a trading post and naval base and not a major territory. But in 1769-70, Bengal itself suffered from a disastrous famine, which played havoc with the finances of the Bengal government. Lucy Sutherland has summed up the situation thus: "an increase in the expenses of administration, particularly on the military side... a trade depression in Bengal, suddenly intensified by the disastrous famine of 1769-70 inevitably cut down the revenues. Between 1767-8 and 1770-1, there had been a decline in territorial collections of some £400,000 per annum and an increase in the sums spent on fortifications of some £162,000 per annum, while other administrative costs were also rising."¹ As Holden Furber has observed, the Bengal Government was overwhelmed with debts.² Yet it was from Bengal that the wars of Madras and Bombay had to be financed to the amount of nearly a crore of rupees.³

The financial embarrassment in India and the military dangers to which the Company was exposed were reflected in England in a steady slump in East India Company stock. The Company had repeatedly to seek treasury permission to postpone the payment of customs dues upon their cargoes. Sales were

1. Sutherland. op.cit., p. 225
 2. Holden Furber - John Company at work. p. 225
 3. Auber - op.cit., Vol. I, p. 563

difficult. The declaration of a dividend was postponed. The short-term loans upon which the under-capitalised Company had been accustomed to operate, could not be renewed. "Nothing could now keep the Company out of bankruptcy and bankruptcy meant that the Company would have to throw itself on the doubtful mercy of the Parliament."¹ In 1772 the Directors had to inform Lord North that "unless they could obtain a loan of one million pounds from the State, they could not carry on their business."² They got the loan but only at the cost of a measure of Government control over the Company embodied in the Regulating Act of 1773.

The respite gained in India by the conclusion of peace with Haider Ali in 1769 and in England by the settlement, financial and political, of 1774 was short lived. In 1775, the Bombay Government involved itself in Maratha affairs but in spite of the treaty of Purandhar Hastings opened a disastrous four years of war in 1778 with the Maratha powers. In that same year the revolt of the American colonies merged into the European war in which France, Spain and Holland combined against England. In 1780, Haider Ali burst once more upon the frontiers of Madras. At that moment there was, as Hastings said, "a war either actual or impending in every quarter and with every part in Hindustan."³ Financial stringency or not, the sepoy force had to be augmented and the number of Bengal

1. Davies - op.cit., p. 468
 2. Roberts - op.cit., p. 181
 3. Roberts - op.cit., p. 197

sepoy infantry battalions steadily increased from 21 in 1777 to 35 in 1780.¹ There could obviously be no hope of securing additional European forces at that time.

In 1781, the Bengal Council brought about a major reorganisation in its sepoy units. The old battalions re-emerged as regiments of 1000 in strength, each composed of two battalions with five companies having a hundred men in each. The regiments so formed were commanded by Majors, the battalions by Captains and the companies by Lieutenants. Each regiment had an Adjutant, each battalion a Sergeant-major and a Quartermaster sergeant. This change had gone hand in hand,² moreover, with the abolition of the post of native commandant.

That post had never been so important in the Bengal as in the Madras forces. In Madras, there had been a succession of able native commandants who earned the praise of Lawrence and other officers. The two native Commandants Sheikh Ibrahim and Meer Mansur had distinguished themselves in the battle of Trichinopoly.³ Muhammad Yusuf Khan had been appointed as Commandant-in chief of all the sepoy troops at Madras. However in 1764, Yusuf Khan had gone into rebellion and finally in 1764 had been hanged.⁴ There was a consequent revulsion of feeling against the employment of such native officers: there were

1. From 1778 these extra battalions were raised one by one. Cardew - op.cit., p.41.
2. G.O.C.C. 10 January 1781. The Code of Bengal Military Standing Regulations 1791. Sec. xxiv.
3. Wilson - op.cit., Vol. I, p.73.
4. S.C.Hill - Yusuf Khan, The Rebel Commandant. pp. 144, 226.

"but few instances where they had "been of much service but frequent ones where" they had "done mischief. When they" were "clever men, their influence over the native officers and sepoy^s" became "dangerous and when they "were not so they" could "be of no use".¹ Hence it was thought necessary in the reorganisation of 1781, to abolish this post.

Of the reorganised regiments, four were ordered in 1782 to assist the hard pressed Madras Government by a move into the Northern Circars. These were the 4th, 15th and 17th at Barrackpore and the 35th at Burdwan. But when in February 1782, the 35th received orders to join the others at Barrackpore, disturbances began.

The 35th had only recently returned from service in Western India. Now it received orders to march for some unknown destination - one which rumour had it was to be reached by sea. The regiment refused to move. The sepoy^s claimed it "to be their due to be allowed to stay for a period of twelve months in any cantonment before proceeding on any foreign service."² Moreover they complained that their pay was four months in arrears so that they were in great distress for want of provisions. Indeed, the Company's credit had fallen so low that, as Hastings stated, "sufficient money could not be raised for the ordinary wants of the troops..."³ The major part of the arrears were paid in March 1782. Even then the 35th regiment refused to move and the sepoy^s asked for their discharge. The

1. Wilson - op.cit., Vol, II, p.174.

2. L. from Capt. Sparke to Major Popham. Burdwan 26 February, 1782. Bengal Sec. Procs. 11 March 1782. No.13.

3. Williams - op.cit., p, 202.

disbandment of the regiment was thereupon proposed by Major Popham and ordered by General Stibbert. The Council at Calcutta agreed that no lesser punishment was merited by the sepoy^s, who, without any genuine grievance, had refused to obey orders.¹ The 35th was marched to Midnapore, compelled to lay down its arms and was ignominiously disbanded. The colours of the regiment were burnt in the presence of all the troops in the station. The native officers were marched out with halters round their necks and the sepoy^s were discharged. Two Subadars and two sepoy^s, being sentenced by the Court Martial were blown away from the guns.²

But this stern example did not prevent the other three regiments at Barrackpore from refusing to embark for foreign service. Since there was only one other regiment at Barrackpore, the Government had not sufficient strength at the station to enforce obedience to its orders. On this occasion, therefore, General Stibbert suggested a court-martial but not disbandment and the withdrawal of the orders for foreign service.³ The Governor General approved of this suggestion and the order for foreign service was withdrawn. The regiments were let off with a severe warning. But in 1784, the 4th, 5th and 17th were broken up for their "unsoldier like" conduct and the men were drafted into the six Bengal battalions which had returned from the West Coast of India and were now formed into six regiments.⁴

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1. L. from Warren Hastings to Stibbert, Ft. William, 11 March 1782. Bengal Sec. Progs. 11 March 1782.
 2. L. from Ironside to Stibbert, Berhampore, 25 March 1782. Bengal Sec. Progs. 22 April 1782. No. 15.
 3. Bengal Sec. Progs. 22 April 1782. No. 15.
 4. Cardew - op.cit., p. 50

In all four regiments the men had been guilty only of a refusal to march - there had been no violence, no other disorderly action. The sentence passed was thus tolerably severe. But no solution was attempted of the basic difficulty, either by the imposition upon recruits of a specific pledge to accept voyages by sea as part of their duty, or by the recruitment of more Muslims who did not hesitate to sail for foreign service. The Muslims were in fact generally distrusted. "The Moors" were "bound by no ties of gratitude" the Bengal Government observed "and every day's experience" convinced "us that Mussalmans" would "remain firm to the engagements no longer than while they" were "actuated by principles of fear, always ripe for a change wherever there" was "the smallest prospect of success."¹

By 1784 peace had been restored both in Europe and in India. It was necessary to reduce the swollen Indian armies and to consider their organisation afresh. The changes introduced in the army organisation by the Bengal Government in 1781, with but scant reference to the Home Authorities, had sought to promote the internal strength of the sepoy units, by increasing the British and reducing the Indian element in the officering of that army. The Directors in 1782 had expressed their disapproval of this reorganisation and censured the frequent structural changes made in the past" according to the whim and caprice of different Governors and Commanders" and on

1. Long - op.cit., [redacted], p.151.

a plea of economy which was scarcely achieved. They had also expressed their sentiments in favour of the battalion as the basic unit of their Indian armies, since upon that system Captains and Lieutenants were all the Officers that were needed.¹ The Court in 1784 again reminded their agents in Bengal of the imperative need to reduce the military expenditure of the Presidency. To this request the Bengal Government had replied by carrying out yet another reorganisation in 1784 by which the whole sepoy establishment under its charge was subdivided into three brigades consisting in total of thirty regiments.² Upon this reorganisation, the Directors now effectively pronounced by forwarding in 1785 a plan of their own. Besides claiming to ensure economy and efficiency, by this new plan the Directors sought to make the system uniform in all the three Presidential armies, so that they would be able "to take the Field in the shortest notice and to act with effect whenever they" happened "to be united upon service." They ordered the Indian authorities therefore to reduce "the corps of every denomination at each of the Presidencies to the same strength in point of officers, non-commissioned officers and privates".³ The Directors also set limits upon the total size of the armies - that of Bengal being fixed at 36 sepoy battalions as compared to 30 regiments of two battalions each

1. L. to Bengal 28 April 1782. D. to Bengal. Vol. ~~111~~. 12.

2. Bengal Military Peace Establishment. 20 December 1784.
Home Misc. Vol. 361. p. 97.

3. Early P.P. relating to India. 1788. Collection No. 22. ~~111~~

then existing. Each of these battalions was to consist of eight companies of 68 men with the complement of European officers for each battalion fixed at one Captain, one Adjutant, eight Subalterns and eight Sergeants. The number of native officers - commissioned and non-commissioned - was kept at eight Subadars, eight Jamadars, 32 Havildars and 32 Naiks. Orders were also sent to distribute these sepoy battalions equally among six Brigades, to each of which one Lieutenant and one Major were to be attached as Field Officers for supervising the military duties.¹

The plan had the effect of undoing the Bengal Government's re-organisation of 1784 and of drastically reducing the total officer strength in India. This latter result raised the problem of redeployment of the European officers in the army establishment. Some were absorbed by increasing the number of officers per battalion, the rest who became supernumerary were granted half pay and ordered home, where the Directors promised, they should "enjoy that allowance till the opportunities offer of restoring them to full pay on the establishment".²

The sepoys rendered surplus were to be disbanded but the native officers because of their acquired skill and the possibility of their joining the native powers of India were ordered "to be retained upon full pay and to take the earliest

1. L. to Bengal. 21 September 1785. Paras. 82-83. D. to Bengal Vol. ~~XIV~~, 14.
 2. L. to Bengal 21 September 1785. Para 87. D. to Bengal Vol. ~~XIV~~, 14.

opportunity of restoring them to former situations,"¹

The provision that surplus officers should be sent home and that they should be retained on half pay until their services could be used again had its origin in a similar problem. The native rulers of India were showing alarming readiness to place their forces under European officers. There was an obvious threat here to the Company's military superiority. Indeed as early as 1775, the Company had forced the Nawab Vizier of Oudh to dismiss all the Europeans whom he had employed in his service and asked the Bengal Council to make it "an express article in the treaty to be concluded with the Nawab that no Europeans would be employed in his service without the permission of the Company".² As the Nawab was a subordinate ally of the Company such preventive measures had been easily taken. But in 1784 Mahadji Sindhia appointed De Boigne "an expert of ability and experience, trained in the best military schools of Europe who had served under the French and the Russian flags before his arrival in India" to the command of his forces.³ Before long Holkar appointed a French Officer Dudreneac to his army. Following these examples, the Poona Government also enlisted some European officers to command the battalions of its army.⁴ The Company had no power to stop these native princes from engaging European officers and hence all these preventive measures had to be taken.

1. L. to Bengal 21 September 1785. Para 88. D. to Bengal. Vol. 14
 2. L. to Bengal 15 December 1775. Para 59. D. to Bengal. Vol. 14
 3. Sen - op.cit., p. 133
 4. Ibid. p. 134

Finally the Directors emphasised, as they had done in 1768, the vital importance to the Company of its reputation as a good paymaster. They anticipated that the savings effected by the reduction in the total strength of their sepoy forces would make it possible to clear off the arrears of pay which had accumulated during the war years. They laid it down that "the leading principle of the Company's Government should be that the pay of the soldier ought never to be in arrear; while there was a rupee in the treasury, he was to be paid, every other article of expenditure being postponed to that consideration."¹

These attempts of the Company to make the Bengal sepoy army more efficient did bring about the desired effect. In September 1786, when Lord Cornwallis came out as Governor General and Commander-in-Chief in India, he found the high military efficiency of the native corps of the Bengal Presidency quite admirable. "A brigade of our sepoy⁵" he said "would easily make anybody Emperor of Hindostan."² In another letter to the Duke of York, he praised the courage and patience of the sepoys in bearing hunger and fatigue and remarked that "the native black troops" were "fine men and would not --- disgrace even the Prussian ranks."³ Again, in a letter to Dundas he expressed his surprise at the good condition of the native troops. He also observed that they would soon arrive at a very high pitch of discipline.⁴

1. L. to Bengal. 11 April 1785. Paras. 647-649. D. to Bengal Vol. 1 31
 2. Correspondence of Cornwallis. ed. C. Ross. Vol. I, p. 304
 3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 225.
 4. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 299

In sharp contrast, his opinion of the European troops of the Company was not so happy. In fact in the same letter to Dundas he thus expressed his dismay, "I did not think Britain could have furnished such a set of wretched objects."¹ To Sir William Fawcett he wrote nothing could be more prejudicial" to our interests and safety, than to degrade the character of Europeans, in a country where a handful of them" were "to hold millions in subjection. The contemptible trash of which the Company's European force" was composed made "me shudder."²

Though Cornwallis had expressed a general satisfaction with the soldierly qualities of the sepoy, he was not content merely to accept unchallenged their aversion to movement by sea. British possessions in India and the East were so widely scattered, and so often separated by independent territories that the delay which overland marches imposed upon troop concentration was not lightly to be borne. He therefore sought to undo the mischief caused by the inefficient handling of earlier expeditions by sea, and to win the sepoy to an acceptance of movement by sea as a normal incident of their service. An opportunity presented itself early in 1789. A reinforcement of troops was necessary at Fort Marlborough, Bencoolen, on the north-west coast of Sumatra. Sepoy volunteers were called for from the 1st, 30th and 32nd sepoy battalions and a bounty of ten rupees for each volunteer was promised. Two Subadars of the 32nd battalion who tried to prevent their men from volunteering

1. Correspondence of Cornwallis - op.cit., Vol. I, p.299

2. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 268-269.

were publicly discharged with ignominy from the service. Notwithstanding their efforts, sufficient volunteers were raised from the three battalions to form the required four companies. Cornwallis issued a circular in which he assured the sepoy that "he would never exact compliances from them which might be inconsistent with the tenets of their different religions, or with the rules of their respective castes."¹ The detachment with six European officers sailed at the end of February 1789. The officers were instructed to make the situation of the sepoy as comfortable as possible on board. Before sailing, the sepoy themselves supervised the filling of their water casks, and "were required to state every sort of article they wished for, for their diet during the voyage, of which an ample supply was provided at the expense of Government."²

These troops reached Sumatra at the beginning of March 1789 and remained there till the end of October. After a five weeks' voyage the contingent reached India again in December 1789. As had been promised the sepoy were paid full batta while on duty outside India, and they were given a month's full pay as a gratuity on their return.³ Moreover the volunteers were also exempted from the tax which was levied on the performance of the rites and ceremonies for deceased parents at Gaya which all Hindus were expected to perform.

With these efforts to persuade the sepoy to proceed by sea on foreign service, the Court of Directors expressed

1. Williams - op.cit., p.90.

2. Ibid., p.90.

3. G.O.C.C. 2 December 1789. Supplement to the Bengal Military Regs. 1799.

its agreement and pleasure. The effect upon the sepoys was marred to some extent, however, by the sickness experienced by the contingent in Sumatra and the mortality suffered on the voyage home. Men who embarked sick only too often succumbed to the discomforts of the sea voyage when their diet was restricted for religious reasons, to parched rice and peas.

Twelve months later, the attitude of the sepoys towards sea voyages was again to be tested. Britain in 1789 was on friendly terms with Holland, France had withdrawn her military forces from Pondicherry, and the Court of Directors even looked for a reduction on their military expenditure, thus achieving a judicious economy in India. Cornwallis however had warned them that though the neighbouring powers "professed the most pacific disposition towards the Company's Government, the ambition and real inclination of Tippoo" were "so well known, that should, unluckily, any difference arise with the French nation we must lay our account that the Carnatic" would "immediately after become the scene of a dangerous war."¹ In 1790, his foreboding proved justified, for war did break out with Tipu Sultan. The Bengal battalions were enlarged from eight to ten companies each,² and troops were sent by land from Bengal to Madras under the Quarter-Master-General Lt. Col. Cockrell. An appeal was then issued for volunteers³ and in 1791 Cornwallis himself sailed for Madras accompanied by more

1. Auber - op.cit., Vol.II, p.56.

2. L. to Bengal. 11 March 1791. Para 13, D. to Bengal, Vol. 21.

3. G.O.C.C. 8 November 1790. Supplement to the Bengal Military Regs. 1799.

than 1400 sepoy volunteers. Another body of 850 volunteers also sailed in the same year for the Carnatic, where in 1792 Cornwallis brought the campaign against Tipu to a successful close.

In 1793 when the sepoy volunteers returned to Bengal Cornwallis once again wrote to the Directors to express his great satisfaction with their spirit. It was "a pleasing reflection to the Commander-in-Chief", he wrote to the Court, "that during his command of the army," a spirit had been "shown by the native soldiery of sacrificing their prejudices to their duty and of overcoming their natural reluctance when the state" had "occasion for their services."¹

Yet another occasion arose in 1795, when Bengal was called upon to despatch troops by sea. While the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 had not led to any serious repercussions within India itself - the English Company had prevented trouble by seizing Pondicherry - in 1795 it became necessary to send troops to Malacca, for "its redemption and defence" from the French.²

The Madras Presidency had already supplied a number of troops for service in Malacca and in 1795 professed its inability to furnish more. It was decided, therefore, to send Bengal sepoys. That did not seem to pose any problem, for the Bencoolen expedition of 1789, and the ease with which volunteers had been found for the voyage to the Carnatic in 1791,

1. Cornwallis Correspondence, Vol. I, p.455
2. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No.2.

had made it seem that the sepoy's had been weaned by judicious management from their old fears of crossing the black water. Accordingly the 15th battalion, at Midnapore was asked to volunteer as a body for the expedition to Malacca. The battalion stationed at Barrackpore was not asked since it had already furnished volunteers for the Bencoolen contingent.

To ask a whole battalion to volunteer was a new departure, for in the past volunteers had been assembled from several battalions. Considerations, either of speed or economy led to the new experiment, which, if successful, would have marked a new stage in the adaptation of the sepoy forces to the Company's new needs.

Every effort was made to ensure the success of the experiment. Captain Grant, who commanded the 15th battalion was asked to broach the proposal to his troops, assuring them that full attention would be paid to the comforts and customs on board ship and that their families would be well looked after during their absence. It was also laid down that only if all unanimously accepted would the whole battalion be sent by sea.¹

The sepoy's were informed of the plan on 22 August 1795 and on a first reading of the arrangement there was no opposition.² But when the proposals were again read at the evening parade, the Grenadiers refused to embark. Ultimately, only 140 men out of the entire battalion expressed their

1. Bengal Mily. Cons. 9 October 1795. No. 3.

2. L. from Bateman to Scott. Midnapore 22 August, 1795. Bengal Mily. Cons. 9 October 1795, No. 3.

willingness to proceed by sea.¹

The refusal would perhaps have led to the cancellation of the whole experiment, had not the Grenadiers themselves approached Captain Grant a few days later and expressed their readiness to proceed. They appeared to be ashamed of their earlier conduct. The entire battalion was then paraded and the consent of all the men was obtained. A few sepoy were selected from the battalion to supervise the arrangements for procuring and storing the provisions and water on board ship. Transport was arranged. Boats were sent to Midnapore to bring the battalion to the mouth of the river Rupnarain where the ship was ready for them.

Then, on the 30 August suddenly and without any warning the two Grenadier companies attached to the 15th battalion again stated their strong objections to board the ship. They further accused the native officers of having deceived them. The sepoy too came forward and declared their utter aversion to embark. Throughout the night the Grenadiers, "never took of their commurbands and compelled the other sepoy to swear by the Koran, Ganga, and Toolsey in their hands, to refuse to embark."² The Government, being informed of this mutinous behaviour of the 15th battalion, decided to convince the mutineers and other sepoy that it would "neither submit to the capricious behaviours of its soldiers nor suffer its orders to

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1. Narrative of the C. in C. before the Council. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 3A.
 2. L. from Bateman to Scott. Midnapore, 30 August 1795. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 3C.

be trifled with with impunity."¹

Lieutenant-Colonel Erskine was sent up to Midnapore with the instruction that "in his treatment of that battalion he was not only to consider what was due to itself for its misconduct but the impression which that treatment would make on the minds of the other native troops of the army."² At a Court of Enquiry which he held, it appeared from the evidence that Captain Grant had been over hasty in reporting to the Government that his battalion was ready for overseas service.³ It was also proved that the native officers, without any authority, had promised extra money to the sepoys and had tried in that way to extract their consent to the sea voyage.⁴ It became equally clear to Erskine that when the sepoys eventually reacted against the pressure, it was only because of certain religious and social prejudices.

However, Erskine was under instruction to make an example of the battalion for its conduct. It had indeed shown an even more mutinous disposition after its refusal to embark by refusing also to perform weekly duty when ordered, on the grounds that it was the turn of the 29th battalion. He therefore ordered a parade of the troops at Midnapore. The 15th were then ordered to lay down their arms and strip off their uniforms. They were warned that if they refused to carry out these orders the guns were ready to blow them off the parade ground.

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1. L. from Scott to Bateman Ft. William 4 September 1795. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 2
 2. L. from Scott to Bateman Ft. William 4 September 1795. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 2
 3. L. from Erskine to Murray Midnapore 26 September 1795. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 2.
 4. Evidence of sepoys before Court of enquiry, Midnapore, 28 September 1795. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 34.

They did refuse, ignoring the warning, and the order was given to open fire upon the mutinous sepoys; for some fifteen minutes they returned the fire, and then, many having been killed or wounded, dispersed and fled. The colours of the battalion were publicly burnt and the battalion was declared disbanded. Instructions were issued by Erskine that any person found sheltering any of the mutineers would be tried by Court martial.¹ Magistrates of all the district courts were also asked to detain for enquiry all sepoys and native officers passing through their districts or towns without a valid discharge certificate or other written authority.²

Thus the attempt to embark an entire battalion for foreign service failed. From the proceedings of the Court of Enquiry it was evident that the officers, both European and native, perhaps with an eye to personal advancement or from a wish to win credit for the battalion, had tried to force the sepoys to agree to the proposal of the Government. One of the sepoys deposed before the Court of Enquiry that Lieutenant Rutledge had come to the lines and urged them to go on the expedition. Later, when the sepoys refused to embark, the same officer showed his anger in violence and threats. Thus when parading the battalion he had kicked a sepoy for not standing properly to attention, and had declared, so the accusation went, that "he would make the sepoys eat beef and pork when he

1. L. from Erskine to Abercromby. Midnapore, 8 October 1795.
Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 3P.

2. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 3C.

got them on board ship,"¹ Captain Grant, when informed of the incident, had not believed it. Without any proper enquiry he had asked the sepoy to forget and forgive.² Subadar Kistna Ram was stated to have said that all the sepoys would be sent to Calcutta and hanged for having refused to go on board,³ and Subadar Ram Sing to have said, "in ten days we" would "put string in all these scoundrels' noses and carry them on board ship."⁴ Some other native officers had sought to tempt the sepoys to embark by setting out what grants would be made for each rank if they did agree to go to Malacca. It had been this double appeal to their cupidity and their fear which for a moment had persuaded the sepoys to reverse their first refusal to consider overseas service. But threats and appeals had both given way before religious feelings when the moment for actual embarkation arrived.

The patient efforts of Cornwallis thus ended in apparent failure, and the Home Government expressed its deep disappointment that its "most sanguine expectations that the prejudices of the Hindu troops to a voyage by sea were gradually lessening",⁵ had been so dramatically exposed as unfounded. The only comfort they were able to draw from the unhappy incident was that Erskine had acted most judiciously

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1. Evidence of sepoys before the Court of Enquiry. Midnapore, 28 September 1795. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 34.
 2. Capt. Grant before the Court of Enquiry. Midnapore, 28 September 1795. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 39
 3. Capt. Grant before the Court of Enquiry, Midnapore, 29 September 1795. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 39
 4. Bengal Mily. Progs. 9 October 1795. No. 3C.
 5. L. to Bengal. 5 July 1791. Para 53. D. to Bengal.
- Vol. ~~31~~. 31.

and that the 29th battalion, which acted against the mutineers, had furnished "an ^exemplary proof of their steadiness and attachment to the service."¹ What was also notable about the incident was that no punishment other than disbandment was inflicted upon the 15th battalion. There was no court martial, and the sepoys who had for fifteen minutes violently resisted authority were neither tried nor punished. The Government, it would seem, had realised that where religious feelings were concerned patience and persuasion were more effective than coercion.

The maintenance of discipline and loyalty in a mercenary army had never been an easy task. As the Committee of Secrecy observed in 1773, "of all artificial fabricks, an Army" was "perhaps the most complicated and like other Machines", required "constant attention to keep in order."² But the task in the Bengal Sepoy army was made more difficult than in the Madras or Bombay armies by the policy of recruitment. It has already been noted that the first sepoy battalions raised in Bengal by Clive were not composed of native Bengalis. The recruiting grounds were rather Bihar, Orissa and Oudh. The inclusion of men from Oudh was early seen to have its disadvantages, for the great number of desertions from the first Brigade, marching in 1768 from Monghyr to Calcutta to embark for Madras, led the Directors to order that

1. L. To Bengal 5 July 1791. Para 53. D. to Bengal Vol. XXXI.
 2. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773. H.C. p. 290

recruitment be restricted to the Company's territories of Bihar and Orissa. They asked to recruit "as much as possible in Behar or Orissa so that we" might "not be exposed to desertion or treachery by having them levied in the countries of any of the neighbouring provinces."¹ In 1790, when the Bengal Government had to despatch troops to Madras for the campaign against Tipu Sultan, desertions were again numerous. Once again, likewise, it was observed that the largest number of deserters were Oudh men. The Commander-in-chief drew the obvious conclusion. "An experience so unquestionable must satisfy every person that whatever advantages such men" might "possess in point of height and appearance", they were "by no means so fit for soldiers in the Company's service as the natives of our own provinces." It was therefore directed that Commanding officers of battalions of sepoy should receive as few men as possible from the countries to the west of Benares, but fill up all vacancies in these battalions, "as few as may be practicable, with natives of the Company's provinces."² Yet despite this second example and warning recruiting continued to be made from Oudh for reasons discussed later.*

That the known disadvantages of such recruitment, most notably the reluctance of Brahmin and Rajput troops to move by sea, were ignored, may partly be attributed to the desire of Commanding Officers to have their troops look well, a Prussian

1. L. to Bengal. 11 November 1768. Para 107. D. to Bengal. Vol. IV, 4.
 2. G.O.C.C. 28 June 1790. Supplement to the Bengal Mily. Regs. 1799.

* See Chapter III.

passion for tall, well-built men, and partly to the way in which recruits were collected. The army officers, in fact, took the easy way of accepting those who presented themselves for service rather than of particularly recruiting in such areas as Bihar and Orissa. "Young men, many of whom" were "Rajputs, from nearby villages always presented themselves daily on the parade ground for employment."¹ When an urgent need arose, trustworthy Jamadars or Havildars were sent out to bring in new recruits, and, being sent out "with a smart new turban, glaring sword, laced coat and some money, they generally succeeded; for as in England their fair speeches and tinsel coats" attracted "many followers."² It may also be said, that these men took the opportunity to enlist their own relatives, and this led to the Bengal army being doubly unusual in that it was predominantly high caste Hindu in composition and was restricted as to the area of recruitment.

In other matters however, the Company sought to ensure uniformity between its forces. Thus though the first code of military regulations was produced for the Madras army in 1765, the Directors in 1768 ordered the Bengal Government to follow these as far as possible. "In order to assist" it "(to frame regulations)" they sent "the private Military code or plan given out at Madras in 1765, for the troops on the coast of Coromandel, which allowing for the difference of the service at the two Presidencies "might be adapted to the situation and

1. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773. H.C. p. 550
 2. Ninth report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773. H.C.p. 550

particular circumstances of the troops employed in Bengal varying the rules, orders and regulations accordingly." The Bengal Council was "not only to transmit" the Home Government "a copy of such a code annually but" was "likewise to transmit copies to the other Presidencies", who were "to do the same with respect to Bengal. "This mutual communication" would as the Directors mentioned "if duly attended to, be productive of similarity of system throughout our whole possessions."¹

The Home Government in its letter of 1773 further asked the Bengal agents to translate the Articles of war into the country languages and laid down that these "must be publicly, at stated times, read at the head of the several companies."² The latter also said that "a Mode of trial must also be established and adequate punishments inflicted for offences, particularly for Disobedience and Desertion."³

While Codes and Courts martial were one side of the effort to secure uniformity, regularity and discipline in the Company's sepoy forces, good pay and pensions were another.

The pay scale was framed in 1779. Sepoys received six rupees a month, naiks eight, havildars ten. The rate of pay of the commissioned officers was fixed at sixteen rupees for a Jamadar and sixty for a Subadar. In addition to their basic pay full batta (dearness allowance) was granted at the rate of three rupees for a sepoy, ten for a Naik or Havildar, fifteen

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1. G. L. to Bengal, 16 March, 1768. Ninth Report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773, H.C. p. 586.
 2. L. to Bengal. 7 April 1773. Para 29. D. to Bengal. Vol. ~~V~~. 6.
 3. L. to Bengal 7 April 1773. Para. 29. D. to Bengal. Vol. ~~V~~. 6.

for a Jamadar and thirty for a Subadar. This batta until 1781 was given automatically in all circumstances. In 1781, however, the Government at Fort William revoked the regulation, it "being found from experience that giving them (the sepoy) the same batta in the field as in Cantonment has proved a discouragement to their going upon service."¹ Instead it was laid down, the Court of Directors approving, that "no more than half batta was allowed to the native troops in any cantonments whether within or without the province except upon foreign service beyond the Jumna or Subarnarekha."²

The sepoy were always paid at the expiration of every month. Neither the pay nor the batta was ever advanced to them and hence in the case of desertion the Company did not experience any loss of money.

Good pay, regularly issued was supplemented on campaign by prize money and by the grant of medals to sepoy and of standards to battalions. The Company also introduced a system of pensions for native soldiers at the rate of half the pay of the ~~in~~ rank. In 1782, when the Bengal treasury was exhausted, the Governor General with the approval of the Court, established the jagir system of land grants. "In order to relieve the Company from a part of the expenses of the native invalid establishment --- and to afford a satisfactory provision for the objects of it,"³ the Bengal Government

1. Home Misc. Vol. 243. p:56.

2. Home Misc Vol. 243. p.56.

3. M.C. 14 June 1782. The Code of Bengal Military Regs. 1791. Sec.IV.

decided to grant waste lands to those native soldiers who desired to receive them instead of invalid pay or pension. The area of land allotted varied according to the rank.¹ The full pension of soldiers who accepted land continued for three years, when it was reduced by one third. After two years the pension was again reduced. The remaining third was paid for life. Upon the death of the grantee his heirs were allowed to enjoy the land at an annual fixed rent.²

For those invalided out of the Service there was similar provision of land or grants to pay and an annual Committee of Surgeons was appointed after 1791 to examine the sick and to recommend their transfer if necessary to the invalid establishment.

The Company also sought to introduce order into the system of promotion by laying down that seniority as well as merit should be rewarded.³

1. A Subadar - 400 Bighas*, a Jamadar - 200 Bighas, a Havildar -120 Bighas, a Naik -100 Bighas and a Sepoy - 80 Bighas.

H.C. 14 June, 1782. The Code of Bengal Military Regulations 1791, Sec.IV.

- * "A Bigha is the most common Hindu measure of land area, varying much in different parts of India". Hobson-Jobson, p.29.
2. H.C. 9 May 1788. The Code of Bengal Military Regs. 1791. Section XV.
3. The odd system applied to commissioned and non-commissioned officers of having to pay a fee when they were promoted. It was laid down in 1786 that "The Major of Brigade in conferring the commissions shall be allowed to receive from every Havildar promoted to the rank of a Subadar half a month's pay for the considerable trouble and labour for the Major." M.C. 9 March, 1786. What that extra trouble was, for which this fee was paid, is not easy to see.

The pride of the men, and a sense of corporate identity and discipline was also fostered by putting them into distinctive uniforms. "A short regimental Jacket, white Neemah, white country breeches, halfway down the thigh, rather tight and bordered with a figured binding, of the colour of the Facing of the Battalion, a Turban, either blue, red or mottled, smartly cocked in the Maratha fashion and decorated with a Plume of feathers or cloth" expanded "like a small fan," their sashes" were "the colour of their turbans with their bayonets fixed in them like a dagger. Black officers" wore the same upper dress only laced, and their plumes or combs ornamented with Gold, their lower garments are Nankeen Breeches and stockings all in one.¹

By such measures an effort was made to transform the individualist, laxly disciplined Indian mercenary troops of Mughal and Maratha days into a disciplined sepoy army. In the main, the effort had proved successful, the rules and regulations had taken effect by 1795. On many occasions the sepoys had afforded gallant proofs of their fidelity and devotion to the Company. At Buxar the sepoys, it was reported, behaved admirably "although some of them were new corps, not having been raised more than eight months."² Warren Hastings observed "on my arrival at Chunar I found myself in great and immediate distress for want of money. The troops were some

1. M.C. 7 May 1781. The Code of Bengal Military Regs. 1791. Section XXVI.

2. Williams - op.cit., p. 52

four and other five months in arrears;" but he had "however great pleasure in testifying that distressed as the sepoy were for the want of money, they never manifested the least symptoms of discontent." Thus he said "I frequently visited the camp and passed the line each time in review; once and only once I heard one or two voices of complaint but neither clamorous nor disrespectful."¹ Cornwallis, as Commander-in-chief congratulated the Bengal sepoy who had served in Madras remarking that "the adherence and fidelity of the native officers and soldiers on a service so extensive in its duration and so distant from the Presidency to which they" belonged would "be a memorable proof of the attachment of the Bengal native soldiery to the British Government in India."²

1. Williams - op.cit., Ap.E.

2. G.O.C.C. 22 January 1793. Supplement to the Bengal Military Regs. 1799.

CHAPTER IITHE EUROPEAN OFFICERS OF THE BENGAL NATIVE INFANTRY(1796 - 1852)

In the preceding chapter, the formation and growth of the Bengal native infantry, the regulations enacted to govern it and certain highlights in its career over the years 1757 to 1795 have been discussed. During this period the East India Company's Bengal native army functioned as a loosely-joined collection of regiments, each of which was supervised by an European officer with extensive control over the sepoys in his care. He was, in effect, the virtual owner of his regiment and more often than not, such absolute authority led to mismanagement or at least to some corruption. Significantly, neither the Board of Control nor the Company's Executive at Fort William thought it necessary to spend much time in formulating policies to check such regimental autonomy and correct such evils as sprang from it, for their attention was not so much centred upon how the Bengal native infantry was administered as upon its profitability as an item of cost in the overall budget of the East India Company. They generally agreed that a force which produced economically valuable results, even though corrupt, should not be tampered with and it was not until discontent amongst the army officers reached a dangerous pitch, by the late 1790's, that the Home Authorities considered it necessary to devise a new military policy. For this purpose,

they welcomed the memorandum of the recently returned Governor-General of Bengal, Lord Cornwallis, and on the basis of his recommendations the Board set forth a number of reforms which it deemed valid to institute. The basic policies embodied in the reforms were those of centralisation, Europeanisation of the army and strict economy. But the over emphasis upon economy in these, as well as in subsequent reforms, defeated the objective of the Board which was to achieve a sound military policy for the Bengal native infantry. Instead, its reforms had particular and significant effects on the attitude and status of the European officer cadre, on the relationship between the officers and their sepoy and ultimately upon the efficiency of the native army. These developments, in turn, made their contribution to the history of the Bengal native infantry, and hence form a necessary part of our study.

It is perhaps better to pause momentarily and consider the service conditions of the European officers of the native army prior to 1794 in order to appreciate the causes of their dissatisfaction. Since 1757, the army of the East India Company in Bengal, Bombay and Madras had consisted of both Company and royal troops. By an act of Parliament of 1754, officers of the Crown serving in India always took precedence over Company's officers of the same rank. A captain of the King's army, even if he was a captain of one day's standing only was considered in India to have seniority over the most senior captain of the Company's army. So long as the inflow of the royal officers was negligible, this inequality was little felt by the Company's

officers. But, as has been seen, from 1782 the Company became embroiled in Mysore with Hyder Ali and then in several quarters with the Marathas, and so required assistance from the Crown. A considerable number of royal officers consequently arrived in India, all of whom superceded the Company officers of the same rank. Further in those years many junior officers of the royal regiments received promotion during their service in India,¹ promotion which was certainly more rapid and extensive than that received by the Company's officers. This preferential treatment raised vehement protest from the Company's officers who only obtained redress in 1788, when, with the sanction of the Parliament, royal commissions were locally granted to the Company's officers which entitled them to equal privileges with their colleagues in the royal regiments.²

This measure removed the most immediate and glaring inequalities between the two services but the greater consideration - that of unequal prospects of promotion within the Company's and the Crown's army - was left untouched. This was the more bitterly felt since, as the following illustration indicates, even the prospects of promotion within the Company's forces had receded with the passage of years so that an officer appointed to the sepoy army in 1784 found himself promoted at a much slower rate than an officer appointed in the same rank

1. Cornwallis Correspondence op.cit., Vol. 1, Ap. XIX.
 2. Wellington's Despatches, Ed. S.J.Owen p.595.

in 1765.¹

Name	Year of appointment and rank						
	Cadet	Lt.	Capt.	Com. of Battalion	Major	Lt. Col.	Col.
Col. Bristo	1763	-	1765 (3)	1769 (6)	1778 (15)	1781 (18)	1788 (25)
Lt. Col. Duncan	1766-67	-	1774 (7)	1778-79 (12)	1781 (15)	1793 (27)	-
Capt. Gruber	1769	-	1781 (12)	1794 (25)	-	-	-
Capt. Davis	1772	1778 (6)	1793 (21)	-	-	-	-
Lt. Ramsay	1784	1794 (10)	-	-	-	-	-

N.B. Figures in brackets indicate the years of service since entry as a cadet.

This was primarily so, because the number of senior officers in the Company's army remained ludicrously small, there being only 102 field officers² amongst an establishment of 1050 to 1080 officers in the Company's army for the three Presidencies as sanctioned by the regulations of 1786.³ The ratio of one field officer to ten officers did not parade any

1. The questions answered on observations upon the points submitted by a personage of high rank for the consideration of certain of the Hon'ble Company's service now in India 1794. Home Misc. Vol. 85, p. 633.
2. Field officers - 12 colonels, 45 lieutenant-colonels and 45 majors.
3. Regulation of 1786 - A native battalion consisting of eight companies, each under a Lt. was commanded by a Capt. Six such native battalions, formed a Brigade which was officered by one Maj, one Lt.-Col. and one Brigadier Genl.
L. to Bengal, 21 September 1785. Paras. 82 & 83.
D. to Bengal, vol. 14.

very bright prospects of promotion before the eyes of the junior officers, and in fact subalterns were often detained in the same rank for more than twenty years. As Sir John Shore observed, "the Company's officers were frequently employed in command of detachments in point of force as well as of importance equal to what field officers are entrusted with in Europe. But this experience and habits of reflection does not bring them quick promotions. No subaltern has the prospect of arriving at the rank of a Captain under a period of 30 years. Entering at 17, he will be 57 years old before he obtains a Colonel's command."¹ The Berhampore officers in 1795 furnished details which fully supported Shore's observation. They noted the average number of years of service required to reach the various ranks in the Company's native armies, which worked out at "Senior Lieutenant twenty one years, Ensigns ten years and if the present system is suffered to continue, of a majority of subaltern officers in the infantry not one can be made a Captain until he shall have been sufficiently fortunate or rather unfortunate to survive an exile of from twenty four to twenty eight years in the uncongenial and debilitating climate."² Criticising the almost total stagnation of promotion prospects John Malcolm³ in 1794 recorded "on an average

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1. Shore to Dundas (no date). Home Misc. Vol. 451. p.25.
 2. Address from the Berhampore officers to the Directors. Home Misc. vol. 451, p.490.
 3. In 1819, Malcolm became Major General. The East India Company Military Calendar. vol.1, p.468.

in the year 1793, the number of years the officers of each rank had served in India - the Colonels from 30 to 33 years, Lieutenant-Colonels from 27 to 30 years, Majors from 25 to 27 years, the Captains from 21 to 25 years and the Lieutenants from 10 to 21."¹ The Company officers were indeed of the opinion that "this was an army of subalterns."²

Not only was promotion terribly slow, it also ended abruptly, for the Company's officers could not achieve a rank higher than that of Colonel, whatever their competence and seniority in years of service. Though their knowledge of the country and of the manners and the language of its inhabitants gave them a great advantage over any officer of the royal army, the general in charge of a Brigade was always appointed from a royal regiment. "The men educated on the fields of Germany and America were regularly sent to India to lead the troops there."³ It was in sheer despair that we find the officers of the Bombay native army in a petition asking whether they "can avoid feeling themselves degraded when in an army of sixty thousand men constituted in other respects upon the same principles as the armies of the European states, there is not a single officer above the rank of a Colonel."⁴

Further, there was no regulation to secure the grant of

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1. Malcolm to Col. Mark Wood, relative to the proposed army arrangement. 14 November 1794. Home Misc. vol. 451. p. 243.
 2. Address from the Madras officers to the Directors. Home Misc. vol. 451., p. 500.
 3. Malcolm to Mark Wood relative to the proposed army arrangement. 14 November 1794. Home Misc. vol. 451, p. 243.
 4. Address from the Bombay officers to the Directors. Home Misc. vol. 451, p. 517.

pensions for old Company officers. A worn out, wounded or infirm officer could not expect an honourable and comfortable retirement from service. He had two avenues open to him and neither of them very promising - to remain in India and be banished from his native land or to return to his friends at home as an object of charity after twenty or thirty years of absence.¹

The Company officers were not even granted the privilege of returning to Europe for a limited period during their term of service. They had to give up the service and their pay for the period of absence from India, if they proceeded home, be it for personal reasons or on medical grounds. On return, they were kept on half pay and could re-enter the service only when a vacancy occurred. The royal officers, on the other hand, were not only permitted to visit England during their period of service, upon either personal or medical grounds, but they were permitted to retain their position in the service and to receive their regular pay while on such leave.

To add to all these grievances, the officers of the Company's army found good reason to be greatly perturbed over the gradual deterioration of their general prospects. In the early eighteenth century men from several sections of English society had been encouraged to join the service of the Company by the great opportunities India then offered. By 1757 "Nabob" had become a familiar and in some circles enviable word in

1. Malcolm to Mark Wood. 14 November 1794. Home Misc. vol.451, p.244.

England. "There were nabobs who bought fine estates and devoted their energies in making them still finer,"¹ and there were others who led a more active life and entered Parliament. Consequently, a position with the Company whether administrative or military, came for a time to be considered as a sure means to fame and fortune.

But with the passage of Pitt's Act in 1784 this picture changed, though the change did not make itself immediately known to aspiring recruits, who continued to come forward for military service with the old expectations only to be disillusioned. Of this change in prospects, Malcolm observed in 1794, "they neither did nor could know - the rise had formerly been rapid and but a short time ago eleven years were reckoned an unusual length of time to remain a Subaltern."² By the last decade of the eighteenth century, however, the junior officers of the Bengal infantry after some years of service in India, had begun to realise that far from returning home as 'Nabobs', they would most likely never rise above the rank of subalterns.

The growing frustration and discontent with their service conditions of the Company's officers (especially the more junior) emerged in the open when several memorials listing their grievances were sent during 1793- 94 to the Company's Government at Fort William.³ Copies of these memorials were

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1. J.M.Holtzman - The Nabobs in England - A study of the returned Anglo-Indians, 1760-1785. p.70.
 2. Malcolm to Mark Wood./Home Misc. Vol.451, p.255./ 14 Nov. 1794
 3. The memorials from officers at Fort William, Fattyghur, Chunargarh, Cawnpore, Dinapore, Berhampore, Madras and Bombay: 10 February 1793 to 10 September 1794. Home Misc. Vol. 451, pp.471-517.

forwarded to the Home authorities at London. Besides ventilating their discontent, the Company officers reproached the authorities for their indifference, observing that "in the very proportion that your fortune have improved, the prospects of your officers have declined."¹ The officers further argued that the Company's Government, being essentially a body of merchants, was so preoccupied and anxious to maintain its trading concerns that it neither realised the importance of sovereignty, with which the victories achieved by its army had endowed it, nor understood that good policy and justice demanded prompt improvement in the service condition of its army officers. Though these memorials failed to move the Board to specific action they did find their way into the Calcutta Press publication, "The World", in which under the pseudonym of 'Anthony' several letters, presenting in very strong language the claims and rights of the Bengal army officers, were published.² When the editors of the publications received strong hints from the Government that no such letters should be published in future, the Company officers of the Bengal army, as a counter step formed a Select Committee with full powers to act for the whole army and bought a printing press with the resolve to assert their freedom of expression.³ The situation became increasingly serious. When the Home authorities in

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1. Address of the Madras officers. Home Misc. Vol.451, p.501.
 2. L. from Col. J. Braithwaite to Maj. G. Braithwaite. 13 April 1794. Home Misc. Vol. 451, p.310.
 3. L. from Col. J. Braithwaite to Maj. G. Braithwaite about the discontent of the Bengal officers. 13 April 1794. Home Misc. Vol.451, p.310.

London learned of this development they admitted the reasonableness of the memorialists' demands and, with the consent of His Majesty's Ministers, assured the officers that relief would be provided. However, nothing was done,¹ for the Government was too busy with the war against France seriously to consider Indian affairs. With such inaction the Company's officers lost faith in the Home authorities and thereupon formed committees of Bengal officers, both in Bengal and in London to develop a concerted plan and to force the authorities to redress their grievances.² Their final step was the presentation of a memorial to the King.³

By 1794, when Cornwallis returned from India, the action of the Bengal officers had compelled the Board to give serious consideration to their grievances. (They had been moved also by the fact that the Company could ill afford to have rising discontent in its army at a period when its Charter was being renewed). So, when on 1 September 1794, Henry Dundas, the President of the Board of Control, learnt that Cornwallis had given considerable thought to the state of troops in India, he requested him to submit a plan for the reorganisation of the Company's army.⁴ Cornwallis submitted his proposal on 7 November 1794 to Dundas, who forwarded it to the Directors for their

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1. Sir Francis Barring, debate at the East India House 5 May 1797. Home Misc. Vol. 450, p. 295.
 2. An Indian Governor-Generalship Ed. H. Furber. pp. 11-12.
 3. Memorial of the officers to the King (no date) Home Misc. Vol. 452, p. 520.
 4. L. from Dundas to Cornwallis. 1 September, 1794. Cornwallis correspondence op.cit., Vol. 2, p. 263.

consideration.¹

A man of the landed aristocracy and a Whig in his political attitude, Cornwallis had a deep rooted belief in English ideas and institutions. He was convinced that English ways were right and best.² To him the defects of the Company's army could best be remedied by integrating it with the royal army. After making various specific recommendations to meet the grievances of the officers, he pointed out that as the opportunities for making money were to be found not in service with a regiment of the European army of the Company but with a regiment of sepoy, the Company's European regiments had been sadly neglected and badly officered. He suggested, therefore, that the native wing of the Company's army should be separated completely from the European wing. He further sought to reduce the military expenditure of the Company, to reorganise the sepoy army on an European model, to improve its morale by stopping the frequent transfer of officers and by removing the temptation to peculation of the sepoy officers. He also expressed himself strongly in favour of centralisation and recommended that the Government of India should always refer any decision on military matters to the London authorities for sanction prior to their introduction.

The Directors took strong exception to Cornwallis' recommendation that the Company's army should be merged with that of

1. Cornwallis' plan of military arrangements for the Company's forces. 7 November 1794. Home Misc. Vol. 388, p. 503.

2. Philips - India. p. 63.

the King. They were afraid of losing their patronage and control over the Company's army and warned Dundas that they would "on no account consent to the transfer of the Company's army to the King's service."¹ Dundas evolved a compromise plan and submitted this to the Directors for their approval.

Though based essentially on Cornwallis' plan with only minor modifications, Dundas' plan permitted the Company's Government to retain its control over the Company's army. The Directors returned this draft with their approval to Dundas in March 1795. But unfortunately, Dundas, who was too preoccupied with other pressing business, could not deal with the matter till September 1795 and the plan in its final shape was not sent to India until January 1796.²

This considerable time-lag made the Bengal officers more anxious than ever and a mere assurance that a new plan was forthcoming scarcely proved satisfactory to them. Their Select Committee again became very active in 1795 and plans for securing redress were widely discussed. This development was so secretly guarded that the election of the members, the proceedings of the Committee and the transaction of all their other business only came to the knowledge of the Government at Calcutta at the very end of 1795.³ All this discontent, finding vent in conspiracy, seriously weakened the discipline of the Bengal officers, and as General Harris noted, "the

1. Philips - The East India ... p.90.

2. Ibid., p.90.

3. An Indian Governor-Generalship op.cit., p.13.

Subalterns are all become Generals since meetings and conventions have taken place, and never think of attending a parade.¹ Sir Robert Abercromby, the Commander-in-chief, for his part, expressed his great disappointment "at not receiving the much wanted arrangement for the Indian army" and openly criticised the Company's home government as "in no way qualified for the management of such a machine."² Even Sir John Shore, the Governor General wrote on 1 February 1796 that if the regulations did not arrive soon he must frame some himself.³

Indeed, the situation had become so critical by February 1796 that Sir John Shore, apprehending a mutiny in Bengal, requested General Craig at the Cape of Good Hope to hold troops in readiness for despatch to Bengal.⁴

The momentum of the crisis fortunately abated, and the new plan, finalised after protracted negotiations, reached India by the end of 1796. Under this new arrangement, the Bengal military establishment⁵ was to consist of twelve double-battalion regiments of native infantry instead of the 36 battalions, as under the existing organisation.⁶ Each battalion was to have ten companies.⁷ Each regiment was allowed five field officers i.e. one colonel, two lieutenant-colonels

1. Cornwallis correspondence. op.cit., Vol. 2, pp.298-299.

2. Ibid., Vol.2, p.299.

3. Ibid., Vol.2, p.316.

4. An Indian Governor-Generalship - op.cit., p.14.

5. Madras was allowed to have four regiments of native cavalry and ten regiments of native infantry with 1800 privates and Bombay had four regiments of native infantry with 1800 privates.

6. In carrying out this arrangement several battalions were broken up and ceased to exist as distinct bodies.

~~See Chapter I, p.~~

and two majors, and the subaltern ranks were to consist of seven captains, one captain-lieutenant, 22 lieutenants and ten ensigns. The number of native commissioned and non-commissioned officers was to be 240, made up of 20 subadars, 20 jamadars, 100 havildars and 100 naiks. The total strength of each double-battalion regiment was to be 1600 privates. Finally for the first time native cavalry was attached on a regular basis to the Bengal army establishment and was fixed at four regiments.¹

The staff complement for each regiment was also laid down by this regulation of 1796 and one adjutant and one quarter-master (plus two further adjutants, one for each battalion) one pay-master, one sergeant-major, one quarter-master-sergeant, one drum major, one fife major, two drill havildars, two drill naiks, one surgeon, one surgeon's mate, and two native doctors were attached to each regiment of Bengal native infantry.²

By the same plan, the Supreme Government at Fort William was made responsible for the other two Presidencies, though for all important matters, i.e., the augmentation and reduction of army establishments, changes in infantry allowance and the appointment of general officers etc., prior sanction of the Home authorities was made compulsory.

Instead of appointments being made to a general staff,

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1. The new arrangement, with respect to the ranks and promotions of the army in the East Indies, 1796. E.Mss. C.33.
 2. The new arrangement, with respect to the ---- E.Mss. C.33.

the 1796 reforms ruled that officers should be taken from their regiments to perform staff duties, and that their promotion should continue to be governed by their position within the regiment. Six general officers were appointed to staff, four from the Company's and two from the King's army establishment in India, under a procedure similar to that followed by the King's army in England.¹ It was also ruled that promotion was to be regulated by seniority within the regiment, and that the Directors were to be informed and satisfied with valid reasons in all cases of supercession. To eliminate the jealousies then existing between the King's and the Company's forces, the King's commission was granted to every officer of the Company, "Of the same date with that which he received from the Company with a retrospect founded on the date of the King's commission they now hold."² The brevet rank of captain was granted to every lieutenant who had served the Company for fifteen years but had failed to receive any higher rank for lack of a vacancy. This new rank, however, did not carry with it the pay and emoluments of a regular captain. Further, the ten most senior officers of the Company's army in Bengal, who had been hitherto restricted to colonelcies, were promoted to the rank of major-general.

Attention was also paid to the removal of other

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1. L. Wraxall - Handbook to the Naval and Military resources of the principal European nations. p.12.
 2. The new arrangement, with respect to the rank and promotion of the army in the East Indies. 1796. E MSS. C.33.

existing discrepancies. Furlough privileges were granted to the Company's officers, who were now allowed to proceed on leave on the pay of their rank, though without any allowance or passage money. The subalterns were made eligible for furlough only after 10 years of service, an exception being made in case of certified sickness when they were allowed passage money.¹ Officers were permitted to retire after 25 years of service in India (this period to include three years of furlough), and the retirement pay was fixed at the same rate as that received by an infantry² officer of the Company's army holding the same rank. These regulations relating to furlough and retirement privileges were not applicable to colonels and generals, whose privileges depended on the pleasure of the Commander-in-Chief and the Government. Their approval, when granted, automatically brought full pay on retirement or on leave of absence.

A fixed and regular rate of emoluments for the officers of the Company serving in all three Presidencies was also established, and the varying rates of allowances and batta which had been in vogue in the Presidencies, and which had formerly caused great discontent in Bengal, were replaced by a uniform system for the whole of India. It was ordered that

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1. By a G.O. of 24 October 1809, passage money for dismissed or retired officers was also allowed. They were to sleep in the steerage and mess at the third officers table to whom the sum of £869-6-9d was to be paid.
 2. The infantry officers of the Company's army received lower pay than their counterparts in the cavalry.

half batta was to be granted to all officers, except to colon-
els who were always to receive full batta. It was further ruled
that full batta was to become the highest allowance except for
the dominions of the Wazir of Oudh where the rate was to be
decided by the Bengal Government.¹ (a) The bazaar allowance

1. Pay and allowance for the Bengal native infantry officers
(European) in garrison. (per month)-in Sonaut * rupee).

Ranks	Gratuity	Addl. Pay	Pay	Tent Allowance	Half batta	Total
Colonel (not a General officer)	-	-	300	180	750 (full batta)	1230
Lt. Col.	-	-	240	150	300	690
Major	-	-	180	120	225	525
Captain	36	-	120	75	90	321
Capt.						
Lieutenant	36	-	60	75	90	261
Lieutenant	24	30	60	50	60	224
Ensign	12	30	48	50	45	185

As regards the variation in the rates of batta then existing, the situation was that Bombay officers hardly received any batta at all. Madras officers stationed outside the Presidency received only half batta, whether in the field or at any other station. Bombay and Madras officers never received more than full batta. In comparison, Bengal officers never drew less than half batta and a great majority were always on full batta. Moreover Bengal officers serving in the Vizier's dominion or outside the borders of the Company's provinces were allowed double full batta.

(a) Bazaar Allowances consisted of a duty levied on sales within the cantonment of spiritous liquors, tobacco and other intoxicating drugs. Bengal Military Statement 1793/94. p.90. This duty in the general bazaar of a station belonged to the officer commanding the whole force and yielded an additional income of about £5000 a year. The duty received by the Commanding officer of the Corps from a battalion bazaar was equivalent to £1000 a year. P.P.1831-'32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p. 161.

* "The term Sonaut rupees, which was of frequent occurrence down to the reformation and unification of the Indian coinage in 1833, is one very difficult to elucidate: The word is properly Sanwat... According to the old practice in Bengal, coins deteriorated in value, in comparison with the rupee of account when they passed the third year of their currency, and these rupees were termed Sanwat or Sonaut. "Hobson-Jobson, p.775 (fn)

revenue ¹ commission and table ² allowance which had hitherto been enjoyed by the Commanding Officers of battalions of the Bengal native army were abolished. As regards the payment of allowances, the subalterns of the Company's army of the three Presidencies were placed on equal footing and the additional allowance of one rupee per day enjoyed by the subalterns attached to the Bengal native army, the sepoy allowance enjoyed by the Madras subalterns, and the language allowance of the Bombay subalterns were all withdrawn. The general officers on the staff were sanctioned an aggregate allowance of 4000 sonaut rupees per month during peace and an additional sum of 1000 sonaut rupees in time of war. Besides this, the general officers were allowed to receive the regimental pay and allowance of a colonel as well as their share from the off-reckoning ³ fund, which was an aggregate fund subdivided equally between the colonels. The general officers were also allowed 400 Sonaut rupees for camp equipage, carriage and travelling expenses.

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1. Revenue Commission was granted by a General order of 25th August 1789. The Hon'ble Court of Directors allotted a sum of six lacs of current rupees to the field officers of the King's and Company's forces of Bengal establishment - Bengal Military Statement 1793/94. p.90.
 2. Table Allowance, 1200 rupees per month was granted to the Commanding officer of a native infantry Brigade for maintaining his position. Ibid., p.37.
 3. Off-reckoning fund - A portion of the monthly pay of the non-commissioned officers and privates was stopped to provide them with clothing. The clothing was supplied by contract and the difference between the contract cost and the stoppage total was credited to the off-reckoning fund which was divided amongst the Captains commanding the native battalions. Each Adjutant received about Rs.1200 a year from the fund whereas a Captain received about Rs.2500. ~~Home Misc.~~
~~Vol. 452, p.489.~~ Ibid., p.90

New gradations of junior lieutenant-colonel and junior major were introduced in each native regiment. These officers were to receive the salary of their rank, with the allowances of the next inferior rank. This was a measure designed to adopt royal army procedure for use in the Company's army and so to create additional opportunities for promotion. Besides this, three additional subalterns were attached to each native regiment for their better control, over and above the officer complement of the corresponding European regiment.

Measures were also adopted to improve the administration of the native soldiers and to ensure their regular payment. Hitherto, company commanders had been responsible for issuing their pay to the native soldiers under their command and they had not been required to furnish any records to certify the authenticity of such payments as they reported had been made. A captain or a major in charge of a battalion of sepoys had therefore been able to make a fortune for himself over a few years by defrauding his men or by keeping his battalion under-strength. In fact, this fraud had been so widespread that Wellington had observed "Every officer who was detached made a sum of money in proportion to the size of his detachment,"¹ and Sir John Shore had informed Dundas in 1795 of the case of a certain Captain Green who, having withheld the batta of the sepoys and having been tried by Court martial, had been compelled "to make a restitution of 30,000 rupees."² Under the

1. Wellington Despatches. Ed. Owan, p. 595

2. An Indian Governor-Generalship op.cit., p. 13

1796 plan, it was ordered that "after every issue of pay, acquittance rolls signed by every individual of each company showing that he had received his full demand," were to be delivered to the Commanding Officer of the regiment. One of the officers, holding rank below field officer, was to be appointed as paymaster in each regiment and was to be made responsible for making payments in accordance with the rules. Moreover, the paymaster was also ordered to prepare detailed muster rolls for every month and send these to the Government.

Finally, the plan attempted to improve relationship between the officers and their sepoys. All officers of the Presidential armies were ordered to promote the sepoys on the basis of seniority and to publish these promotions in regimental orders. The Articles of War were to be published in both the Persian and Nāgari characters, and every officer commanding a corps of sepoys was ordered to read out and explain these to the sepoys once a month. Significantly only the Commanding Officer of a regiment was authorised to approve a new recruit, grant leave of absence to the native soldiers or to dismiss a sepoy for unfitness. He was to record in the regimental orders the reasons of all dismissals. Furthermore, it was laid down that native soldiers might only be punished by Court-martial and that only a General Court-martial could dismiss a sepoy. It was also laid down that the officers of the European regiments and those of the native regiments of the Company's army were to be treated as separate bodies and no interchange between them was to be permitted.

This plan of reorganisation was published as a General Order in India in 1796. The new regulations fell so far short of the expectations of the Bengal army officers that their promulgation brought forth remonstrations from every station. The Home authorities were blamed for indifference and were accused of having unworthy motives in framing some parts of the regulation. Each and every measure was bitterly criticised. The order regarding regimental promotion was held by the officers to contradict their implied contract with the Company as laid down by an Act of Parliament in 1785. That Act had stated that all promotions and advancements of officers and servants of the East India Company in India, Civil and Military in their respective line shall be made according to seniority of appointment in a regular progressive succession.¹ In the opinion of the Bengal officers, the new rules regarding regimental promotion laid down that the seniority was to be considered within the officers' respective regiments only, rather than in the line, so that the date of their appointment no longer had any importance. Consequently, they thought the measure to be "constituted upon such narrow circumscribed principle that ... instead of our hopes and expectations being realised ... it is an aggravation of the sufferings of which we complain."² The granting of furlough privileges and retirement pensions were regarded as "consolations that justice and

1. Memorial from the officers at Dinapore. 12 May 1797. Home Misc. Vol. 454. p.120.
 2. Memorial from the officers at Midnapore. 21 May 1796. Home Misc. Vol. 454. p.133.

humanity had long called for," but in the words of the Bengal officers, "public interest and advantage of service" required something more substantial and immediate than permission to retire after twenty five years of service with ten shillings a day.¹ The measure adopted to separate the European wing of the Company's army from the Native wing was also severely criticised. The officers of the European regiments strongly resented this order as it meant not only a reduction in the possible scope of their earnings - as officers of the sepoy regiment, they had enjoyed bazaar money and tent allowance - but a loss of other advantages like that of a superior command at a great number of separate and independent stations. They further argued that he "who has not occasionally served with both the descriptions of men of which the armies in India are composed, European and native, cannot be a finished Indian officer;---. The French, the first of European powers that raised and disciplined corps of sepoy, were never able to render them formidable, principally from their having wholly separating this line from the European, the consequence was that the officers in the native branch, considering themselves as inferior, soon lost that self-esteem which is the soul of a military man, and became contemptible."² It was similarly argued that, "the officers henceforth to be attached exclusively to the Company's native Corps will inevitably be considered as a less respectable body than the officers of the European

1. Memorial from the officers at Chunar, (no date) Home Misc. Vol.454, p.146.

2. Memorial from the officers at London. 9 May 1797. Home Misc. Vol.454, p.298.

establishment."¹

Besides these issues, the Bengal officers were most disturbed by the abolition of the bazaar money and various other allowances which they had enjoyed - among their real motives for originally joining this service had been that of securing these plums. As they noted, "In our early youth we had exiled ourselves from our mother country, bade farewell to our friends not for the mere receipt of the present pay of our respective ranks but for obtaining those high emoluments, bazaar money, revenue commission, double full batta, the strong and only inducements which decided our selection of the East India Company's service; now it has been taken, can law and equity defend this invasion of the breach of faith which dooms us to perpetual slavery or turns us grey headed beggars upon the world."²

Widespread indeed was the discontent among the Bengal army officers that followed the publication of the regulations. The resistance to the new regulations was so apparent that the Governor-General Sir John Shore and the Bengal Council thought it judicious to apply the new system with care and to modify it wherever it seemed necessary. The Governor-General, in fact, was of the opinion that the new regulations were not "founded on solid principles or framed with any knowledge of the country."³ Both he and the Bengal Council considered the

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1. Memorial from the officers at London. 9 May, 1797. Home Misc. Vol. 454. p. 298.
 2. Memorial from the officers at London. 9 May 1797. Home Misc. Vol. 454. p. 298.
 3. Cornwallis Correspondence op.cit., Vol. 2, p. 316.

situation to be so aggravated that, having sent the Governor-General's minute to England, they decided to act without waiting for a reply.¹ They modified the regulations with regard to allowances and the question of promotion, and then circulated these modified rules to the other Presidencies with a request to adopt them. The Directors were subsequently informed that the pressure upon the Government of Bengal had been so great as to necessitate this action.

These modifications were purposely designed to meet the most acute of the demands of the officers. Promotion was still to be based on regimental seniority as in the plan sent by the London authorities, but only up to the ranks of major and after that on one general line. The rates of batta, table allowance for a colonel, and tent allowance such as had been enjoyed by the officers of the native troops were reinstated, and all the Company officers promoted to brevet rank were granted batta retrospective to the date of their brevet commissions. Junior lieutenant-colonels and junior majors were also allowed batta and other allowances of their respective ranks. An extra allowance of one rupee per day was also granted to officers holding the rank of captain-lieutenant to support the character of such rank. The officers serving in the Wajir's dominion were allowed

1. In those days it took a long time for a despatch to travel between India and England. The army arrangements as advised by the Home authorities were sent out to India in January 1796 but reached India only by the end of that year. Similarly the minute of the Governor-General did not reach England till December 1797. Cornwallis Correspondence op.cit., Vol.2, p. 316.

full or double full batta depending upon their rank, because nothing short of that sum would be sufficient compensation for the increased expenses of the officers stationed there. Full batta was also allowed to the general officers, who were not on the staff together with a share from the off-reckoning fund. These modifications were duly forwarded to the Directors by the Governor General in Council.¹

The despatches sent by Sir John Shore to England on the subject of the new regulations reached the Home authorities by 5 December 1797. Five days later, the Directors received another letter from Sir John Shore, in which he indicated that modifications had been made and expressed the hope that the General Orders as modified by his Council would be acceptable to the officers.² But the London authorities were greatly alarmed at what the Bengal officers had demanded and at what the Bengal Government had done. They severely censured the officers: "Instead of receiving the material benefits and advantages held out to them by the new regulations with gratitude and respect, [they] had presumed to arraign those Regulations in a style of disrespect and intemperance highly unbecoming the situation in which they stand to those who had prescribed them."³ The action of the Governor-General was no less

1. Cornwallis' correspondence. op.cit., Vol. 2, p. 316.

2. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 316.

3. M.D. to Bengal 6 June 1798. para 118, E. MSS. C-33.

severely condemned: though "some few individuals might not feel their present situations to be exactly what they wished," any modification of the plan should have been referred to the authorities at London, previous to its being carried into execution.¹ The Directors felt that Sir John Shore had not shown the firmness and decision befitting a Governor-General and they decided to recall him and to replace him by Lord Cornwallis, who was sworn in as Governor-General on 1 February 1797.²

Yet even though the Board of Control initially condemned Shore and the Bengal officers, they in time had to deal with the situation as it existed, and even to initiate a series of discussions in London with the Committee of Bengal officers, on the basis of the modifications made by the Bengal Government. Though they did not approve of all the changes, they did acquiesce in certain of them and by so doing they went against the will of Lord Cornwallis, who eventually resigned in protest in August 1797.³

On the basis of this compromise between the Court and the Committee of Bengal officers, orders were sent to the Bengal Government that the increased batta for the brevet ranks, which had already cost the Company an additional expenditure of six lakhs of rupees, be discontinued. It was also laid down that no officer should be allowed higher batta than that of his regimental rank. The tent allowance for a colonel

1. M.D. to Bengal. 6 June 1798. para. 119, E.MSS. C-33.

2. Cornwallis correspondence. op.cit., Vol. 2 . p.316.

3. Ibid., Vol. 2 . p.317.

was also withdrawn, as the new regulations had already augmented the emoluments of this rank. The Bengal Government was further ordered to publish an order to the effect that, "if any of our officers hereafter presume to address themselves to our Government in an offensive, intemperate and disrespectful style upon the subject of orders received from us, such officers, whatever be their rank or services, be immediately dismissed from our employ and sent to England."¹

Though the modifications made by the Bengal Government had in some measure been undone by the Court, one of the principal objectives of the original reorganisation, - namely that of economy - had been defeated. So alarmed was the Bengal Government at the discontent of its army officers that peace had been bought at the expensive price of an additional permanent expenditure of about six to seven lakhs of rupees per annum. And this purchase in turn, proved to be of dubious value, for though the officers of the Bengal army returned to their duty, the encouragement thus given to their mutinous proceedings affected the whole future history of the sepoy army. Sir John Shore failed where Clive had succeeded in 1766 and one might reasonably conjecture that had there been a Clive, the question of the Government granting concessions to the mutinous officers might never have arisen.

Although the Bengal officers were satisfied with the modified regulations, the reform promulgated in 1796 was not

1. M.D. to Bengal, 6 June 1798. para. 119. E.MSS. C-33.

beyond criticism. The size of the military establishment laid down for Bengal was not in keeping with the requirement of the Presidency. As the Duke of Wellington later noted, "It seems difficult to say, upon what principle the establishment of 1796 was formed."¹ The provinces of Bengal and Bihar, a small part of Orissa, and the zamindari of Benares were directly under the control of the Bengal Government. The defence and the security of the Nawab Wazir's dominion was also entrusted to the Company's government. The Bengal army was thus required to guard the frontiers of the British provinces and the Wazir's country and also to man the principal military stations so as to curb internal disturbances and afford protection from foreign attack. Thus the native establishment of twelve regiments of Infantry and four regiments of Cavalry, which was sanctioned in 1796, was spread over an area of 215,000 square miles and could hardly be considered adequate for either defence or security. "It was not sufficient for any purpose not even as a peace establishment."² As a result this limit could not be adhered to and within four years, i.e., by 1800, the Bengal native army establishment carried a complement of 19 regiments of Infantry and six regiments of Cavalry.³

The complement of officers allocated to a regiment of

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1. Wellington Despatches Ed. Owen., p.444.
 2. Wellington Despatches Ed. Owen., p.444.
 3. "Observations on the military letter to Bengal 11 February 1801 and a proposed despatch regarding reduction of Military establishments in India."
Home Misc. Vol.87. p.115.

native troops was also a subject of criticism. A native regiment consisting of 1600 sepoy and an European regiment with only 950 soldiers were allowed the same number of European officers. And this in spite of the fact that the efficiency of a native regiment greatly depended upon its officers, and the need for officers was thus naturally greater in a sepoy regiment than in an European one. Besides, the new regulation allowed officers to seek appointments on the staff, in volunteer service, with detached corps or irregular local troops or even in the Civil Department. In fact, the opportunities that opened before the army officers were so varied that many of them could pick their positions. Since the reform of 1796 had greatly curtailed an officer's chances of making quick money, and service with the Company's army had lost much of its attraction, many officers did look for other posts outside their regiments. As the Home authorities at the period were concentrating on the problem of officers rendered surplus to establishment by the 1796 reorganisation, not a single ensign was appointed to any one of the native infantry regiments for the period from 1796 to 1799¹. This rather too drastic measure when taken in addition to a continued drainage of officers into alternative situations, depleted the officer complement of the sepoy regiments very appreciably. In some regiments the number of officers missing was as great as ten².

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1. Bengal Military Statement. 1796/97, 1797/98, 1798/99. This was so because the Home authorities sought to absorb the officers rendered surplus by the reorganisation of 1796.
 2. Bengal Military Statement 1796/97, 1798/99.

thereby reducing the sanctioned number of 40 officers to 30. That number was not enough for carrying out even routine regimental duties.¹

Though the regulations of 1796 allowed of promotion to higher rank for a considerable number of subalterns it had not been possible to promote every one of them. Several officers with the brevet rank of captain remained subalterns, and in the Bengal army there remained 140 to 150 subalterns of 14 or 15 years standing with hardly any prospect of promotion. These officers continued to be very dissatisfied and formed the hard core of discontent in the army.

Even the furlough regulations as laid down in the reforms of 1796, though apparently a good measure, proved to be impracticable. Not even one officer out of ten as a subaltern could avail himself of leave of absence for the very reason that he could not raise the passage money. Besides, the furlough pay in England of ten shillings a day for a captain was totally inadequate to support a man and his family. For simple economic reasons therefore, an officer generally wanted to complete his turn of service of 22 years and retire with full pay and other benefits in preference to proceeding on furlough.²

However the measures adopted to reduce the earning potentialities of the officers were those which irked the Bengal officers most and in time adversely affected their performance within the regiments. Before 1796, the Commanding

1. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.9.

2. Ibid., p.9.

Officer of a corps of sepoy's granted furlough to his men on condition that they gave up their pay to him during their absence. The Commanding Officer used to use this money as capital and lend it at a high interest to the Company or to an individual.¹ The appointment of a paymaster to each sepoy regiment stopped this source of earnings and various other illegal means like faked pay rolls, non-payment of batta etc.

Barred by the new reforms from many old-established sources of extra money, the officers looked for weaknesses within the new system which might be exploited - and found one in the transfer regulations. Before 1796 an officer had been permitted to change his regiment according to his own will, but after the reforms of 1796 transfer from one regiment to the other had to be sanctioned by local authority, though the sanction of the Directors was not needed.² Thus, transfers soon came to be arranged in order to enable officers to be posted to higher earning posts. As a result, officers attached to regiments at cantonments³ where half batta was allowed came to be either "on furlough" or "with the staff", whereas officers stationed with regiments at Benares or at certain stations of Bengal and Bihar where full batta was allowed or in Oudh where double full batta was permitted were all present and accounted for. Most of the regiments at the half batta

1. Wellington Despatches Ed. Owen, p. 596.

2. M.D. to Bengal, 4 June 1834. Memoranda of Military reference. Vol. 16. No. 712.

3. Dinapore, Berhampore, Barrackpore and Dumdum were half batta stations. Bengal Military Statement, 1793/94.

stations had no other officer except the colonel, who always received full batta, and the adjutant and quarter-master who received very large allowances,¹ and it was not altogether surprising to find as in the case of Barrackpore, that a sepoy battalion was entirely managed by an adjutant and the sergeant-major.² The Bengal officers thus arranged transfers for themselves to the more lucrative posts and offset the decline in their income resulting from the reforms in army administration. But their shifts and expedients did more than defeat the authorities' plan to secure economy, it fostered a disregard for duty in the officers and a state of indiscipline amongst the sepoy ranks.

Besides the reduction in earnings, the drastic curtailment of the authority vested in the European officers of the sepoy regiments also became a cause of disgust with the service. The enforcement of detailed regulations and the allotment of increased responsibility to staff positions practically deprived the 'line' officers of all decision-making power. The change of emphasis had so altered the old situation of regimental autonomy that the sepoy officers came to consider their routine duties as being boring and unattractive. In addition, this withdrawal of authority lowered the prestige and influence of the 'line' officers in the eyes of their sepoys and had far reaching consequences for sepoy discipline,

1. Bengal Military Statement, 1798/'99.

2. J.H. Stoenqueler - The Old Field Officer, Vol. 1, p.61.

The deterioration in morale caused by the various factors outlined above might have been arrested had any measures been taken in 1796 to improve the selection and training of the European officers for the sepoy corps. But none were taken, and junior officers arriving in India only to find themselves posted to undermanned regiments officered by the disgruntled who had failed to secure a transfer to a more lucrative post or station, were only too likely themselves to become disgruntled.

That inadequate selection and training was one of the shortcomings in the reforms of 1796 was eventually realised by the Home authorities and though the next few years, from 1798 to 1813, saw no further wholesale reorganisation in the Company's army in Bengal, both the Court and the Bengal Government did busy themselves in framing various rules and regulations for the training of cadets.

Prior to 1796, ^{officers} ~~men~~ from the Company's European regiments had normally been selected to serve as officers of the sepoy regiments, it being felt that they would thereby acquire a competent knowledge of their military duty as well as of the language, manners and habits of the inhabitants of the country. Since the new regulation of 1796 forbade any transfer between the two wings of the Company's army below the rank of major, cadets for the sepoy units after that year had to join their respective regiments directly, thus being deprived of the very essential training phase. To correct this, the Directors of the Company made arrangements with the Military academy at Woolwich in England to train officers for

the Company's service in India.¹

Woolwich did provide some officers from 1798 onwards, but a great majority of the infantry cadets still proceeded to India without any training whatsoever and were immediately placed with their sepoy corps, of which they knew nothing.² This absence of training was a problem in itself, but it was rendered even more of one by the fact that the minimum acceptable age for recruitment of a cadet for service in India was the tender one of 15 years and even this age limit was not strictly adhered to, and many instances occurred of cadets overstating their age at the time of embarkation.³ Indeed this practice became so widespread that the Home authorities decided to demand a copy of his birth or baptismal certificate as evidence of age from each future cadet. In cases where none was available, it was laid down that the party had to swear an affidavit that he was of the required age. But even allowing for this precaution, the Home authorities still failed to realise that fifteen was too young an age to send a boy to India. The situation was further worsened by the fact that "only five per cent of the whole had any elementary or professional education at the universities or the large public

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1. The Directors paid at the rate of £100 per annum for each of their cadets at Woolwich in addition to a sum of £3000 for providing the extra accommodation required. The average length of stay was from two to two and half years.
V.C.P. Hodson - Officers of the Bengal Army (1758-1834)
Part I Introduction.
 2. Memoirs and correspondence of Lord Wellesley - Ed. M. Martin
Vol. 2, p.186.
 3. V.C.P. Hodson - op.cit., introduction.

schools,"¹ before sailing for India.

Confronted with such immature and ill-trained cadets, the Bengal Government requested the Home authorities in 1802 to grant permission to start an institution for the training of cadets at Baraset, a village 16 miles north of Calcutta.² It was proposed that all cadets should be required on arrival to go through a period of training at this institution, "for the purpose of being instructed in the native language and in their military duty previous to their appointment to their respective corps."³ In 1804, after the permission of the Court had been obtained a cadet institution was started at Baraset under the authority of the Bengal Government.⁴ A cadet-company was formed under Captain Richardson as commandant or head master, and he was assisted by a second-in-command who was a professor in Hindi. A few other subaltern officers acted as professors of various subjects, one of them acting as a drill superintendent. The institution was designed to train cadets for both the infantry and the cavalry wings of the Bengal army.

Though based on sound principles and started with good intentions, the institution at Baraset failed to improve matters. The failure lay less in the institute than in the character of the cadet candidates. Immature in outlook and with 20 rupees as monthly pay and one rupee per day as half batta

1. V. C. P. Hodson - op.cit., introduction.

2. L. from G.G. in Council 11 June 1802. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.1.

3. L. from the G.G. in Council to the Court 11 June 1802. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.1.

4. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council at Ft. William. 20 June 1804. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.1.

the young cadets were less interested in learning the necessary military subjects than they were in the carefree pursuits of shooting, drinking, gaming and smoking in accordance with the prevailing image of a gentleman officer - one who drank hard, used foul language, gambled and duelled.¹ The authorities failed to ensure attention to study, and the cadets were too often allowed to behave irresponsibly. Numerous were the adverse reports on their escapades, and various acts of violence were committed by them on the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages. In fact John Grant, a cadet of the Baraset institution, who had "obtained great notoriety on account of mischievous tricks played by the Company's cadets on the natives was tried by the Calcutta Supreme Court in January 1808 for wilfully and maliciously setting on a fire and burning a hut at Baraset, the property of Keeno Bearer on the 24th October 1807."² Grant was found guilty and was sentenced to death, which was subsequently commuted to transportation to New South Wales.³ Even the officers of the school staff were not safe from these cadets, four of whom were tried for an assault on William Turner, the garrison sergeant of Fort William and were convicted and sentenced by the Civil Magistrate to six months imprisonment.⁴ The Magistrate of the 24 Parganas reported that

1. W.H. Carey - The Good old days of Hon'ble John Company.
Vol. 1. pp. 224-225.

2. L. from the G.G. in Council to the Court 27 March 1809
para 816. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 4.

3. L. from the G.G. in Council to the Court. 27 March 1809.
para 846. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 4.

4. L. from the G.G. in Council to the Court. 20 April 1809.
para 11. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 4.

the natives were much exposed to the oppression of the cadets, and the police sergeant stated that "he could not reside there with safety."¹ Besides these acts of irregularity and violence outside the school, the cadets broke much of the furniture of the institution,² and did not hesitate to behave insolently to the authorities. Cadets J. Kern and C. Elison, for instance, sent a letter to the principal, Captain Richardson, intimating their wilful intent not to study the "black language."³ This earned them the displeasure of the Government which ordered them "to be suspended from the service of the Company unless the pleasure of the Hon'ble Court of Directors be known and that these gentlemen be ordered to prepare to embark for Europe by the earliest opportunity."⁴ The cadets also formed their own code of law based upon duelling, until the Bengal Government issued an order that duels were forbidden among the cadets.⁵

Much of this misbehaviour by the cadets must be attributed to individual foibles and the high spirits of youth. Some can be attributed to mistaken notions of how to show oneself to be an officer and a gentleman. Some - especially that part which related to ill-treatment of Indians and disregard

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1. L. from the G.G. in Council to the Court 17 October 1809, paras 324, 327 and 328. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 5.
 2. L. from the G.G. in Council to the Court 17 October 1809, para. 328. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 5.
 3. L. from the G.G. in Council to the Court 4 August 1809, paras 324-328. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 4.
 4. L. from the G.G. in Council to the Court 19 August 1809, paras. 4 and 10. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 4.
 5. G.O.G.G. 4 May 1807. Carroll's Code 1817. Sec. XI. /Bengal

for their customs - may be attributed to the general hardening of European attitudes towards India which appeared in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One of the paradoxes of the period was that the growth of evangelic christianity all too often led to unchristian behaviour. But a cadet who in 1797 read in Charles Grant's work on "the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain," that Indians were "as a race lamentably degenerate and base"¹ was at least as likely to despise as to pity the villagers of Baraset or the sepoy's of his regiment. If he was constantly reminded that everything Indian - religion, law, arts and sciences, habits and manners - was decadent, he was as likely to be filled with contempt as with reforming zeal. Attitudes of superiority in the cadet were further fostered by the obvious progress in Europe of the technological or industrial revolution and the contrasts with the static nature of Indian society. The growth of English industry had opened up the prospect of transforming India into a vast market for the use of British Industry,"a transformation which demanded a new expansive and aggressive attitude,"² on the part of English industrialists. The cadets, immature and impressionable as they were, all too easily caught the contagion of such attitudes.

The authorities at Fort William were most concerned over these developments and frequently reported such matters

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1. Charles Grant - Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects ---. p.71.
 2. Eric Stokes - The English utilitarians and India. p.xiii.

to the Directors. But limited as they were by the regulations of 1796, without previous sanction from the Directors, they could take no other step even in extreme cases but to suspend a misbehaving cadet. To obtain such approval usually took a year, so that in most cases the very object of punishment was lost. Simple expulsion from the Baraset establishment would have meant that the offender would be allowed to join his corps. But expulsion, under those circumstances, could easily be considered by the cadets, "as the full attainment of their wishes and as a triumph over their commanding officers and the Government."¹ Expulsion operated, indeed, as an encouragement upon other cadets to seek escape from the Institution rather than to obtain the approbation of their superiors by diligent and regular attention to their duty. Only in such flagrant cases as those of Grant² in 1807 and Hatchet³ in 1809 did the authorities take the extreme step of ordering them to return home in disgrace. In both these cases the Directors approved Calcutta's actions. In numerous other cases, however, the Directors asked a pardon for the offending cadets whom the Bengal Government wanted to suspend. This weakened the Bengal Government's resolve and as the events proved later, it would

1. L. from G.G. in Council to the Court 19 August 1809. para 9. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 4.

2. See pp 132 of this chapter.

3. Mr. Hatchet came to India with an appointment as a cadet in the Company's service. He conducted himself with great irregularity, disregarded all military rules, was guilty of many crimes and was eventually tried for forgery. He was suspended from the service and was ordered by the Governor-General in Council to embark for Europe. Europeans in India 1766-1824. Vol. 25. (no page mark)

have been wiser for the Directors to have been more strict rather than lenient, thereby ensuring caution and responsible behaviour from its cadets.

"Pained and disappointed at the numerous instances of misconduct" by the cadets, the authorities realised that their hope of earning the gratitude and obedience of the cadets, "for the care taken by the Government to make those young men useful and creditable members of their honourable profession"¹ would not be fulfilled. While recognising the virtue of a preliminary training for a cadet the majority of the Directors decided that England was a better place for imparting this training. Accordingly, a new Military seminary was established at Addiscombe² for the training of the infantry cadets and by 1811 the Baraset institution had been closed down.³ The Directors however retained the age limit of 15 to 22 years for the admission of the cadets and instructed the Government of India to appoint graduate cadets from Addiscombe directly to the native regiments with the rank of junior ensigns.⁴ At

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1. D. from the Court to the G.G. 27 February 1811. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.3.
 2. "Addiscombe - formerly called Edgecomb, Adgcomb, or Adscombe situated about a mile east of Croydon on the Shirley Road" Vibart - Addiscombe its heroes and men of note. p.9
"It was established for the purpose of providing a suitable education for officers intended for the Scientific branches of the army and it happened to be able to accomodate a large number and therefore the excess not required for the engineers or artillery is sent to the infantry.
J.C.Melvill, Secretary to the Court of Directors before the Select Committee. P.P. 1852-'53, XXXI,(627), H.L.p.151
 3. D. from the Court to the G.G. 27 February 1811. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.3.
 4. D. from the Court to the G.G. 20 April 1811. M.D. sent to Bengal. Vol.3.

Addiscombe the cadet was trained in mathematics, fortification, surveying, sketching and languages,¹ but little attention was paid to the history, culture and the people of India. Thus, the ultimate result was similar to that of Baraset. At an age of fifteen or sixteen, with no thorough understanding of Indian ways, the cadet was sent forth to officer a hundred or more Indian soldiers about whom he hardly knew anything. What was thus gained on the upswing of organised training was lost on the downswing of the practice of direct posting, and the problem remained as acute as it had ever been. It is not surprising to find a gradual, yet marked deterioration in the relationship between the European officers and their sepoy throughout the period of 1796 to 1852. As General Auchmuty acutely observed, "The naturally high spirit of the great mass of the native army renders them disgusted with the careless and not frequently contemptuous conduct of their European officers, particularly of the junior ranks, towards them."² It was this deterioration, so closely linked with the inadequate training of young officers, which was to contribute so adversely to the later history of the sepoy army.

As has been said before, from 1797 to 1813 the Court did not send out any new plan regarding its army in India. The Directors were fully aware that the good intentions of Lord

1. Vibart - op.cit., p.226.

2. L. to Commanding Officers particularly to those of Madras regarding relation of European officers to native ranks by Lt. General Sir Samuel Auchmuty. 23 October 1813. Home Misc. Vol.88, p.955.

Cornwallis and the practical wisdom of Dundas as embodied in the reforms of 1796 had achieved only limited objectives, and had, indeed, created new problems in the place of the old ones. The Directors were not happy with the state of economy and discipline, the Government at Fort William was irritated over the curtailment of its power and the serious results of poor cadet training, and the European officers, whose grievances the reform had sought to meet, remained unsatisfied over the reduction in their allowances and the curtailment of their regimental authority. (This was specially true of the subalterns, who were the worst sufferers.) But the most damaging outcome of the reform was the fact that the officers felt that whatever benefits they had derived was owing to their own joint strength and policy of protest rather than to the good judgment and generosity of the Company.

However, the question of military organisation and administration did not arise again until the charter was reconsidered in 1813. At that time the Directors established a special Committee for economy. On the principle that "no office be continued which is not necessary for conducting the public business," the Committee planned retrenchments in the Company's civil and military establishments.¹ The Directors accordingly submitted a plan to the Board for reorganising the army in India which they hoped would reduce military expenditure. They suggested a decrease in the number of sepoy regiments and of the King's troops in India but recommended

1. Philips - op.cit., p.197.

an increase of one regiment of the Company's European troops both at Bengal and Madras.

They argued that this increase was necessary to provide future European officers for their sepoy army units.¹ But this aspect of the plan, like every other feature, was ill-received by the Board, which had become most hostile to the Court of Directors. Buckinghamshire, in his capacity as the President of the Board of Control, "bluntly refused to consider any change in the number of the King's troops in India but sanctioned the reduction of the Company's troops,"² and upon this premise, the Directors were compelled to draw up a new plan which was duly forwarded to the Bengal Government in November 1814.

The measures recommended therein were justified by the Directors on a consideration of "the conclusion of peace in Europe, the consequent return of the force employed in the settlements to be restored to the Government of Netherlands, the condition under which restitution is made of the possessions in India formerly belonging to France and the inadequacy of the territorial revenue to meet the existing expenditure." All these amongst many important considerations, had led them, they wrote, "most seriously to revise the state of our military establishments."³ On this occasion, however, the Directors

1. Plan submitted by the Directors to the Board, 1814.

Home Misc. Vol. 522. Draft 174.

2. Philips - op.cit., p.197.

3. Army plan sent by the Court to the Governor-General in Council at Fort William 8 November 1814. M. D. sent to Bengal
vol. 4

took special pains to impress on their agents in India that "in the attention that we have given to this subject we have not overlooked objects which though attended with some additional expenditure appear essential to the comforts of our European and native officers."¹ The new plan sought to retain the double-battalion regiment structure of the Bengal native infantry and approved the increase in establishment that had already taken place. The Bengal native army establishment was allowed to have 27 regiments of infantry and seven regiments of cavalry. But, while the complement of field officers per regiment remained the same as that sanctioned in 1796, i.e. one colonel, two lieutenant-colonels, and two majors, the complement of officers of junior ranks per regiment was reduced from 40 to 28 and was to be composed of eight captains, 14 lieutenants and six ensigns. Thus, the post of captain-lieutenant was abolished and the number of subalterns was drastically reduced. It was also proposed that any vacancy for ensigns in the native army units should be filled by such senior ensigns of the European corps as should be agreeable to such a transfer. The issue of pay and allowance for officers was also discussed, and efforts were again made by the Directors to establish an uniform rate in the different ranks serving in the three Presidencies of India.

The attempt made to secure such an ~~uniform rate~~ ^{uniform rate} in 1796 had proved abortive. The European officers of the

1. Army plan sent ---. 8 November 1814. M.D. sent to Bengal. Vol. 4.

Company's army were very sensitive over this subject and Lord Lake, the Commander-in-chief, had warned the Government in 1805 about the consequences of the reduction of their emoluments. "It becomes a question of great political importance how far it would be wise or consistent with the permanent welfare of the state to reduce military men to a bare subsistence --- How such a policy of deductions is calculated to promote the ultimate benefit of the Company is a point which the Commander-in-Chief entertains the most serious doubt of."¹

In spite of such warnings, the Directors in 1814 again tried to introduce a consolidated pay table and sought to equalise the rates of allowances for the Company officers of the three Presidencies. A table of allowances was drawn up which fixed the rates for house rent, half batta and tent allowance for all officers whether employed in the field or stationed in garrison and cantonment. The table was as follows² and indicates the comparative loss and gain in earnings over the rates introduced in 1796.

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1. Lake to the Military Secretary. 6 March 1805. Home Misc. Vol.449A. p.927.
 2. Army plan sent ---. 8 November 1814. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.4.

Pay and Allowance of Native Infantry European officers
in Garrison - In Sonaut rupees per month.

Rank	Gratu- ity	House Rent	Pay	Tent Allow- ance	Batta	Total	1796 Total	Differ- ence
Colonel (not a General officer or the staff)			300	200	750 (full)	1250	1230	+ 20
Lt. Colonel		100	240	150	300 (half)	790	690	+ 100
Major		80	180	120	225 "	600 605	525	+ 80
Captain	36	50	120	75	90 "	371	321	+ 50
Lieutenant	24	30	60	50	60 "	224	224	
Ensign	12	25	48	50	45 "	180	185	- 5

The Directors also sought to remove the anomalies that existed in the various staff allowances received by the staff officers of the Bengal army, and while doing so to cut them drastically. The comparative statement given below indicates the extent to which measures of economy were proposed by the Directors in 1814 on this issue.

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1. When in the field, the house rent allowance was ordered to be withdrawn but full batta was granted

Sonaut rupees per month

Rank	Station	Staff Pay		Establishment Allowances	Staff pay (all inclusive)
		Pre 1814 (1)			
Barrack Master	Berhampore	240	+	104	170
	Dinapore	240	+	104	170
	Cawnpore	240	+	223	170
	Meerut	240	+	196	170
Fort Adjutant and Barrack Master	Allhabad	275	+	404	122
	Chunar	275	+	147	122
	Agra	375	+	417	162
	Buxar				112 (newly created)
Fort Major	Fort William	1200			600
Fort Adjutant	Buxar			137	abolished
Judge Advocate General		713	+	400	863

An additional allowance of 150 rupees per month, known as the Andaman Settlement allowance had been granted to the staff officer at Fort William in 1794. The Directors ordered this allowance to be stopped in 1814. Similarly the allowance of Rs. 250. per month received by the Commandant at Buxar since 1768 for examining passengers at Buxar was abolished in

1. Statements of all the Military staff appointments under the Presidency of Bengal and of the allowance annexed. Bengal Military Statement 1812/13. p.279.
2. Army plan sent ---. 8 November 1814. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 4.

1814.¹

Besides these proposed economies in the emoluments of the staff officers, the Directors also endeavoured to do away with the preferential batta enjoyed by the Bengal officers. Before 1801 all the European officers of the Bengal native army enjoyed full batta and full tentage, except those who were stationed at Barrackpore, Berhampore, Dinapore and Dumdum which were half batta posts. In 1801, as a measure of economy, Government had ceased to provide quarters, and in compensation, had raised the batta at the aforementioned stations to full measure.² Thus, after 1801, all the Bengal army officers had been paid at full batta rates, a privilege denied to the officers of Madras and Bombay who had continued to receive only garrison or cantonment allowance. In their effort to remove this anomaly, which had proved to be a bone of contention between the officers of the three Presidencies, the Directors resolved to reduce the full batta rates of the Bengal officers and to declare the stations at Barrackpore, Berhampore, Dinapore and Dumdum as again eligible for half batta only. By this measure, the Court felt, the discontent of the Madras and Bombay officers would be removed. The Directors also laid down that all the extra allowances enjoyed by the Commanding Officer of a native regiment such as the saddle³ contract, the

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1. Army plan ----. 8 November 1814. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.4.
 2. Minute of Bentinck 19 January 1835. M.L. received from Bengal. Vol. 39.
 3. Saddle contract - Saddle, harness and bridles were supplied by the Government once in eight years. These were held by the Commanding Officer who received one rupee per set per month to keep these in repairs.

contract for the repair of arms¹ and the allowance for Hircarrahs² or guides to be abolished. By curtailing these allowances and by regulating the pay of the officers by the newly drawn table the Home authorities expected that, "in Bengal, the officers would lose collectively about Rupees 5,15,400 a year, Madras will gain about Rupees 2,70,000 a year and Bombay will gain Rupees 1,57,548 a year,"³ an economy to the Company of about Rs. 87,700 per year.

Finally, the Directors, though they failed to review the emoluments of the subalterns and in some cases inadvertently reduced them, did show a desire to improve the situation of the officers in command of battalions and regiments. To that end they reintroduced the old Bazar allowance - the duties levied on spiritous liquor and intoxicating drugs - in a modified form. In 1796 the duties formerly levied in the military bazaar by senior officers had been taken over as part of the Company's revenue and the officers had been deprived of any share in it. Consequently, the duty became unproductive. On the supposition that if the officers had an interest in this source of revenue it would increase, the Directors in the plan of 1814 proposed that the duties should be thrown into a single fund, part of which would then be distributed amongst

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1. Contract for the repair of arms, gun carriage and the supply of petty stores were peculiar to the Bengal army. Report from military finance committee, 21 March 1831. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.30.
 2. Rupees 40 per month were allowed as Hircarrah or guide allowance. Bengal Military Statement 1812/'13.
 3. Letter from the Military Committee (London) 26 February 1814. Home Misc. Vol. 522, p.337.

the officers in command of battalions and regiments. They argued that the additional income to be expected would both enable the officers to meet their expenses and increase the revenue of the Company as well.

To prevent a repetition of the kowtowing to the Bengal officers such as had occurred in 1796 the Home authorities issued their plan to Fort William with the specific order that "the new plan was the permanent establishment of our army and that no alteration should be hereafter made therein without our sanction being previously obtained."¹ The Government of Bengal was warned that, "they should pay proper attention to the steady and vigilant execution of the regulations" and not attempt "to introduce improvements, however apparently useful, by which the system may be disturbed and the whole rendered fluctuating and uncertain."² The Directors also thought fit to remind their civil and military officers of the "absolute necessity of conciliating the minds of the native officers and soldiers by the most mild and considerate treatment."³

The new plan reached Bengal in 1815. Lord Moira, the Governor-General in India, because of his Government's pre-occupation with the Nepal war, thought it proper to suspend for its duration the promulgation of this plan.⁴ Meanwhile he

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1. Army plan sent ---. 8 November 1814. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 4.
 2. Army plan sent ---. 8 November 1814. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 4.
 3. Army plan sent ---. 8 November 1814. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 4.
 4. Philips - op.cit., p.199.

referred the plan to a committee of civil and military officers in Bengal.

The Home authorities, with their 'counting house mentality', might have forgotten the vital role that the Company's army was then playing in India, for, after the Napoleonic war, the other European powers in India had ceased to offer any threat - the French and the Dutch having recognised for the first time British sovereignty over the Company's possessions¹ and having agreed not to maintain troops or to build fortresses in India. Moira, however, knew that other threats remained and that there was little to be said in favour of reduction of the military establishment in India and that no major disturbance in the service could be then afforded. The Ganges Valley from the Jumna to the sea, the whole of the East coast and most of the West coast were British possessions and, as Lord Moira wrote, if "within them all is quiet and well on their borders the spirit is not so placid."² In the north the Company's possessions touched Nepalese territory for some 700 miles, but the border remained ill defined and incursions by the Gurkhas were quite common.³ On 18 February 1814, Moira had been advised by the Directors to declare war on Nepal, and that he had done on 1 November 1814. In the South, Moira had to extend protection to the State of Bhopal

1. Cambridge History of India Vol.V, p.596.

2. Letter from the Earl of Moira to the Prince Regent 19 October 1813. Letters of King George IV, 1812-1830.
Ed. A. Aspinall Vol.I, p.331.

3. Philips - op.cit., p.198.

to prevent its conquest by Sindhia and the Raja of Nagpur.¹ Thus, both in the North and the South, the Company's army in India was called upon to bear an immense responsibility during this period. It was not to be wondered at, then, that Moira should have chosen to postpone the promulgation of the new regulations until his borders were secure. What was surprising was that the Home authorities, while sanctioning the declaration of war against Nepal, should also have sent forth a plan of military reorganisation which called for a reduction in the army establishment.

The Committee, to which Moira referred the plan of 1814, sat in deliberation over it for six years and forwarded its recommendation to the Bengal Government in 1820, a copy of which was also despatched to the Court of Directors. The Committee observed in its report that the state of politics in Europe should not have any effect on the scale of the military establishment in India, which should immediately relate to the needs of the local authorities in India. It also argued that, as the British territorial possessions in India were still expanding and the political map had not as yet acquired a final shape, it was unwise and impracticable to lay down such a final and permanent reorganisation as that conceived by the Directors. It further emphasised that the reduction made in the complement of officers per regiment, after allowing for leave, under the plan of 1814 would make the performance of even the

1. Philips - op.cit., p.198.

most perfunctory regimental duties an impossibility. Commenting on the equalization of regimental allowances for the army officers, the Committee stated flatly that "Equalization of regimental allowances must not be obtained by reducing those of Bengal officers," and continued with the equally flat comment that "if the resources of India were found to be inadequate to meet the expenses, then the possible deficit must be supplied by the mother country."¹ Furthermore, it referred to the arrangements of 1796 as permanent and warned that any change in the allowances of the officers sanctioned in 1796 would be both inexpedient and impolitic. The Committee advised that the officers should be granted furlough twice within their service period and should be paid for their passage, and went so far as to condemn the Court's arrangements for distributing the military bazar profits. In place of this bazar fund the Committee suggested a staff allowance drawn from the Company's treasury. Finally, the Committee raised very strong objections to the Court's proposals made for an overall reduction in the cost of the military establishment, noting that as "the first duty of Government is to fix the amount of military force necessary for the maintenance of India, it must fall upon the civil charges of Government."² In any case, the Committee argued, "in the four years elapsed of the present charter more has been contributed to England from Indian resources than had

1. Report of the Committee, para 28, 6 January 1820.

B.M. Addl. MSS. 38, 518.

2. Report of the Committee, para 40, 6 January 1820.

B.M. Addl. MSS. 38, 518.

been furnished in the twenty preceding years in the proportion of 9 to 5."¹

The Court was both surprised and annoyed at this report. ~~They~~ ^{It} sent a strong rebuke in 1823 to the Bengal Government and asked them immediately to carry out the orders of 1814, with only minor modifications to accommodate their criticism. Censuring the practice of referring the Court's orders to a Committee of Bengal officers, the Home authorities observed that "on no pretence whatever shall our orders be hereafter referred for report to a Committee of our servants who may be more or less interested in their non-execution,"² The statement by the Committee that the "Court of Directors cannot without breach of faith interfere with or diminish any of the scanty allowances or advantages as they are called granted to the officers of the Bengal army by the arrangement of 1796," which in the eyes of the Company's army officers had "the sacredness of almost a direct Royal and Ministerial pledge,"³ was refuted and strongly condemned by the Court. The Directors pointed out that they were not bound by the arrangements of 1796 and had paid reasonable attention to the fair claims and interests of their servants in framing the reforms of 1814. They further observed that "the imaginary and unfounded doctrine of being bound to the orders of 1796 was at variance with the principle

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1. Report of the Committee , para 68. 6 January 1820. B.M. addl. MSS. 38, 518.
 2. D. from the Court to the G.G. 25 November 1823. M.D. sent to Bengal. Vol. 10.
 3. Report of the Committee para 69. 6 January 1820. B.M. Addl. MSS. 38, 518.

of the relations in which the employers stand to the employed.¹" If such a doctrine were ever to be admitted, said the Court, "it would subvert all the control exercised by the East India Company over its servants."² In countering the remarks made by the Committee with regard to the financial implications of the plan the Court reminded the Governor-General that "all the expenses of the Company's Government both in India and Europe were supported by the revenues of India itself and that Great Britain had nothing to do with it."³ Further, the Directors argued that they had decided to curtail the military establishment not so as to cope with possible deficiency of its revenues but with the "expectation of a surplus revenue, and to the appropriation of some portion of such surplus together with surplus commercial profits which would lead to the gradual extinction of debt."⁴ The Home authorities reaffirmed their conviction that the allowance established under the plan of 1814 were sufficient for all reasonable purposes. They countered the argument advanced by the Committee that it was utterly impossible for an officer "to avoid incurring debt" by observing that "the embarrassment into which a few officers may be plunged at the commencement of their career by extravagance or mismanagement can afford no ground for a statement of that

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1. D. from the Court to the G.G. 25 November 1823. para 9. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.10.
 2. D. from the Court to the G.G. 25 November 1823. para 11. M.D. sent to Bengal. Vol.10.
 3. D. from the Court to the G.G. 25 November 1823. para 40. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.10.
 4. D. from the Court to the G.G. 25 November 1823. para 77. M.D. sent to Bengal. Vol.10.

general nature."¹ For the same reason, the Directors ruled out as inadmissible and inapplicable the suggestion of the Committee that the reductions should apply to future officers only, and they firmly rejected the proposal to increase the number of officers per native regiment, doing so on the ground that there were neither European nor Indian enemies left to fight with in India. They did recommend, however, that the shortage of officers in the regiment should be dealt with by imposing a limit of five officers per regiment who could be allowed to hold staff or other appointments, and by forbidding military officers to be employed in civil situations, "except in cases of great urgency."² Finally, the Directors abandoned their scheme of using the military bazaar profits and allowed instead a staff allowance of 400 rupees per month to be granted to the Commandant of each corps. The Directors also advocated that the double-battalion regiment system be abandoned and replaced by one of single battalion regiments, each of 10 companies with each regiment having a complement of one colonel, one lieutenant-colonel, one major, five captains, ten lieutenants and five ensigns and that promotion be based upon regimental seniority up to the ranks of major.³

The reply of the Court of Directors reached Bengal in 1824. Lord Amherst and the Supreme Government were then

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1. D. from the Court to the G.G. 25 November 1823. para 22. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.10.
 2. D. from the Court to the G.G. 25 November 1823. paras.28-123. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.10.
 3. D. from the Court to the G.G. 25 November 1823. para 148. M.D. sent to Bengal. Vol.10.

occupied with the first Burmese War, and it was ostensibly for this reason that it was considered injudicious to carry into effect the Court's orders for a reduction in the strength and allowances of the Bengal officers. But in reality the Bengal Government strongly objected to the Court's counter proposals for a reduction because the expenses of the military establishment had never exceeded the ever increasing revenues of the country. The Government of Bengal again raised the issue of the permanency of the 1796 arrangement and remarked that the regulation of 1796 had been universally accepted by the Company's army as a compromise introduced by the Government to cover, "certain sacrifices on the part of the army by a distant service of privation and banishment from their families and home."¹ It warned the Home Government of the alarm and agitation which would inevitably result if the Court's recommended measures were introduced, for these measures would certainly embitter those very officers "who have in a great degree sacrificed their country, families and health to your service in an uncongenial climate."² It further defended the higher allowances enjoyed by the Bengal officers as compared to their colleagues in the Bombay and Madras armies, on the basis that there existed a vast difference between their way of living, in the climates of the three Presidencies, in the health of the officers, and the intricate pattern of

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1. L. from the G.G. to the Court, 6 January 1825. paras 2-4. M.L. received from Bengal, Vol.20.
 2. L. from the G.G. to the Court, 6 January 1825. para 11. M.L. received from Bengal, Vol.20.

prejudices and distinctions of caste and customs prevalent in Bengal which obliged Bengal officers to "maintain four times the number of servants that will serve an officer at Madras and Bombay."¹ Not only were the expenses on servants higher, but the Bengal officers stationed in the lower provinces suffered a loss of pay amounting to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent because they were paid in Sicca² rupees which formed the currency of the region and were held at premium whereas their wages were calculated in Sonaut rupees. Finally, the Bengal Government argued against the simultaneous reduction of allowances and the reimposition of half batta, which in itself would cause a loss varying between 10 and 20 per cent to the Bengal officers.

The Directors were also criticised for their rigid adoption of the measures of economy which involved the loss of long recognised allowances on the part of the officers "at the very time when your finances are known to the world to be in a more flourishing condition than ever."³

The Supreme Government also expressed in very strong terms its indignation over the tone and content of the Court's letter. "The reference to the relative position of master and servant would hardly justify towards an army of British

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1. L. from the G.G. to the Court, 6 January 1825. para 11. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.20.
 2. "Up to 1835, a variety of rupees had been coined in the Company's territories. The term sicca rupee had been applied to newly coined rupees which were at a batta or premium over those worn or assumed to be worn by use and these were termed as sonaut." Hobson-Jobson, pp.834-835.
 3. L. from the G.G. to the Court, 6 January 1825. para 18. M.L. received from Bengal. Vol.20.

officers and gentlemen the adoption of a measure which is certainly harsh, not called for by any urgency of your finances, nor by any political cause and which must appear a breach of a tacit or implied compact at least with all the officers actually in your employ, to whom you have not previously announced so material an alteration in the terms of service."¹

It is significant to note, however, that though the Bengal Government expressed in no uncertain terms their disapproval of the Court's order regarding a reduction of allowances, they willingly accepted the changes in the organisation of the army structure therein proposed. On 6 May 1824, a General Order was issued in accordance with the instructions received from the Court ordering that the new organisation be adopted and promotions be made accordingly so as to increase the number of officers in each infantry regiment to the following strength: ^{two} colonels, ^{two} lieutenant-colonels, two majors, ten captains, twenty lieutenants and two ensigns. In cavalry regiments, the strength of officers was ordered to be half the above. The General Order further directed that "as soon as the above promotions are carried out, the infantry, European and native, are to be divided into two regiments each by the final separation of battalions"² and the officers were to be posted alternately to the two regiments. The regiments so formed were to be numbered in the order in which they

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1. L. from the G.G. to the Court, 6 January 1825. para 20.
M.L. received from Bengal, Vol.20.
 2. G.O.G.G. 6 May 1824.
Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 May 1824. No.58.

were first raised. A comparative table is given below showing the complement of officers for each regiment as sanctioned in 1796, 1814 and 1823.

<u>1796 (accepted and promulgated)</u> <u>Double battalion regiment.</u>	<u>1814 (proposed)</u> <u>Double battalion regiment</u>	<u>1823 (accepted)</u> <u>Single battalion regiment</u>
1 Colonel	1 Colonel	1 Colonel
2 Lt. Colonels	2 Lt. Colonels	1 Lt. Colonel
2 Majors	2 Majors	1 Major
7 Captains	8 Captains	5 Captains
1 Captain-Lieutenant		
22 Lieutenants	14 Lieutenants	10 Lieutenants
10 Ensigns	6 Ensigns	5 Ensigns

The table indicates very clearly how drastic had been the proposed cut in officer strength under the 1814 plan and how successful were the protests which led to its replacement by that of 1823. The position in 1823 was little different from that of 1796 - but where it did differ it was in favour of promotion, providing as it did for an extra colonel and two extra captains for each two battalions, with a loss only of two lieutenants. It was this slight gain over 1796 and very large gain over 1814 which led to the Bengal Government to lose no time in supporting this part of the Order while choosing to criticise the rest.

But after thus hastening to clinch the deal with the Home authorities, the Governor-General and the Bengal Council did nothing from 1825 to 1828 to implement the Directors' orders of 1823 and it was not until 1828 when the Earl of Amherst was replaced as Governor-General by Lord William

Cavendish Bentinck that the plan of 1814, as modified in 1823, was at last put into effect.

The promulgation of the order almost immediately gave rise to expression of reaction and discontent amongst the officers of the Bengal army. In 1829 they sent some 76 memorials, 63 from the European and native infantry regiments, 3 from the native cavalry and 5 from the artillery, many of them lengthy, were sent to the Government by the officers. They used much the same terminology as in those previously sent to the Government, praying for the repeal of the half-batta order and other measures of economy.¹ Besides the constant references were made to the financial plight of junior and subaltern officers of the Bengal army. Major Fraye of the 13th native infantry regiment computed that a subaltern while on the march, was forced to spend a minimum of 226^(a) rupees a month as against his pay and allowances on the march of only 194 rupees. In garrison, Fraye reckoned, his expenses^(b) amounted to 181 rupees per month against his pay of 168 rupees

1. Summary of the statements contained in the memorials of the Bengal officers against the half batta regulations of 29 November 1828. / Memoranda of Mily. Misc. Vol. 6, No.583 (no page mark).

(a) <u>Expenses of a subaltern</u> (on the march)		(b) <u>Expenses of an Ensign at</u> <u>Berhampore</u>	
Messing	Rs. 90	Messing	Rs. 60
Servants	50	Breakfast	16
Horse	16	House rent	35
Carriage of tent, baggage	40	Servants	40
Cattle and camp equipage	30	Dress	<u>30</u>
	<u>Rs. 226</u>		<u>Rs. 181.</u>
Income of an Ensign	Rs. 194.	Income of an Ensign	Rs. 168

per month. Major Parks of the 49th regiment observed that the initial cost of an Ensign's equipment was not less than 1500 rupees to meet which he had necessarily to contract a debt. By the time he had been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, the original sum would have been nearly doubled by interest accrued.

Lieutenant

Gough of the 10th native infantry regiment deposed that "four-fifths of the Bengal officers are insolvent," and Colonel Kern of the 50th native infantry regiment remarked "it will be most commonly found that after many years of service when an officer has arrived at the rank of a field officer, he is then commencing to liquidate debts which he unavoidably accumulated during his career through the junior grades by submitting to being placed under stoppages from his allowances." Captain Wheeler of the 48th native infantry regiment wrote that "it is to the rank of field officer alone that any military man can look for the means of either providing for a family or for retiring."¹

The memorialists also referred to the loss sustained by the remittance of earnings to Europe at a time when the rate of exchange had depreciated from two shillings and six pence to one shilling and ten pence to a rupee, and they pleaded that "it would be a great boon to permit the officers' families in England to receive the remittance for their use at two

1. Summary of the statements contained in the memorials of the Bengal officers against the Half batta regulation of 29 November 1828. / ~~Memoranda of Mily. Misc.~~ Vol. 6. No. 583
Misc. /

shillings six pence per rupee."¹ They reiterated their criticism of the restriction on the rate of interest² which they might ask on loans which they made, the promotion policy, and the batta allowances. The Bengal officers brought to the Directors' notice, a letter of 1809 in which the Directors themselves had stated that "Bengal, the first great territorial possession of the Company had its establishment early settled to its income and that country being the seat of the Supreme Government, the centre of the British interest in India, came to have a standard of public allowances which could not be exactly imitated at the other Presidencies under their very different circumstances," for which reason, as the letter went on, "the Court have always resisted the idea of a general equalisation of allowances and emoluments of the different Presidencies."³ The Court had also commented in 1809 that "if the comparative slowness of promotion at Bengal be taken into the estimate it might not be incorrect to say that the military service of Bengal has not been for many years past upon a superior footing upon the whole than at either of the other Presidencies."⁴ The memorialists argued that if such

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- Misc./ 1. Summary of the statements---/Memoranda of Mily. Misc. Vol. 6 No. 583.
2. Ordinance was issued restricting the legal rate of interest on capital advanced by the officers to 12 per cent. [But this affected the field officers mostly as the subalterns could hardly meet their expenses.]
3. D. from the Court to the Government at Ft. St. George. 15 September 1809, para 16. M.D. sent to Madras Vol. 16.
4. D. from the Court to the Government at Ft. St. George 15 September 1809, para 66. M.D. sent to Madras Vol. 16.

was the opinion of the Court in 1809, they failed to understand why in 1814 or 1823 they could have recommended a reduction of their allowances for the purpose of equalising pay scales in the Presidencies.

The Supreme Government forwarded these memorials to London on 22 December 1829. In spite of all the arguments marshalled by the memorialists, the Home authorities expressed their displeasure at "the want of military subordination which was the first duty of the officers,"¹ and explained that "as they did not want to impose new burdens upon the people of India or to ask aid from the people of England and as they wanted to promote the general interest of their servants, the order for half batta regulations could be called a measure of military policy and a general system of necessary economy."²

Though the Home authorities stood fast by the decision, the Press showed considerable sympathy for the officers and their grievances. The Times gave the lead when it commented, "the East India Company has so contrived it as to revolt against themselves and their monopoly the spirit of the whole English nation. If we felt any interest in the maintenance of Hindustan then we might warn them against exasperating the whole body of instruments through whose swords that Government of force and despotism had been so long preserved. They were Company's defenders, they undertook originally to

1. D. from the Court to the G.G. 31 March 1830. para 4.
M.D. sent to Bengal. Vol. 15.

2. D. from the Court to the G.G. 31 March 1830. paras 5-6.
M.L. sent to Bengal. Vol. 15.

serve it on fixed and understood conditions, many of whom have endured the toils of thirty campaigns."¹

That the imposition of these orders would bring forth determined opposition was not unknown to Lord Bentinck. He went to India with no illusions about what he should expect or what was expected of him. He was aware of the strong support his appointment had received from Lord Grey and his 'reform ministry', he was conscious of the demands of the Company's Directors for reforms with economy. Above all, he was most sensitive to the tugs and pulls of British administration in India, for it was there, in his early years while serving as Governor of Madras that he saw his bright future as an administrator momentarily swept away in the whirlwind of the sepoy mutiny of 1806 at Vellore and found himself recalled in disgrace for blunders committed, but not acknowledged by others. Now, in his mature years, he viewed India and the Company, with caution, responsibility, tolerance and thoughtfulness.

It was with this outlook that Bentinck approached the troublesome conflicts existing between the Court of Directors and the officers of the Bengal army. Being convinced of the determination behind the Directors' policy of economy within the Company during Charter renewal year, he lost little time in promulgating and putting into effect the Court's edict of 1823 regarding military reforms.

So, simultaneously with his implementation of the

1. The Times - 17 October 1829.

Directors' reforms, he instructed his Military Secretary, Colonel Casement, to institute an enquiry into the economic condition of the Indian army with particular reference to the Bengal army and its officers. Colonel Casement did so and in March 1829, a Military Committee of Finance with Lt.-Colonel E. Frederick, Commissioner of Bombay in the chair, and with Lt.-Colonel T.H.S. Conway, Commissioner of Madras, and Major J. Craige of Bengal as members, commenced its enquiry. After almost two years of detailed study and questioning, the Committee submitted its report to the Governor-General in 1831 and a copy of the report was forwarded to the Court in the same year.¹

The report was not an unanimous one, for Major Craige dissented ^{from} with the basic recommendation of the Committee that there existed no case for higher allowances for Bengal officers. He also questioned the validity of the estimates of expenditure submitted by the Madras and Bombay officers, and he expressed his opinion that the Committee had not adequately established its conclusions. This lack of unanimity amongst the Committee members limited the effectiveness of the final recommendation of its report, but the information it produced was significant and arresting.

The Committee reported that the emoluments of the subalterns in all the three Presidencies were not sufficient, "even with the strictest economy to maintain them free from

1. Report from the Military Finance Committee, 21 March 1831.
M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 33.

debt and particularly in cases where they originally as cadets had no separate sum to provide themselves with their first equipment." The Committee then went on to consider the many circumstances which led the Company's officers into debt - the need to provide against a tropical climate, the wide variety of duties which they could be called upon to perform, and the heavy charges involved in moving from station to station over the vast areas of Company territory - and returned once again to ^{the} theme of debt: "it is with much reluctance we follow up this topic in seriously asserting as a fact that the great majority of the officers and particularly the junior classes are deeply in debt."¹ This was especially true of the subalterns each of whom, the Committee noted, upon his arrival in India, was confronted with a formidable expense for equipment. This sum he could rarely furnish himself and he was therefore obliged to borrow from the agency houses at an interest rate of about 10 to 11 per cent or, if refused, from the money lenders at the rate of 24 per cent. A young officer was thus forced to incur a debt of 1800 to 2000 rupees at the outset of his career when there was no probability of any quick promotion. If he was posted at a half batta station, his emoluments were not even enough to maintain him, let alone to permit the redemption of any substantial portion of his debt. At a full batta station, he could, with the strictest economy, pay off some part of his debt, but such a posting never continued for

1. Report of the Military Finance Committee, 21 March 1831.
M.L. received from Bengal Vol. ~~10~~. 33.

long. His debts therefore tended to increase rather than diminish, for he had to supplement or replace his initial outfit in the course of years. Moreover, as the Committee noted, because of the uncertainty of a soldier's life, it was usually necessary to provide a life-surety for any loan from the Agency houses which added another three or four per cent interest to the already existing debt. Thus by the time a subaltern reached the rank of captain, his original debt had more than doubled and he had no prospect of releasing himself from it. From his captain's emoluments he would just manage to pay off the interest, and on obtaining his majority he would find himself "poorer by many thousands than he was when he entered the service."¹

The Committee therefore proposed that no cadet be accepted for service who did not receive, either from his parents or from guardians, his uniform and a credit of 1500 rupees for equipment. A cadet properly provided for at the outset would be able to join his regiment free from pecuniary embarrassment and would be able to maintain himself, with economy, from his pay and allowances.

The Committee further pointed out how much a subaltern's expenses varied from station to station and showed that

1. L. from the Major General Moore to the Finance committee, Barrackpore, 23 June 1829. Report of the Military Finance Committee, 21 March 1831. M.L. from Bengal. Vol. 33,

the expenses per month of a Lieutenant at Cawnpore¹ might be as high as 355 rupees while at Barrackpore² they did not exceed 273 rupees. Commenting on the Directors' often repeated phrase about the 'extravagance of the Bengal officers', the report observed that the general tone of Bengal society was changing. There were far more married men in the army, with a radically changed pattern of living-luxurious if not extravagant - and this had replaced the mere satisfaction of wants which had prevailed earlier in the eighteenth century. This could not, however, be said of the junior officers, who, in the opinion of the Committee, were more economical in their habits than in former days. Yet despite such economy "subaltern officers were generally in debt to nearly 7000 rupees each."

Estimates of Expenses in Rupees

1.	(1) <u>at Cawnpore</u>	(2) <u>at Barrackpore</u>
Orphan and military fund	8	8
Regimental Library	6	5
House rent	40	40
Breakfast	15 - 4	} 45
Dinner	56 - 4	
Servants	81	59
Bunniah's bill	14	Horse 17
Wine etc.	48	35
Candles	6	Misc. 17 - 0
Postage	4	4 - 8
Cigars	6
Clothing	39 - 6 - 2	34 - 10 - 2
Tent etc.	31 - 11 - 5	8 - 0 - 0
	<u>355 - 9 - 7</u>	<u>273 - 2 - 2</u>

Report of the Military Finance Committee, 21 March 1831
 M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 33.

Regarding the controversial question of difference in the grant of batta in the three Presidencies, the Committee stated that though the Supreme Government might "on special or political grounds have deemed it necessary to maintain for sudden emergencies a larger number of field stations in Bengal than in the other Presidencies,"¹ - which naturally gave the Bengal officers more opportunity to earn batta at the higher field rates - there was no other reason why Bengal officers should expect to receive more batta than Bombay and Madras officers. From this view Craige dissented.

Bentinck was not ~~not~~ satisfied with the findings of the Committee and with its differing views. With the hope of rectifying the situation he wrote a Minute to the Court in January 1835, advising that, "Equalisation of only staff allowance would not do, as the jealousy entertained by the officers on the Madras and Bombay establishments at the superior allowances drawn by their brethren of the Bengal army is not restricted to the staff. It pervades every rank and is more particularly felt by Regimental officers than by any other class because their means are smaller and their prospects generally more confined." He further added, "It was therefore essential to the complete success of the measure that with whatever financial sacrifice it might be attended, one and the same rate of pay should be fixed at once for all with the understanding also

1. Report of the Military Finance Committee, 21 March 1831. M.L. received from Bengal, Vol. ~~22~~.33.

of its not being liable to further alteration."¹ As his solution, Bentinck suggested that full batta and full tentage should be allowed in the field and that full batta and $\frac{3}{4}$ tentage should be allowed in cantonment throughout the three Presidencies. No comment, however, came from the Court before Bentinck relinquished his office in 1835.

Bentinck handed over his charge to Sir Charles Metcalfe, who had been much alarmed about the probable effect within Bengal of the equalisation of military pay and allowances. In a warning letter to the Home Government he wrote "the reduction will alienate the affections of the sufferers from the Government which deals out to them that treatment. It is not a light matter in a country which is held solely by the army. No object to be gained can be worth such a cost. It is neither rational nor prudent to risk it." While admitting that the Madras and Bombay officers were relatively underpaid in comparison to the Bengal officers, he argued that "this does not imply that the Bengal officers were overpaid." He saw no reason to reduce the Bengal allowances for the sake of equality, and quipped, "There would be no harm, for instance, in putting a high crowned hat on a short person in order to give him an equal appearance with another, but it would not do to cut off a quarter of a man's head with a view to equalise him with his short neighbour."² On 20 December 1836 Metcalfe

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1. Minute of Bentinck 19 January 1835. (written on 4 August, 1834). M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 39.
 2. Minute of G.G. in Council to the Court 20 December 1836. No.15. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.41.

wrote again to the Home authorities asking them to accept Bentinck's proposals for full batta and $\frac{3}{4}$ tentage at all stations and full batta with full tentage in the field, while marching or when posted at certain field stations.¹ The Home authorities, at long last, gave their decision on the controversial subject and agreed to allow officers "full batta when posted at any station exceeding 200 miles of direct distance from the seat of the respective Governments and half batta in garrison or cantonments within that distance."² The Home Government thus followed a middle path, and while the Madras officers and the Bombay officers gained in some respects, Bengal officers lost their stand for full batta throughout the Presidency but succeeded in upgrading some half batta stations. It seems that the Home authorities made the rule effective from 1837 and this arrangement, for better or worse, continued in force till 1857 when the Mutiny abolished all such existing conventions.

Thus by 1837, the question of reforms of pay and allowances of the Bengal army was considered by the Directors and Supreme Government in India to have been settled. Whereas the salary of the superior ranks had been increased either substantially or moderately, there had been hardly any increase, perhaps even some reduction, in the earnings of the junior ranks. The Home authorities maintained their doctrine that

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1. L. from G.G. in Council to the Court. 20 December 1836. No.15. M.L. received from Bengal. Vol.41.
 2. D. from the Court to the G.G. 20 September 1837. No.79. M.D. sent to Bengal ~~No.45~~. Vol.22.

money should be in short supply with these young men to prevent them from developing extravagant habits. The motive may have been admirable, but the effect of the policy was questionable, seeing that "the price of necessaries and the wages of servants had increased at least 25 per cent throughout India between the establishment of pay rates in 1796 and their reform in the late twenties of the nineteenth century."¹ While so many cadets and subalterns found it virtually impossible to keep out of debt on their normal pay in a half-batta station, the effect of the Company's parsimony was to force them to look beyond their normal duties for some better paid employment. Subalterns therefore continued to seek out staff appointments for the sake of the increased pay, prestige and influence attached to these positions and sought by all possible means to escape from the ordinary round of regimental duties. Those who failed shared the discontent and frustration fostered in their immediate seniors by the reduction in the privileges and allowances enjoyed by the Bengal officers.

Though the Directors' views prevailed and achieved a modicum of economy, they did so at the price of some hardship for the most junior and continuing rancour amongst all but the field officers of the Bengal Sepoy army. This discontent lingered on. In 1848 one finds a subaltern writing in a local paper, The Moffussilite, about the difficulty in paying "for

1. Minute of Bentinck to the Court 19 January 1835.
M.L. received from Bengal. Vol. ~~49~~ 39.

the servants, rent, clothing, uniform, contribution for the steps,¹ and food from his paltry emoluments,"² and of "the humiliation of knowing that nearly all the junior members of the Bengal army were debtors."³ Even in 1852, The Bengal Hurkaru, another local paper, observed that "an Ensign cannot live upon his pay--- with all their efforts to be at once just and respectable--- the Ensigns who had nothing to live upon but their pay, have a very hard struggle to keep within compass."⁴

Indeed the grievance was not resolved until the mutiny sealed the fate of the East India Company. By that time, it had helped to form the frustration and the deterioration of the officers' pride and morale which contributed indirectly, yet significantly, to the alienation of the Bengal sepoys.

Though the issue of pay rates and allowances was obviously the most important grievance which shaped the attitude of the Bengal officers, other grievances played a contributory role in framing their outlook towards the Bengal army.

1. From 1798 junior officers of the Company's army bought out their seniors with a view to accelerate their own promotion and offered them sums of money to retire."

Wellington Despatches. Ed. Owen, p.595.

All such transactions took place on a private basis. Major-General Sir Thomas T. Pears who was with the Indian army for 21 years (1840-'61) said "a scale of contribution was fixed and agreed to by the officers constituting the regimental cadre. There was a regular regimental fund and when an officer was to retire his brother officers were called upon to pay the money according to the agreed scale".

P.P. 1875. X(176) H.C. p.248.

2. The Moffussilite 10 November 1848.

3. The Moffussilite 10 November 1848.

4. The Bengal Hurkaru 4 May 1852.

Brief reference will be made here to such grievances as retirement and furlough regulations.

The retirement regulations were first introduced in the Company's army in 1796. The full pay of the rank held by a retiring officer was paid to him as pension if he had served his time of 25 years, which might include three years of furlough. The rules were modified in 1823¹ when, following the regulations prevailing in the King's army, half pay was sanctioned to those retiring before serving their full term. This applied to all ranks superior to that of captain. A lieutenant was allowed to enjoy this privilege only after 10 years, though after six years service he was permitted to retire on the half pay of an ensign. If a subaltern had to retire, even on medical grounds, before serving out six years, he was only eligible for his share of Lord Clive's Fund.²

The retirement regulations, however, led to a major difficulty. Since senior officers of the Company's army were not eligible for full retirement benefits before 25 years of service, it became a general practice with them to proceed home on furlough after serving a continuous term of 22 years in India and then either to retire from England or to rejoin the service. During the three years which an officer spent on furlough the authorities in Bengal were unable to fill the

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1. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 25 November 1823. para 124. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.16.
 2. Lord Clive's Fund - amounted to £45 annually for a Lt. £36 for an ensign provided they did not possess property of a value of £1000 for a Lt. and £750 for an ensign. Fifth report of select committee 1772-73. H.C. p.518.

vacant posts of the absentee senior officers since they could not know whether they would retire or return to India at the expiry of the three years. As a result junior officers had to be promoted temporarily to perform their duties, but without the substantive promotion or emolument befitting such ranks.¹ This procedure naturally led to much discontent. Both the Bengal Government and the Court of Directors attempted to deal with the grievance² over the years but with no success. Finally in 1835 the Court introduced reforms in the retirement regulations,³ which proposed to grant the full pay of a captain to an officer of any rank retiring after 23 years of service, the full pay of a major after 28 years of service, that of a lieutenant-colonel after 33 years and that of a colonel after 38 years. It was also specified that the service periods would include the permitted furlough period. This new rule was promulgated in India in 1836.⁴

The reforms only in part met the grievance of the Bengal officers, who continued to point to the much more liberal retirement privileges enjoyed by officers in the King's service and to the fact that as with pay and allowances nothing

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1. L. from the G.G. to the Court. 1 July 1822. M.L. received from Bengal. Vol. 16.
 2. (a) G.O.G.G. 28 July 1824 ordered that an absence of more than five years would be considered as retirement.
(b) G.O.G.G. 7 August 1833 reduced the period of continuous absence to only three years.
 3. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 23 December 1835. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 20.
 4. G.O.G.G. 4 May 1836. Bengal General Orders by Government 1836, p. 320.

had been done by the Court for the subalterns.¹ After two years agitation, the Court was persuaded to extend the privileges of retirement on half pay to sick or wounded subalterns and they also slightly shortened the period² of service in senior ranks for retirement privileges. Though these modifications, promulgated in 1838 were more acceptable to the Bengal officers, the retirement regulations remained an issue of grievance for the officers until the mutiny of 1857.

The rules governing furlough privileges for European officers hardly underwent any change after 1796.³ The regulations of 1796 had sanctioned leave of absence for a period of three years after ten years service in India. During this leave the officers were eligible to draw their regimental pay. One or two minor alterations were made in this regulation, one in 1819⁴ dealing with sick leave for one year without pay and another in 1825⁵ providing that an officer could enjoy his earned furlough in more than one instalment and allowing an additional three years leave for sound medical reasons. But by and large, there was little change in the regulation, and it

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1. Memorial from Col. Raper and other officers 21 May 1836. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 41.
 2. For a Maj. 27 years, for a Lt. Col. 31 years and for a Col. 35 years (the three years furlough being inclusive in all the cases). D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 20 September 1831, M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 10.
 3. "The system of furlough is the same since 1796", Mr. Melville, P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627) H.L. p.131.
 4. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 26 August 1818. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 7. (The order was issued on 26 June 1819).
 5. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council. 21 April 1825. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 11.

was natural that the Bengal officers particularly the junior ones, should have taken issue with them.

In 1830 the officers sent a request to the Directors for an additional period of leave after twenty years service - the request was refused. Then in 1837 they sent another memorial to the Court through the Bengal Government asking for the grant of regimental allowances in addition to pay during furlough, without which, they said, "no man would dream of taking his furlough,[as] he had to pay for his passage, the maintenance of his family and himself."¹ This request too, was refused by the Directors.² In 1846 in replying to another memorial ³ of the Bengal officers on the same topic the Court severely censured the Supreme Government for its practice of forwarding memorials and ordered it to stop this practice.⁴ Throughout the 1840's and 1850's such grievances continued to be a source of discontent among the Bengal officers. One cannot but wonder whether the decision of the Home authorities not to act was wise, for as The Times commented in 1846, "They ask for the amendment of an old law which however necessary it may

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1. Memorial from the Bengal officers 13 January 1837.
M.L. received from Bengal Vol.42.
 2. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 20 September 1837.
M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.22.
 3. Memorial from the Bengal officers 22 January 1846.
M.L. received from Bengal Vol.51.
 4. "It has long been a standing order in the army in England not to receive any memorial or address on general regulations, and system of service and similar rule be established in India." G.O.G.G. 9 September 1848.
Bengal Mily.Cons. 9 September 1848. No.344.

have been when it was first introduced has lost its original virtue by the lapse of time and change of circumstances.¹

The grievances of the Bengal officers, though of interest even when studied in isolation because of the partial insight they give us into the outlook of the officers during the period 1796 to 1852, only became fully significant when related to other problems connected with the Bengal army at that time. These include the failure to maintain an efficient and sound officer complement in the native regiments and the consequences this failure had for the discipline and morale of the native soldiers.

The organisational structure of the Bengal army introduced in 1824 fixed the complement of European officers for each native infantry regiment at 23. But the 1824 reorganisation did not provide for the replacement of officers on leave or furlough or assigned to staff appointments or other positions.² Thus, the number of officers doing regimental duties was always less than that sanctioned. We have already seen how anxious officers always were, especially the inadequately paid junior ranks, to transfer at one period to full batta stations, at another to transfer to volunteer or irregular forces, to the staff or to civilian posts. Since from the end of the eighteenth century there had begun a vast expansion of the Company's domain in India, the opportunities to make such transfer steadily grew. New prospects of civil appointments were opened

1. The Times 22 April 1846.

2. D. from the Court to the G. G. in Council, 25 November 1823 para. 1b9. M.D. to Bengal Vol. 10.

up, and attractive terms were offered to incoming recruits. The Government of Bengal had decided for reasons of exigency and economy to offer some of these civil appointments to interested army officers, for it was thought that with their education and experience, army officers would be well qualified to perform civil duties.¹ Whenever such an appointment was made, the officer concerned continued to draw his regimental pay (but not his allowances,) together with his civil allowances. Since his name was retained on the regimental roster for purposes of promotion, his post in the regiment had to be left unfilled. As Trevelyan observed "the officers --- joining the civil or political stations or detached troops or staff employments --- were not to lose anything. On the contrary these appointments enabled them to make money and reputation faster than their less fortunate brothers who remained in the line."² The system provided for a saving in the military expenditure for the Company and a gain in the form of increased earnings and improved status for the individual officer, but its effects upon the regiments were deplorable, for there was a steady drain from them of the most active and able officers.

The rate of depletion accelerated after the reorganisation of 1796, principally because of the institution of staff appointments with very generous allowances. The financial attraction of these appointments, together with the prestige

1. L. from the G.G. to the Court 20 January 1844.
M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 49.

2. G. Trevelyan - Cawnpore p. 40.

that they carried, prompted regimental officers of all ranks to opt for such positions at the first available opportunity. Added to this new attraction were the continued prospects of civil appointments which were paraded before army officers. By 1820 the regiments were under officered, and the Home authorities, realising the seriousness of the situation, ruled in 1823 that "no more than five officers shall at one time be taken from any regiment, either cavalry or infantry on the new establishment for staff or other duties."¹

Though Lord Hastings approved this limit and observed that the remaining officers would be sufficient to carry out regimental duties,² the restriction was never effectively applied and the drain of regimental officers to staff and civil appointments continued unabated. Further inducements to transfer were added in the Political department of the Supreme Government by the creation of more posts as residents and political agent, and the creation of the Department of Pay and Audit opened up such posts as those of judge-advocate, military secretary. Then there were open to regimental officers staff appointments on the clothing, barrack, commissariat and stud boards. Regimental officers were also selected as Commanding

1. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 25 November 1823. para 120. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. ~~4~~. 10.

2. Miscellaneous memoranda. Vol. 5, No. 435 (no date, no page number) it has been mentioned that "the Court in their arrangements of 1823, fixed five as the maximum number of officers who might be withdrawn from any one corps for staff appointments. --- Lord Hastings approved --- as an ample supply of officers for Regimental duty."

Officers of Irregular troops, bodies of sepoy over and above the sanctioned strength of the army which were used for emergencies or for the temporary occupation of new territories. These appointments were most eagerly sought after, for to the temptation of independence was also added obvious financial inducement. A lieutenant of a regular regiment who could secure command of an irregular corps might receive a special allowance worth 1200 rupees a month over and above his normal pay and allowance, while he still remained part of the regular army establishment.

Since the withdrawal of officers from the regiments could not be stopped, the Bengal Government in 1825 asked the Court to increase the number of officers in each regiment. They pointed out that many regiments had no more than eight or nine officers present for duty, others being on leave or having opted for alternative situations.¹ Two years later the Bengal Government repeated its request and suggested an increase of five extra officers per regiment to deal with the depletion rate.² But the Home authorities did not agree and replied that the deficiency had arisen not because of any inadequate allocation of officers under its 1824 scheme but because of the policy of the Supreme Government in granting staff and civilian appointments to its army officers. The Directors argued that even if nine officers were released from a regiment

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1. L. from the G. G. to the Court, 6 January 1825 paras 53-60. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 20.
 2. L. from the G. G. to the Court 15 December 1827. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 26.

there should be "available for duty besides a Field officer to command, a larger proportion of Captains and Subalterns than is equal to one officer for each Company."¹ As the European officers of the native regiments were assisted by the native officers, the Court held that more than one European officer per Company of native troops should not "under ordinary circumstances be required to preserve the native regiment in a proper state of efficiency."² The Bengal Government ultimately agreed with the Court, and a letter of 1830 promises that "more moderation shall be exhibited and military men will be selected for civil duties only when absolutely necessary."³ The good resolution was soon abandoned, for only four months later Calcutta is found seeking sanction for an additional captain for each company and an extra field officer for a regiment.⁴ This too the Court declined to sanction declaring that the state of their finances would not admit of their making any addition to their present military expenditure" except under very peculiar circumstances."⁵

The Bengal Government was not alone in drawing attention to the problem of officer depletion. Its adverse effect upon the native army was strongly presented by distinguished

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1. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 29 May 1828. paras 55-66. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 9. 14.
 2. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council. 29 May 1828. para 66. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 9. 14.
 3. L. from the G.G. to the Court 10 February 1830. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 30.
 4. L. from the G.G. to the Court. 26 June 1830. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 30.
 5. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council. 19 October 1831. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 10.

military men like Sir William Keir Grant and Lt. Colonel Baker. In his comments before the Select Committee of 1832, Grant observed "the consequences are obvious, a relaxed state of discipline, no connection between the officers and the sepoy and dissatisfaction in the minds of the former from severe duties falling on him in consequence of the paucity of officers present."¹ Baker, who had served in the Bengal army for more than 29 years, advised that this development be halted by issuing a general rule that, "no military man should hold a civil station, except in cases where necessity must supercede all law."² In spite of these warnings and promptings, the Home authorities did not increase the number of officers per native infantry regiment and the Bengal Government, in its turn, failed to observe moderation in staff and civil appointments of the officers, so that by 1836 the increasing drain had reached serious proportions.

As the years passed the situation did not ease, but was worsened rather by the increased establishment of local corps for service in such places as Assam, Arakan, Tenasserim and Sind. The Bengal Government found it impossible to abide within the limit of five officers per regiment set by the Court, and in desperation appealed again in 1844 for the increase of at least one officer for each native infantry regiment. Tired by these repeated requests, the Court in 1844

1. P.P. 1831-32. XIII, (735-V), H.C. Ap. B.No.6.
2. P.P. 1831-32. XIII, (735-V), H.C. Ap. B.No.16.

wearily stated that, "if the addition of one Captain only is required for the permanent efficiency of the native infantry of which the European officer is so vital,"¹ they were ready to sanction this increase as far as financial circumstances would allow. But in spite of this addition of one captain per regiment, which took effect in 1845, the deficiency of officers on active duty with the regiments continued to be felt.

This deficiency within the officer ranks of the Bengal army was widely known and commented upon by the Press of the period and it is instructive to take a random sampling of its comments. The Friend of India of March 1844 criticised the Board of Control for not taking up this matter in earnest and for not persuading the Court to arrest the shortfall.² The Bengal Hurkaru of June 1845, in commenting on the seriousness of the situation, observed that "very many regiments have not even one European officer at the head of each company on parade [and that] we have even known the whole ten companies held by three officers for six months at a time, on account of the absence of all other qualified officers."³ The Delhi Gazette reported in November 1846, that the 33rd regiment native infantry had not a single captain available for command duties because four were already on staff appointments and the other had assumed command of the Sheikh ^[sic] corps (an irregular corps).⁴

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1. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 15 June 1844. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 29.
 2. Friend of India 12 March 1844.
 3. Bengal Hurkaru 25 June 1845.
 4. Delhi Gazette 25 November 1846.

This sad state of affairs was not only confined to the cantonments, for as a letter published in The Times in November 1848 noted, "under the very walls of Multan, every captain as well as the two senior subalterns of the 51st regiment native infantry were absent."¹ The Mofussilite, commenting on the same problem observed in June 1849 that "the charge of companies in all regular corps devolves with few exceptions upon the young and inexperienced. In every other disciplined army, troops and companies are commanded by Captains, the Native army is the exception."²

The validity and accuracy of these comments is to a large extent borne out by the following statistics gleaned from the Bengal military statement of 1849. Out of the 74 regiments of Bengal native infantry, 21 regiments had between four and six captains absent; from another 21 regiments, at least three captains were missing and at least two captains were absent in the remainder. As regards subalterns, on an average only half the sanctioned number were present and available for duty per regiment.³ When their number is added to that of captains absent, a total is reached of about nine or ten officers absent per regiment, a number even greater than that which the Bengal Government forwarded to the Court of Directors in 1850 when it cited an absent officers figure of six or seven officers per regiment.⁴

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1. The Times - 25 November 1848.
 2. The Mofussilite - 26 June 1849.
 3. Bengal Military statement of 1849.
 4. Ap - C.

It appeared by 1850 that the difference of opinion between the Court and the Bengal Government on the depletion of officers would not be wisely resolved. Again the Court turned down a request for an increase in the officer complement and instructed the Bengal Government to draw upon as many Madras officers as possible for staff appointments in the Bengal army.¹ Since the limit of five was being consistently exceeded, the Court, while censuring the Government in India, sanctioned the rule that "six officers could be withdrawn from any regiment" though laying down that the number should "not be exceeded without an absolute necessity, the particulars of which are to be specially communicated to us."² But before this decision could reach India, the Governor-General Lord Hardinge, realising that the limit of five for withdrawal of officers was too low and therefore unrealistic, had himself issued an order raising the limit to seven.³ The Court was duly informed of this order and reluctantly sanctioned this raising of the limit, expressing the pious hope that the Government at Fort William would now be able to insist upon the maintenance of an effective number of officers in the sepoy regiments.⁴ Such, however, was not to be the case, and the officer shortage continued to be acute throughout the army up

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1. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 20 July 1850. para 20. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 36.
 2. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 27 November 1850. No. 30. Para 11. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 36.
 3. L. from the G.G. to the Court 22 July 1850. No. 122. para 4. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 58.
 4. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 15 January 1851. para 5. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 37.

to the Mutiny.

It was natural that this depletion of officers should ultimately affect the rank and file of the sepoy infantry regiments. This was pointed out with ample fullness by various senior officers before the Select Committee of 1852. Lt. Gen. Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Sind, observed that, "the general staff of the army being very numerous, it withdraws from regiments of the line such a large number of officers as not to leave enough for the regimental duties of those regiments and the consequence is that the regiments lose their discipline."¹ Major-General Pollock, alluding to the same problem, noted that, "The Bengal native army was not sufficiently officered by European officers, every company ought to have a Captain which they have not. The officers are taken off for other appointments and there are not a sufficient number of Captains on the establishment. Out of six Captains to a regiment some are taken for other appointments, some are on furlough. I have known of regiments commanded by Lieutenants sometimes in the field too."²

In addition to these comments, it can be generally stated that those officers chosen for civil and political duties were carefully selected men, qualified for such posts by their ability and linguistic attainments.³ Since "from the

1. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p. 331.

2. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p. 250.

3. For staff appointments, it was laid down that an officer must have "sufficient acquaintance with the native language, to be able to read, converse, answer and communicate freely in Hindustani. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 4 July 1838. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 25.

instance a young man arrives in India, his thoughts seem to be directed to how, instead of being with his regiment, he is to get away from it in order to better his conditions,"¹ those who were left to serve in the regiments were by and large inferior officers, those least able to carry out their responsibilities. Dissatisfied as they were with their service conditions, and often compelled to manage permanently short staffed, they performed their duties in a grudging manner and the morale and discipline of the native units suffered in consequence.

Such then was the state of affairs which existed amongst the European officers of the native infantry regiments in 1852. Gradually shorn of all their incentive, both financial and martial, and burdened with grievances, they became indifferent to their duties and ceased to take an interest in their sepoy. This would have been damaging in any military organisation based on 'line' management principles, but it was specially so for the Bengal army in which the bonds of race, religion and esprit de corps usually existing between officers and their men had never been present.

The increased centralisation of authority within the Bengal army since the reforms of 1796 had also lowered the prestige of the regimental officers in the eyes of their sepoy. Hedged in by voluminous rules and regulations and by growing delegation of power to those in staff positions, the regimental

officer was continually placed in an embarrassing position. Indeed, the regulations had become so complicated with time that any officer's actions were liable to censure and were acceptable and correct only as long as they were not challenged¹. Even the Supreme Government in India was not free from this questioning and more often than not were censured for their actions. In 1824, when, under the demands of the Burmese War, the Government of India took an emergency decision and raised six extra regiments for the Bengal army, they wanted to include them in the regular line. The Directors, for their part, ordered their disbandment. This led to an argument which continued till 1828. The Court severely admonished their Bengal agents and observed, "It is your duty in the high and responsible situation in which you stand to place before all our servants an example of obedience to our orders and of deference to our authority - with what seeming propriety can we retrench from the allowances of subordinate officers the amount of all unauthorised expenditure, if the Supreme Government be permitted in direct disobedience of orders² to inflict upon our revenue a great permanent charge, without incurring the ordinary penalty which according to the custom of our service attached to such conduct?"³ The Court had previously warned the Bengal Government in 1814 not to act without receiving

1. T.R.E. Holmes - History of Indian Mutiny p.55.

2. This refers to the order of the Court to disband the six extra regiments.

3. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 6 February 1828. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.14.

previous sanction of the Home authorities. Remarks made by the Court - "on no future occasion whatever should an augmentation by whole regiment be made by any of the local government without any previous reference to us,"¹ "no commissions of whatever rank is to be granted until a sanction and authority be given to the same from England,"² reveal the tone of control exercised by the Home authorities over the Government of Bengal. How far this policy of detailed control exercised by London authorities was wise is questionable. Any effort to exercise rigid control from a distance of many thousands of miles and to restrict the powers to improvise rules for meeting the exigencies of an emergency must at times prove costly and disastrous. It encouraged a state of lethargy and the avoidance of responsibility and decision - making amongst the superior army officers, and this in turn embarrassed the junior field officers before their sepoys. Devoid of most of their authority, they were reduced to mere arbitrators of drill and dress and found solace in liquor, gambling and other delights of Anglo Indian society. The discerning sepoy was not at a loss to notice the situation.

It is significant that as this serious weakness came to the fore, other pressures playing upon the Bengal army made themselves felt. As the prestige and power of the Company in India had increased, and the memory of Maratha hardiness or

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1. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 8 November 1814.
M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 4. 5.
 2. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 3rd March 1824.
M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 7. 11.

Mughal splendour had faded, new racial attitudes had been emerging as between English and Indians, attitudes which were reflected in the relationships between European officers and their native sepoy. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the attitude of the Company's Government became permeated with imperial ambition, and superiority. The attitude of the average Englishman changed from one of disapproval of Hindu 'superstition' and Mussalman 'bigotry' to one of contempt for the ideas and beliefs of an inferior and conquered people, and there emerged in him a superiority complex which led him to regard India "not only as a country whose institutions were bad and people corrupted but one which was by its nature incapable of ever becoming any better."¹ Likewise the life of the English in India was becoming more Europeanised than it had been, and gradually but noticeably, the situation arose in which there was "little connection with natives of either religion."² Indians came to be excluded from important posts, both in the army and the civil organisations and the friendly intercourse between the two races disappeared. As Maria Graham said, "Every Briton appears to pride himself on becoming outrageously John Bull,"³ and she noted in her memoirs that, "the distance kept up between the English and the natives (in Bengal) is such that I have not been able to get acquainted with any native family."⁴ With the increasing influx of

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1. T.G.P. Spear - The Nabobs, p.136.
 2. T. Williamson - East India Vade Macum. Vol.I, p.347.
 3. Maria Graham - Journal of a residence in India p.136.
 4. Ibid., p.139.

Englishwomen into India, the social distance had become greater still and "a herd psychology and an intense race consciousness," flourished.¹ "The intense Anglo-Saxon spirit of self approbation," commented Trevelyan, "unpleasantly noticeable among vulgar Englishman on the continent, became rampant in India. It is painful to observe the deep pride and insolency of race which engrained in the nature of Europeans."² The European society at Calcutta was shocked when Lord Auckland, the Governor-General accepted Dwarkanath Tagore's invitation to dinner.³ The common expressions used about Indians were 'odious blacks', 'the nasty heathen wretches', 'the filthy creatures' etc., and if it was "not that the English generally behave with cruelty [yet] they make no scruple of expressing their anger and contempt by the most opprobrious epithets that the language affords."⁴

The European officers of the Sepoy army were not immune to this changing social environment, and their behaviour towards their sepoy reflected the attitude of the period. Indifference and abuse became the order of the day, and social contact with the sepoy and the native officers was looked down upon. This feeling was further aggravated by the fact that inexperienced immature cadets fresh from England were sent out to take command over native officers and men far older than

1. T.G.P. Spear - op.cit., p.145.

2. G.Trevelyan - The Competition Wallah pp.441-442

3. E.Eden - Letters from India Vol.I, pp.215-216.

4. Observations on India - by a resident there many years, p.149.

themselves, whose tongues and customs were wholly unknown to them. In such circumstances it was understandable that they would assume an air of superiority. The sepoy, for their part, conscious of the inexperience and incapacity of their officers, felt resentful. Consequently, any bond of mutual trust, respect and attachment that had grown up between the sepoy and his European officer was replaced by a feeling of estrangement and mutual distrust. Even the native officers were looked down upon by their European colleagues because of their complexion, religion and language.¹

The Bengal officers thus increasingly sought outlet in the society of balls and suppers which had come into vogue. Lt. Colonel Sleeman, who was in India for a period of over 40 years, wrote, "the subalterns exhibited little interest in their regimental duties and turned instead to Beer and Billiards and their clubs. They became entirely alienated from their men and betray signs of greatest impatience while they listen to the necessary reports of their native officers."²

Indeed, this attitude was so overwhelming, that, as an officer observed "it was almost impossible for any one to avoid becoming almost a different being in a very short time after arriving in India. I dare say I am wonderously altered among the regiment in my ways, while every griffin swears he'll never get into such and such habits, that he sees everyone, in spite of their having made the same determination, dropping

1. Gleig - India and its army p.192.

2. Lt.Col.Sleeman - Rambles and recollections of an Indian official Vol.II, p.32.

into by degrees, they will be seen exactly as the rest of the officers."¹ William Delafield Arnold, long in the Company's military service, described these officers as "mere animals with no single idea on any subject in the world beyond their carcasses. They were dishonest in money transactions and as for courtesy, such an idea never entered their heads. Their language was disgusting, they took no interest even in their regiment."² This withdrawal from and reaction to the sepoys placed the Bengal officers in an increasingly dangerous vacuum. To Lord Bentinck, this trend was very disturbing and he noted with deep regret, the passing of the good old days when "the connection between the European and the native officers was much closer, their dependence upon each other was greater and a more cordial intimacy and union existed between all ranks and the sepoys. They have never been so good as they were in the earliest period of our careers."³

This deterioration of morale amongst the officer corps brought forth no positive action from either the Court or the Supreme Government in India. On more than one occasion, the Court sanctioned their Executive in India to show "courtesy and observation of kindness and proper attention from the Europeans towards the native soldiers,"⁴ and emphasised that

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1. Eastern sketches or original letters from India, 27 May 1826 to 11 July 1827 by an officer in the East India Company's service. E.MSS. B.74.
 2. William Delafield Arnold - Oakfield ~~Vol. I~~, p.12.
 3. Minute of Bentinck 13 March 1835. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 39.
 4. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 28 May 1828 para 103. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 14.

that the Commanding Officers of native corps should impress upon their juniors "the prime importance of zealous exertion on the part of our European officers in their manifesting an unceasing regard in the happiness, the good will and obedience of their men and of their possessing a common language and of their habit of intercourse with troops under them."¹ If such lofty statements could have arrested the demoralising influences at work amongst the Bengal army, history might have been differently written. But such was not the case, and these instructions went unheeded.

Throughout the period under review, 1796 to 1852, two forces were at work in India. One was the driving force of able, ambitious governors-general, bent upon the extension as well as the consolidation of their Indian empire, very conscious always of dangers threatening and of the importance of the army which shielded them against those dangers. The other was the governing force of the Home authorities, of the cautious Directors, anxious at first about their trade and at all times about the finances of their Indian possessions and of the Presidents of the Board of Control, determined to impose Parliamentary control and often hostile to the pretensions of the Company in India. The officers of the Company's armies in India found themselves and their prospects, private and professional, at the mercy of these conflicting forces. Sometimes they were able to play upon the feelings of one or

1. D. from the Court to the G.G. in Council 3 August 1842.
M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.27.

other party, at others they became the victims of an access of pique in a President of the Board of Control or a particular Court of Directors. In either case their efficiency and integrity was impaired. Ill prepared for Indian conditions, young officers came out to India to find themselves plunged into the society of officers whose isolation from a wider society made them unduly preoccupied with their own past status and present difficulties. They inherited a tradition of near-mutinies, officer combinations and constant memorials of protest. The difficulties of a subaltern's early years, when it was all too easy to fall into debt - especially in Bengal - led to much dissatisfaction and a continuous search for ways of escaping from regimental service. Financial considerations led to a distaste for the ordinary round of sepoy management and training - a changing climate of opinion might turn that distaste into a positive dislike of the sepoy and of all things Indian. Frustrated and wallowing in his discontent, the officer drifted away from his regimental duties and his sepoys. Such a situation could be explosive. As Sir Henry Lawrence said, "so long as all is smooth and quiet on the surface few enquiries are made. All may be rotten below, a mine may be ready to be sprung."¹

1. H. Lawrence - Essays on Indian Army and Oudh ~~military and political~~. p. 198.

CHAPTER III

The Native Soldiery of the
Bengal Native Infantry
(1796 - 1852)

The army reorganisation of 1796 affected the native soldiery of the Bengal native infantry as much as its European officer complement. It replaced the Brigade formation of the infantry introduced in 1786 by one of Regiments, each of which was made up of two battalions. The strength of each regiment, European officers apart, was fixed at 20 Subadars, 20 Jamadars, 100 Havildars, 100 Naiks, 40 Drummers and Fifers and 1600 sepoy, their numbers being equally divided between the two battalions. Two drill havildars, two drill naiks and two native doctors were also sanctioned as staff attached to each regiment. The office of native adjutant was however abolished, in keeping with the policy of the army administrators who were reluctant to vest any major responsibility in the native officers. This structure of the native complement within a battalion remained substantially the same down to the year 1852,¹ for the reorganisation of 1824 did no more than replace the double-battalion

1. M.C. 13 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulation 1799, p.131. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec. XLI, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852. p.289.

regiments by a larger number of single-battalion regiments. The only important variation, and this was irregular, was in the number of sepoy to a company. In spite of this continuity of the basic structure, the native soldiery was none the less affected by the various changes in regulations, service conditions and circumstances that occurred between 1796 and 1852. This chapter will deal with the reactions of the native soldiers to all such measures and also with the significant influence that these reactions exerted on the history of the Bengal native infantry.

Contrary to what the name would imply, the Bengal native infantry hardly drew any recruits from Bengal proper. Instead, its ranks were filled mainly by residents of Oudh and the upper provinces of the Bengal Presidency. Although Oudh was politically included in the Company's domain only in 1856, its inhabitants were nevertheless welcomed into the Company's military service. The military establishment of the Vizier of Oudh was greatly reduced at the end of the eighteenth century when by the treaty of January 1798, he was made to cede the Fort of Allahabad to the Company. A great many inhabitants of Oudh, who had served as soldiers in his army were therefore thrown out of employment. The Calcutta Council thought it proper to tap this ready source of trained men well known for their soldierly habits, and they recruited as many as possible from the infantry ranks. In this, the Council received support from the Commander-in-Chief, who observed that such recruitment "will be attended with many beneficial consequences and it will

furnish the army with a body of good and unexceptionable recruits."¹ Although it is not clear what particular benefits the Commander-in-Chief was expecting to derive from such a policy, recruits were drawn from Oudh in 1800 and the system persisted throughout the period under review. Besides Oudh, the provinces west of Dinajpur in 1810 also supplied many recruits to fill the vacancies caused in the regiments by the raising of volunteer corps for foreign service.² Recruits were also raised from the districts of Patna and Bihar, as Buchanan noted;³ he also stated that a great many came from the north side of the Ganges i.e. from the Shahabad and Bhagalpore regions. During the Burmese war of 1824, men from the Benares, Buxar, Cawnpore and Dinapore regions were also enlisted in the Bengal native infantry.⁴ Since these areas adjoined Oudh, the statement that the Bengal infantry sepoy were recruited from the inhabitants of Oudh and Bihar, would sum up the position fairly enough. The deposition of Major-General Sir Jasper Nicolls, (who was in India from 1802 to 1830 and was "a little at each Presidency,") before the select Committee of 1831 that "the whole sepoy army of Bengal is drawn from the Company's province of Bihar and Oudh, with very few exceptions"⁵ supports the above conclusion.

Recruitment from Oudh was not without its disadvantages

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1. Bengal Mily. Cons. 29 May 1800. No.1 and 1A.
 2. Bengal Mily. Cons. 26 September 1810. No.28.
 3. F. Buchanan - An Account of the district of Bihar and Patna, Book II, p.268.
 4. L. from Bengal, 6 November 1824. para. 12. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.20.
 5. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-V), H.C. p.1.

however. When large scale desertion occurred in the Bengal native infantry units in 1830 during their march to the southern peninsula, the Bengal Government found itself unable to take any punitive action against the deserters, except by discharging them, as they hailed from Oudh which was not under the Company's authority. This led the administrators to reconsider the policy of recruiting men from regions not under the Company's jurisdiction, and as a result, orders were issued that "natives of the Company's provinces only are to be entertained as recruits in situations where such can be obtained and as few men as are possible be received into battalions serving in the Vizier's dominions from countries to the west of Benares."¹ But from the depositions (before the Army Commission of 1859) of those European officers with long service in the Bengal infantry, it can be proved that this order of 1830 was little observed and that the Bengal infantry had continued to recruit its sepoys from the Vizier's dominions. Colonel Keith Young, who had been with the Bengal Army since 1823 observed as a Judge Advocate General of the Army in 1859 that "Oudh and the adjacent districts that were formerly under the Oudh Government furnish about three fourths of the recruits for the Bengal infantry."² Brigadier Troup who had been in the Bengal military service since 1819 and who served as the Commander at Bareilly in 1859, stated that "the Bengal native infantry came chiefly from the province of Oudh, Buxar, Bhojpur and Arrah..."³ Henry Russell

1. Bengal Mily. Cons. 9 August 1830. No. 1600.

2. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.143.

3. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p. 146

also supported these officers by noting in his diary that, "a great portion of the Bengal army in the old days [the pre-mutiny days] came from the Byswara district."¹

The reason for this preponderance of recruitment from Oudh may be sought in the writings of various people who were personally attached to the Bengal military service in various capacities during the period under review. The Duke of Wellington wrote to Lieutenant-General Stuart in 1804 that the Oudh recruits were chosen because they were of a better size and appearance² than any others to be had in India. Major-General Sir Thomas Reynall who was with the Indian army from 1805 to 1828 (1822 to 1828 in Bengal) stated before the Select Committee of 1831 that, "the Oudh men were thought of as the best soldiers."³ Lord Bentinck wrote in connection with the composition of the native armies of India that the people of Oudh were "much more military in their habits and were considered more powerful than those of Bombay."⁴ Melville, the Military Secretary of East India House observed in 1852 that "the sepoy from Oudh are generally men of fine stature."⁵ For these, and for other reasons to be discussed later, this predominance of men from Oudh continued to be an important feature of the Bengal Native Infantry throughout the period.⁶ This narrow regional

1. W.H. Russell - My Indian Mutiny Diary, p.20.

2. Despatches of the Duke of Wellington -ed. Gurwood, Vol.II, p.1046.

3. P.P. 1831-'32, VIII, (735-V); H.C. p.135.

4. L. from Bengal, 16 March 1835. para.10.M.L. received from Bengal. Vol.39.

5. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.230.

6. "The Bengal native infantry was mainly recruited from Oude, Bhojepore and Bihar," said Lt.Col.Coke (who was with the Bengal army from 1827) P.P.1859, VIII, (2541) H.C. p.1279.

basis of recruitment was to make its influence felt on more than one occasion during these years.

The fact that sepoy recruitment was confined to Oudh and Bihar also meant that sepoy recruitment was overwhelmingly from among Hindus, who formed the great majority of the population of these areas. Hindus always enjoyed a marked numerical superiority over the Muslims in the ranks of the Bengal native infantry regiments. Although Clive had recommended in 1765 that native battalions should be composed of equal numbers of Muslims and Hindus so that they might exercise an effective check over each other,¹ this policy was hardly followed at all and from an early date the Hindus supplied the majority of recruits for the native infantry regiments in Bengal. Thus Captain Badenach, in submitting the returns of a corps raised in 1814-15 at Benares, pointed out that there were only 92 Muslims against 804 Hindus.² The Court of enquiry which sat in judgment over the sepoy mutiny at Barrackpore in 1824 stated in its report that only one tenth of the personnel of the Bengal native infantry regiments was Muslim,³ and the members⁴ of the Punjab Committee of 1859 commented in their report to the

1. Chap. I. p. 56.

2. Captain W. Badenach - Inquiry into the state of the Indian army, p. 74.

3. Genl. observations of the Court of enquiry, Barrackpore, 2 January 1825, para 22. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18.

4. Sir John Lawrence, Brigadier-General Chamberlain and Lt. Col. H. B. Edwards. They were with the Indian army since 1828, 1837 and 1840.

Army Commission that "three-fourths of the Bengal native infantry [were] high caste Hindus and the rest one fourth consisted of Muslims and low caste Hindus."¹ The composition figures of seven sepoy regiments selected at random by the Army Commission of 1859, indicated that in 1857 there had been only 1170 Muslims as against 6572 Hindus and 54 Sikhs² in the seven regiments.³

Again, of the Hindu sepoy in the Bengal infantry regiments, men belonging to the higher castes - Brahmins and Kshatriyas - formed the majority. Captain Badenach gave the following table of caste distribution in a regiment raised at

1. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.27.
2. Sikhs were enlisted as local army in 1846 by Hardinge but they were not enrolled in the line before 1850. D. to Bengal 18 September 1850. para. 14, M. D. sent to Bengal, Vol. 36.
3. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. Ap. 22,

Benares in 1814-15.¹

Ranks	H i n d u s										
	Muslims		High caste		Low castes						
	Sheik Pathan		Brah- min	Raj- poots	Koit (a)	Bur- ie (b)	Ah- eer (c)	Kur- mi (d)	Bhat (e)	Moo- nee (f)	At- ect (g)
Subadar	1	1	-	4	2	1	1	-	-	-	-
Jamadar	3	6	2	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Havildar	5	6	15	19	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Naick	4	6	24	12	2	1	1	-	1	-	-
Sepoys	19	41	351	265	16	32	32	4	8	3	1
Total-	32	60	392	304	23	34	34	4	9	3	1
	92		696		108						

1. Badenach - op.cit., p.74.

- (a) Koit - It could be Kayastha, Kaet, Kait, Kayath, Kaya - the writer caste of Bengal proper and Bihar, or it could be Kayat, a synonym for Darzi (tailor). H. Risley - The tribes and castes of Bengal. Vol.I, pp. 440, 443, 214.
- (b) Burie - Buri or Buru? Buri Samat, a sect of HO in Singhbhum, or Buru a sect of Pans in Chota Nagpur. Hos, Lorka Kolh, a non-Aryan tribe of the district of Singhbhum, Ibid., Vol.I, pp. 165, 319. Pan - a low, weaving, basket-making and servile caste scattered under various names throughout the north of Orissa and the southern and western parts of Chota Nagpur. Ibid., Vol.II, p.155.
- (c) Ahir, Ahiri, Abhir, Abhiri - the cowherd caste of Bihar and upper India. The name is also sometimes used to denote a sub-caste of Goalas. Ibid., Vol.I, p.14.
- (d) Kurmi - Kumbi, Kurambi, a very large cultivating caste of upper India, Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa. Ibid., Vol.I, p.528.
- (e) Bhat - a caste of genealogists and family bards. Ibid., Vol.I, p.98.
- (f) Moonee- Mundri or Munri? - a totemistic sept of Mundas in Chota Nagpur. Ibid., Vol.II, p.108.
- (g) Atect - Atit? Atith from Sanskrit atit - As used in Bihar, it includes two classes of persons, Sannyasi Atits (who adopt a purely ascetic and celibate life) and Gharbari Atits, whose manner of life is that of ordinary householders. Ibid., Vol. I, p.26.

It would thus appear that in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, recruits were drawn mainly from the Brahmins and Kshatriyas "in the proportion of eight to ten, with one tenth Mahomedan and one tenth Hindus of inferior caste."¹ Henry Russell, a Bengal officer, in his evidence before the Select Committee of 1831 supported this view and said, "among the Bengal native infantry regiments, Hindus of the better class greatly preponderate".² Lt. General Briggs while commenting upon the composition of the Bengal native infantry in 1842 stated that the proportion "of different sects in the ranks of the regular Bengal native infantry" was as follows".³

Christians	Mahomedans	Brahmins	Rajputs	Hindus of inferior caste
No. 1076	12,411	24,840	27, 993	13,920

Thus throughout the period under review high caste Hindus continued to form the majority in the Bengal native regiments. This view is supported by the report of the Select Committee of 1852 which observed that "in 1851 there were 70,129 Hindus in the Bengal native army. Among these Hindus, there were 26,983 Brahmins, 27,335 Rajputs, 15,761 Hindus of inferior description and 50 Sikhs."⁴

- Court of Enquiry.
1. Genl. observation of the ~~C. of Enq.~~ Barrackpore, 2 January 1825. para. 23. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825, No.18.
 2. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.225.
 3. J. Briggs - A letter on the Indian army. p.13.
 4. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.145.

From the data listed above it is evident that in the early part of the nineteenth century the Brahmins provided the largest, or nearly the largest group among the Bengal infantry sepoy. That predominance brought in its wake many a problem for the army administrators, and measures were taken to arrest the trend. Thus the Bengal Government observed in 1830 that, "an unusually large number of Brahmins has of late entered the service,"¹ (This may have been brought about by the permission granted to serving sepoy in 1823 to bring a Brahmin youth to cook for them on their return journey from furlough;² these youths, being present in the camp of the regiment, found it easy to secure employment in the army with the help of their sepoy masters.) To arrest this increasing trend the Bengal Government laid down in 1830 that, "it would be desirable, to follow the proportion which formerly prevailed by giving a decided preference to the Rajputs and to the Mahomedans."³ As a consequence, the enlistment of Brahmins was discouraged. This restrictive policy was however not very effective; it was detected in 1834, for instance, that a number of sepoy who had been enlisted in the 59th regiment as Rajputs, were in fact Brahmins.⁴ Bentinck, however, thought it best, since it was impossible to prevent fraud, to revoke this restrictive order on Brahmin recruits and in 1834 issued a General Order that,

1. Bengal Mily. Cons. 9 August 1830. No.1600

2. G.O.G.G. 8 May 1823. Bengal Mily. Cons. 8 May 1823. No.197.

3. Bengal Mily. Cons. 9 August 1830. No.1600

4. L. from commanding officer of the 59th regiment, 6 November 1837. para. 7. Board's Collection, 60, 204, p.8.

"all objections to men belonging to the respectable classes of the native community or preference among such classes on account of caste or religion shall cease to operate."¹ He also ordered the sepoy of the 59th regiment to be enrolled in their real names and castes.² The Court of Directors being informed of this measure approved it, and the restriction was withdrawn. The earlier intention of the Government to reduce the proportion of Brahmins seems somehow to have been met, for the report of the Select Committee in 1852 revealed that the Rajputs by that time, exceeded the Brahmins in total numbers.³

The basic fact however remained that the high caste Hindus continued to form the majority in the Bengal native infantry regiments during the period 1796 to 1852. There was no Government order barring the enlistment of low caste recruits, yet, though the order of Bentinck in 1830 encouraged all castes to seek service, the proportion of low caste Hindus in sepoy regiments remained comparatively low compared to that of the higher castes. For one reason or another the commanding officers of sepoy regiments preferred to enlist the higher castes.⁴ They thought that "the higher caste men are cleaner in their habits."⁵ As Lt.-Colonel Wyllie, who was in India for 25 years, from 1834 onwards, observed, "the feeling was that [in Brahmins]

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1. G.O.G.G. 21 December 1834. Bengal Mily. Cons. 21 December 1834. No.252.
 2. L. from Bengal 22 December 1834. para. 10. Board's Collection 60, 204. p.9.
 3. See page 202.
 4. P.P. 1831-32, XIII; (735-v), H.C. p.18.
 5. P.P. 1859, V; (2515), H.C. p.20.

they have a more respectable man, in the same way as in our own country you would rather have a farmer's son than a man taken from the streets.¹ Whatever the causes, the fact remained that up till 1852, the Bengal native infantry was "chiefly Hindus of the highest caste."²

These high caste men, had Lt.-Col. Wyllie reflected for a moment, were of course, very often themselves farmers' sons, for Oudh and Bihar were the very heart of the great agricultural region formed by the Ganges valley. The districts from which the sepoy were recruited were predominantly agricultural in their economy, and the inhabitants mainly dependent upon the land. That was true whether they were Rajputs or Pathans, with a martial tradition, or Brahmins and Kayasths.³ If they were driven to seek employment as the mercenary forces of the Company by the oppressions and disorders of the Oudh Government, they remained conscious of their status as 'Ashraf' or gentry, and as such "soldiers by birth."⁴ This was in the sharpest contrast with the European regiments of the Company, for they were composed of men, who, previous to their enlistment had followed a whole variety of callings, as "brick layers, labourers, sailors, basket-makers and painters."⁵ This strange conglomeration of men sought Company's service either to escape disappointment in their own mother country or as adventurers in search of gold. Ned Phasele, a horse-artillery man in the

1. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.173.

2. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.164.

3. H.P. Chattopadhyaya - Sepoy Mutiny, 1857, its social study and analysis, p.48.

4. Buchanan -- op.cit., p.265.

5. The Mofussilite, 19 October 1847.

Company's service, in his description of his fellow recruits described how one had enlisted because of a quarrel with his father-in-law and another because of a disagreement with his father's coachman. Ned Phasele himself had had rather a colourful career. After alternate hard reading and daring breaches of all University rules and regulations, he had been rusticated for two years. Being virtually alienated from his family and disgusted and overwhelmed with debts he had joined the Company's army with the hope of returning with some of the orient gold in his pouch.¹

Recruited as the sepoy's were from all over the upper provinces of Bengal Presidency a wide variety of local dialects of Hindustani prevailed in the Bengal sepoy regiments. In Benares,² Ghazipur³ and in the whole district of Shahabad,⁴ the common tongue of the people was the western Bhojpuri dialect of Bihar, while the Awadhi dialect of Eastern Hindi was the general language of the whole of Oudh. In Bareilly district the majority of the inhabitants conversed in western Hindi, in some form or other, as their mother tongue.⁵ Since Hindustani was the one common language, it was accepted as the official language for the purpose of communication in the sepoy regiments of the Bengal army. The European officers attached to the sepoy army, from 1796 to 1852, were therefore required to master this language before being granted the charge of a

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1. The Mofussilite 19 October 1847
 2. District Gazetteer of the United Provinces, Benares. p.106
 3. Ibid., Ghazipur, p.93.
 4. Ibid., Shahabad, p.97.
 5. Ibid., Bareilly, p.34.

native regiment. From 1809, the year of inception of the seminary, the cadets in the Military seminary at Addiscombe had also to study Hindustani and this practice continued till 1852.¹

Such then was the material from which the Bengal native infantry drew its recruits. To summarise, the characteristics of the representative Bengal native recruit for the period under review can be expressed as follows: He was a Hindu of high caste, came from an agricultural community, was a resident of Bihar and Oudh regions and had Hindustani as his mother-tongue. He was a person of good physique and clean, sober and frugal habits. Religious in temperament, very conscious of his caste and social duties, much attached to his family, and surrounded even in the regiment by his fellow villagers, the Bengal sepoy recruit was reluctant to take any steps which could be questioned on the context of social and religious practices and prejudices. In sharp contrast to his English fellow soldiers, he hailed from the peasantry and a station which possessed a social heritage. In fact, as like as not, he was of the landed gentry, and had land in his name. Unlike his European comrades, he did not seek escape in the ranks; rather by enlistment he gained status in his society to which he continued to retain his allegiance. He therefore remained a civilian at heart though becoming a soldier by profession. This distinctive feature in the make-up of the Bengal recruit and sepoy necessarily exerted an influence over the happenings of the Bengal native infantry.

1. MSS. History of Addiscombe Seminary, 1809-1860. p.236.
Misc. Cadet Book. Vol.3.

It can be stated in a general sense that no special agency was employed to recruit for the Bengal sepoy regiments. In ordinary circumstances intending recruits were brought along by the men already serving in a regiment while returning from furlough.¹ In times of urgency, however, reward money was allowed to native soldiers who voluntarily exerted themselves to bring in fresh recruits,² or a reward in the form of promotion was given.³ In addition, recruiting parties were occasionally sent out, with the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, and native commissioned officers and sepoys were granted leave of absence to recruit men from their native villages.⁴ Whatever agency may have been employed in securing the recruits, it can be said that the intending recruits were by and large the fellow villagers of the serving soldiers of the regiment. That this self-operating procedure had the acceptance of the army administrators is borne out by a variety of evidence. Thus Colonel C. Fagan, the Adjutant General of the army, issued a circular (No.1600) on 9 August 1840, in which he asked the commanding officers of native regiments to "avail themselves of the services of any intelligent and smart native officers and men, who are on leave of absence to obtain good recruits by their assistance..."⁵ to keep up the strength of their regiments to 620 privates. Again, Major-General Hearsey,

1. Seetaram - From Sepoy to Subadar p.3.

2. G.O.G.G. 5 October 1797. Grace Bengal regulations 1799.p.210

3. G.O.G.G. 26 September 1810. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817.Sec.XLI

4. G.O.G.G. 5 October 1797.Grace Bengal regulations 1799.p.210.

5. Board's Collection 60,204, pp.12-13.

speaking before the Army Commission of 1859 as an officer with over fifty years experience in India, and as commanding officer of the Presidency Division, stated that "the great agency was that of native officers and men. When they went on their periodical furlough to their villages they were told to bring back with them young and strong youths fit for recruits".¹ This procedure was to a great extent responsible for the regional character of the recruits of the Bengal native infantry and the consequent influence that it exerted on its history of the reviewed period.

For the ease of recruitment, which the Bengal Government experienced, there was more than one reason. From the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the first quarter of the nineteenth, constant wars over a wide region and frequent changes in the territories possessed by the ruling native princes, caused disruption to civil life. Consequently, agricultural labour was little in demand.² Moreover, even when with British conquests agriculture became more settled and flourishing, the simultaneous reduction in the size of the armies of the native princes flooded the country with people who were unaccustomed to any other avocation but that of a soldier and these people were ready to serve any one who could pay them. To these people, the terms offered in the Company's army proved attractive and especially so because the Company offered a fixed and regular rate of pay. There was yet another factor which tempted young Indian recruits to enter the military service of

1. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.172.

2. R. Temple - India in 1880. p.39.

the Company. For years, the Company's army had been victorious everywhere in India and there was no spell like victory to benefit a soldier especially when victory meant prize-money and plunder.¹

As Viscount Gough said before the select committee of the Parliament in 1852, "the military service in India [was] a very popular service."²

As a direct consequence of this popularity, the question of paying bounty money to potential recruits in the manner which was prevalent in the Royal army, never arose in Bengal during the period under consideration. Lord Bentinck rightly observed in 1830 that there was no other country in the world in which men could be recruited "with such facility and at such trifling expense as that of the native army of the Bengal Presidency,"³ and Melville, from 1837 the Military Secretary in the India House, showed that this held true to the end of our period when, in 1852, he reported to the Select Committee that the recruiting for the native force was carried on "entirely by voluntary enlistment without bounty."⁴

Recruitment was thus allowed to be the responsibility of the serving native officers and men. Although procedures⁵ were laid down for recording details about intending recruits, upto the middle of the nineteenth century, the particulars furnished

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1. John Jacob also related that the sepoy on the march in time of war normally expected to live off the country.
 2. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.240.
 3. L. from Bengal 14 October 1830, para. 59. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 32.
 4. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.145.
 5. Ap- A.

by these men during enlistment were not counter-checked. Presentation of false returns was therefore not unknown. Since the Company's Government could hardly take any punitive steps to prevent desertion if their only evidence of enlistment was based on such false returns, this laxity in procedure was at length tightened up. In 1852, the Bengal Government ordered that "in future the persons through whom recruits are enlisted will be held responsible for all these and they will be severely punished in future if any errors are detected."¹ The members of the recruiting parties were also asked to be careful to draw up a correct registry of recruits. On entering a district, they were ordered to wait on the Civil authority i.e., the district officer, who in his turn would adopt all necessary measures to facilitate the enlistment of recruits. Each recruit after enlistment, was to be taken to the tahseeldar² of his village who would verify his name, caste, parentage and residence. This verified list, with the tahseeldar's signature, was then to be shown to the district officer for re-verification. After the enlistment of the recruits at the regimental head-quarters, the Adjutant General was required to send to the District Commissioner a complete return of all the recruits enlisted during the month. These returns were again distributed among the district officers for cross-checking with their lists. The Adjutant General was also ordered to send a monthly casualty

1. G.O.G.G. 6 August 1852. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 August 1852 No. 486.

2. Tahseeldar - "The chief (native) revenue officer of a subdivision (tahsil) of a district." Hobson-Jobson p.888

list to the commanding officers in order to enable them to correct their registers and to prevent any dismissed men from re-enlisting into the Company's service.¹

To help the recruiting authorities in their task, detailed specifications of physical requirements had been drawn up in 1796 to guide the commanding officers in their selection of recruits. These rules remained in vogue throughout the period under review being republished at regular intervals down to 1852.¹ The enlisting age limits were fixed between sixteen and thirty years and the minimum height at five feet six inches. Men below the standard height were permitted to be enlisted provided they were of active make, athletic and not below the acceptable age. Exceptions to these rules were only permitted on the face of great demand and when additional recruits were required to be raised within a very short time.³ It was also laid down that recruits before their enlistment were to be examined by the regimental medical officer. Those who were declared unfit by the medical officer were to be rejected without any reference to army head quarters.

The Bengal Standing Orders further prescribed that after passing the medical examination, the first four Articles in section two of the Articles of War, dealing with desertion, were to be read out to the recruits in Hindustani. The commanding officers of regiments were under orders to explain these

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1. G.O.G.G. 6 August 1852. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 August 1852. No. 486.
 2. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations, p.210. Carroll's Code 1817. Sec LX. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852 p. 464.
 3. Bengal Hurkaru, 14 June 1845.

Articles to every recruit. Each recruit had also to take an oath of fidelity in front of the colours of regiment, and according to the tenets of his belief. By this oath he was required to declare that he would obey the orders of the Commander, never forsake or abandon the colours, march whenever he was so directed and would be a faithful servant of the Company.¹ According to the declaration in the oath, a Bengal sepoy recruit was bound to serve within or beyond the Company's territories. But no mention was made about service beyond the sea; it being understood that unless a recruit was enrolled for general service, he would not be bound to embark but only to march on any service. This understanding prevented the Government on more than one occasion from freely employing the Bengal sepoy for foreign service and at times even precipitated crises.

The Bengal sepoy recruit was enlisted with the understanding that after three years of service he might claim his discharge after giving two months notice, provided that at the time there was no state of war, and no deficiency in the strength of the army.² This privilege apart, he was enlisted for an unlimited period of service,³ though he could be discharged by the Company if and when it was found to be necessary. The Bengal infantry recruit was always required to stay for his initial period of training at army headquarters. But he was not

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1. M.C. 8 August, 1796. Grace Bengal regulations 1799, p.210. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec.LX. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852. p.484. & A. - B.
 2. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations 1799, p.210. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817; Sec.LX, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852. p.485.
 3. P.P. 1852-53. XXXI, (627), H.L. p.324.

housed by the army authorities there, nor even given any allowance from which to provide his own accomodation. Instead it was expected that in the first year of his service he would be given a place in the hut of some relation or friend, while in the second year two or three of the recruits would usually join together and build a hut for themselves. Here was yet another example of the way in which the army authorities encouraged the growth of family or village ties within the army, handing over their duties toward and their control over the recruits to the semi -autonomous body of sepoy. While it is difficult to ascertain the expenses a recruit had to bear on account of hutting for all the period 1796-1852, there is a reference in a newspaper article on the Bengal army, to the cost of building a hut in the year 1845. The writer stated that at that time "four or five rupees will build a very decent hut for two."¹ The recruit, after completing his training started his career, then, by having to spend two or three rupees upon providing a hut for himself. This expense together with his other items of expenditure, the recruit had to meet from his daily allowance. By a regulation of 1796, a candidate before enlistment as a recruit, received from the Company an allowance of two annas per day.² His pay and allowance together after enlistment were fixed at seven rupees per month. To ensure his attachment to the service and to prevent him from

1. Bengal Hurkaru, 24 August 1845.

2. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations p.211.
Carroll's Bengal Code 1819, Sec.XLV, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1830, 1840 and 1852.

deserting the lines, a recruit received his pay in three instalments. From this pay he was required to buy his kit. His turban, kamar-band¹ linen jackets and a pair of shorts were supplied by the Regimental Quartermaster, but against the cost of these articles two rupees per month for a period of four months were deducted from his pay.² The recruit had also to pay for the service of washerman, barber and sweeper. From 1845 onwards, when the new post of Ghanty Pandy³ was introduced in the Bengal army,⁴ the Bengal sepoy recruits were ordered to pay for this service also. The recruits had thus to feed⁵ and maintain themselves on the money that was left out of their salary after meeting all these expenses. These rules remained unchanged upto 1852.

The regulation of 1796 made no specific mention about the period of training of a sepoy recruit. Presumably this depended upon the strictness of the commanding officers of the regiments and the aptitude of the recruits. Seetaram in his autobiography stated that in 1814⁶ he underwent training for a period of eight months,⁷ while the author of an article on the Bengal army wrote in 1845 that "the training period of a recruit lasted from six to eighteen months, during which he had

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1. Kamar-band or Commerbund - a girdle but any waist belt is so termed. Hobson-Jobson p.279.
 2. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations p.211. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec.XLV, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1830, 1840 and 1852.
 3. Ghanty Pandy - The man appointed to strike the bell at every hour for denoting the time.
 4. The Bengal Mily.Cons. 15 August 1845. No.52.
 5. No rations were issued to recruits or sepoy, in cantonment or on active service - unless that service was beyond their Presidency.
 6. Seetaram - op.cit., p.7.
 7. Ibid., p.17.

to undergo courses in drill and weapon instruction."¹ The drill havildar with the assistance of a drill naik was made responsible to the adjutant for the training of the recruits.² One factor which must have made the training period longer than it would be today³ was that all orders were given in English, and that many officers seem to have known so little Hindustani as to need the services of an interpreter when addressing their men.

Seetaram commented upon the great difficulty which he experienced in mastering this quite unfamiliar language - especially since it was used to give orders for actions which were themselves quite novel to his experience.⁴ In fact this language problem proved to be a formidable obstacle for the new recruits and was often blamed for their delay in completing the training period.⁵ After completing his training period, the sepoy recruit was again required to take an oath of fidelity under the colour of the regiment to which he was to be attached. He was sworn in by the regimental interpreter before the whole regiment which would be on parade for the purpose of acting as witnesses to his oath. The new sepoy then took his arms from the havildar, who would march him to his company.⁶ Only then

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1. Bengal Hurkaru, 14 June 1845.
 2. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations 1799, p.211. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec.LX, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852, p.485.
 3. Since Independence the Indian Army has abandoned the use of English words of command in favour of Hindi terms.
 4. Seetaram - op.cit., p.15.
 5. Bengal Hurkaru, 24 July 1845.
 6. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations 1799.p.211, Carroll's/Code 1817; Sec.LX, Standing Orders in Bengal / Bengal regiment 1852. p.485.

did the sepoy recruit become a full fledged member of the regiment and was supposed to take his share of duty.

A sepoy of a Bengal regiment on being so admitted into the service of the Company received exactly the same pay and allowances, seven rupees per month,¹ which he had been receiving as a recruit. It is surprising to record that a recruit and a trained sepoy both received the same amount of pay, and it is difficult to explain the reason for the adoption of this peculiar system by the Company, for as was stated in Parliament in 1859 "a recruit cannot be worth as much to the state as a veteran soldier [and] no good purpose is answered by putting them on a level as to pay."² Nor was this the only point of criticism over the pay scale of the native soldiers. In 1831 Major-General Sir Henry Worsley who had been with the Bengal army since 1819, drew the attention of the Select Committee to the peculiar pay structure, saying "it is at this very day the very same in amount as when it was first fixed, which was in so early a period of our establishment in that country, that in a code of Pay Regulations, published by the Military Auditor General in 1810, it is stated that the same rates as therein stated of pay and batta have been always passed to the Native troops, but that no record of the authority establishing them in the first instance is anywhere to be found."³ What was true

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1. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations 1799. p.230. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817. Sec. XLI. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852. p.174.
 2. P.P. 1859, VIII. (2541); H.C. p.36.
 3. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. Ap.B. No.15.

in 1831 remained unchanged even in 1852 and the rate of pay of a Bengal sepoy was held constant for three quarters of a century at seven rupees or 14 shillings a month.¹

Although the ordinary pay of the sepoys in all the three Presidencies was the same in total, till 1837 that of the Bengal sepoys was issued under two heads: five and a half rupees as basic pay and one and a half rupees as an allowance - called half batta. The Madras and Bombay sepoys on the other hand received the sum of seven rupees per month without any reference being made to allowance money. Colonel Munro, who was in the Company's Madras military service from 1791 onwards, said before the Select Committee of 1831 that just before the conquest of Mysore, there had been great difficulty in procuring recruits at Madras and in maintaining the battalions in a complete state. Desertions had been frequent and this had induced the Madras Government, "with the sanction of the Court, to increase the pay of the native troops at Madras from five to seven rupees a month."²

In addition to this nominal difference in the division of pay, which existed till 1837, there was one major difference concerning the payments made to native infantry soldiers of the three Presidencies. A Bengal sepoy, when on the march or in the field, received an extra allowance of one rupee eight annas per month as marching batta or field allowance. A Madras sepoy however, upon the same account received two rupees

1. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.144

2. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.70.

five annas four pies and a Bombay sepoy was granted two rupees eight annas per month as field allowance.¹ Further, "the Madras sepoy used to receive full batta (three rupees) beyond the frontier,"² of their Presidency, which increased the monthly earnings on campaign of a Madras sepoy serving outside Madras Presidency to twelve rupees five annas four pies (Rs. 7 plus Rs.2-5-4 plus Rs.3). This difference in earnings, which was always a sore point for the Bengal sepoy, continued till 1837 and, as Bentinck pointed out, existed not only in the case of the sepoy but also in that of the native commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the three armies.³ Further a comparative table of the monthly pay and allowances of the native commissioned and non-commissioned officers in infantry regiments of the three Presidencial armies in 1835 indicates the extent of the difference which existed in the pay roll of the soldiers.⁴

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1. L. from Bengal 28 May 1828. para 98, M.L. received from Bengal Vol.27.
 2. L. from Bengal 28 May 1828. para. 98. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.27.
 3. L. from Bengal 28 May 1828. para 98. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.27.
 4. L. from Bengal 28 February 1835. para 14. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.39.

RANK	BENGAL			MADRAS			BOMBAY			
		Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
Naik	Pay	7	0	0	8	12	0	8	12	0
	Allice.	5	0	0						
		12	0	0						
Havildar	Pay	9	0	0	10	8	0	10	8	0
	Allice.	5	0	0						
		14	0	0						
Jamadar	Pay	17	0	0	24	8	0	24	8	0
	Allice.	7	8	0						
		24	8	0						
Subadar	Pay	52	0	0	42	0	0	42	0	0
	Allice.	15	0	0						
		67	0	0	70	0	0	70	0	0
						to			to	

Both at Madras and Bombay the rank of Subadar was divided into three ranks. Thus, those who were under six years in the post received 42 rupees per month, those who had between six to ten years of service received 52 rupees each month and lastly those who were in the ranks for a period of above ten years received 70 rupees as a monthly pay.

Lord Bentinck realising how much such discriminatory pay scales antagonised the Bengal sepoys and the non-commissioned officers of Madras and Bombay, proposed in 1828 to equalise the pay and allowances of the three Presidency armies.¹ The Court

1. L. from Bengal. 28 May 1828. para.102. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.27.

though it understood Bentinck's motives and agreed in principle with his recommendation explained that "this difference was granted because the price of rice was higher in the markets of Madras and Bombay than in any other market in India,"¹ and enquired therefore, whether it was feasible to introduce a common pay scale. Bentinck therefore formed a Committee of three Bengal officers, Major-General Whittingham, Colonel Casement and Major Taylor, to consider the question and to frame workable proposals. The Committee, after extensive enquiries in all three Presidencies, recommended the Government to equalise the batta of the three Presidential native infant-ries at the rate received by the Bengal units. In 1835 Bentinck forwarded the recommendation of the Committee to the Directors, adding his own observation that "rice or other grain as [a] substitute is nearly of the same price in all the interior part of India where the great body of native troops are employed," and that therefore "there is no reason why the allowance of extra batta should be any longer continued to the native soldiers of the other Presidencies."² Reassured on this point, the Home authorities were ready to admit that the equalisation of batta in the three native armies was very necessary, so that, as they said, "when troops of different Presidencies met on service there would be no necessity for recurring to the embarrassing expedient of raising the pay and allowances of the

1. D. to Bengal 14 October 1830. para. 44. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 15.

2. L. from Bengal 28 February 1835. para 16. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 39.

lowest to those of the highest rate in each class and again taking away this advantage at the close of the service on which the troops may have been so employed."¹ Hence, with the approval of the Directors the Governor-General in Bengal issued an order in 1837 directing that the pay and batta of all the native soldiers in the Company's army should be regulated by the Bengal standard.² By making this equalisation effective Bentinck was able to remove a major source of grievance of the Bengal sepoys.

Not only was Bentinck responsible for the equalisation of allowances among the native infantry soldiers of the three Presidencies, he also succeeded in increasing the rate of their pay after some years of service. In his letter of 1828 he had suggested to the Court that there was a need to award additional pay to native soldiers after a few years of service.³ The Directors however, at that time refused, pointing out that the financial position of the Company would not allow it, and that the measure was "not one of urgent necessity."⁴ Before their letter had even been written, Bentinck expressing his high opinion of the morale and discipline of the native soldiers of the Company had sent yet another letter to the Court recommending "an addition of one rupee to the pay of a native soldier after 15 years of service."⁵ Despite Bentinck's insistence it

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1. D. to Bengal. 1 February 1836, para. 9. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 21
 2. Bengal Mily Cons. 11 February 1837, No. 89.
 3. L. from Bengal. 28 May 1828. para 46. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 27.
 4. D. to Bengal. 14 October 1830. para 44. M.D. sent, to Bengal. Vol. 15
 5. L. from Bengal 26 June 1830. para. 11. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 30.

was only in 1834, after an increase had been granted to the King's soldiers in England, that the Court accepted this request and ordered the Bengal Government to increase the monthly pay of a native infantry private by one rupee after 16 years of service and by two rupees after 20 years of service.¹ This measure did not satisfy the humanitarian Bentinck. He argued that a period of sixteen years was far too long for a sepoy to wait for a rise of one rupee. The economic condition of the native soldier was not very satisfactory and such a delayed increase would not effectively alleviate it. He therefore proposed "an increase of 1 d., a day after seven years and 2 d., a day after 14 years of service." Such a grant would be not merely a just but a wise policy, for they were foreign mercenary soldiers the Company employed in India.² This small increase in the opinion of Bentinck, would "increase the energy and allegiance of the sepoys and ... benefit both the state and the soldiers."³ The London authorities however did not approve and the pay scale of the Bengal sepoys as established by the Court's order of 1834 continued unchanged up to the year 1852.⁴

The maximum pay which a sepoy could expect after twenty years of service was thus raised from the year 1837 to nine rupees per month. This increase of either one rupee after sixteen years, or two rupees after twenty years of service was

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1. D. to Bengal 8 September 1834. para.20.M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 19.
 2. L. from Bengal 28 February 1835. para29, M.L. received from Bengal. Vol. 39.
 3. L. from Bengal. 28 Febraury 1835. para. 30. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 39.
 4. Bengal Military Statement 1852.

however subject to the condition of a sepoy's good conduct. A sepoy could enjoy this increase in his pay only if he had not at any time been tried by a court-martial and if his name had not been entered in the regimental defaulter book during the two years immediately preceding the date of his completing the required period of service.¹ It was not every native infantry soldier then who gained by the order passed by the Court in 1834. Bentinck's proposal of granting an increase of daily one penny after seven years and two pennies after 14 years of service might have excited 'emulation, ambition and satisfaction' amongst the native soldiers, both privates and officers. As the Panjab Committee rightly observed in its report, "great vitality would be infused into the native army by a graduated scale of pay in every rank, the effect of which has been found to be very great in our own Civil Department..."²

That caution seems even greater when it is realised that from the sepoy's seven, eight or nine rupees, a series of deductions was made to meet the expenses of his dress and the other articles which were supplied to him by the Government. The sepoy had to pay for one pair of coloured linen trousers, one pair of white trousers, three white jackets, a woollen coat, a set of beads, a full dress cap with wax cloth cover and two white linen covers, an undress cap with wax cloth cover, a haversack and a pair of shoes or sandals. Under the Standing

1. D. to Bengal. 8 September 1834. para. 20. M.D. sent to Bengal. Vol. ~~XX~~ 19.
 2. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. p.36.

Orders of 1796 only two articles of dress, namely one great-coat and one pair of cloth pantaloons were provided by the Government and that only every other year.¹ Even that privilege was however shortlived for in 1823 the Court, because of its financial difficulties, abolished the practice of supplying a great-coat to the sepoy. From that year onwards everything relative to the dress of the sepoy with the sole exception of one pair of cloth pantaloons was ordered to be paid for by the sepoy.² The expenditure that had to be incurred on account of the great-coat proved to be so heavy to a Bengal sepoy that in 1824 Sir Edward Paget, the Commander-in-Chief, strongly recommended to the Court that a sepoy should be furnished with some articles of his dress, especially the great-coat, at public expense.³ The Court did not approve of this suggestion. Rather it passed orders that the sepoy should supply himself, out of his pay with three white linen ungahs,⁴ three pairs of white linen trousers, one pair of coloured trousers, one set of beads with clasps, one pair of shoes, one kamar-band with buckle and band, one turban and cover, one knapsack and great-coat. It was also laid down that these things should be supplied to the sepoy under the superintendence of the quartermaster of the regiment and paid for by the stoppages

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1. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations 1799. p.135. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec. XLI.
 2. D. to Bengal, 22 September 1823. para 18, M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.10.
 3. L. from Bengal 23 September 1824. para 8, M.L. received from Bengal Vol.20.
 4. A tunic - like dress, worn off duty.

from the men's pay. But "to make the economic condition of the sepoys easy," the Court told the Bengal Government that "not more than five rupees per annum might be deducted as stoppages from the pay of the Bengal infantry sepoys" and gave order that "one jacket and one pair of woollen pantaloons ... be supplied in alternate years by the Government without any cost."¹ This practice, as can be gleaned from the Bengal Military regulations of various years, remained in force down to the year 1852.²

In addition to these expenses incurred on dress, a sepoy like a recruit was required to pay for the services of a washerman, barber and sweeper. From the articles on the Bengal Army published in 1835³ and in 1845⁴ it can be found that a sepoy incurred an expense of five annas six pies per month on this account. In addition to this expense, from 1845 onwards sepoy had to pay for a Ghanty Pandy too.

As can be imagined, after meeting all these expenses a sepoy had little enough money to live on. Captain Briggs, writing about the Bengal sepoy has stated, "their pay on entering the service, after making allowance for the expense of linen, pipe-clay⁵ heel-ball⁶ and the stoppages made for the supply of small stones⁷ yields them little more than a day

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1. D. to Bengal 29 October 1828. paras 78-81. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. D. 14A.
 2. M.C. 3 January 1829. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1840 and 1852.
 3. E.I.U.S.J. February 1835. p.121.
 4. Bengal Hurkaru 23 September 1845
 5. Pipe clay - clay used for whitening soldier's belt.
 6. Heel ball - Mixture of wax for polishing shoes.
 7. Stones - These may have been used for raising fire or for the necklace worn by the Bengal sepoy, or it could be stores (sic) which means to supply buttons etc.

labourer and less than many menial servants."¹ The order of the Home authorities limiting withdrawals or stoppages to five rupees only per annum seems to have been abused by the local authorities, for Durgadas Bandopadhaya, a clerk in the Commissariat of the Bengal army noted in 1847 that after clearing all such dues the sepoy often actually received only one rupee eight annas or even as little as one anna in cash. Indeed, some times he did not receive any money at all and had to remain satisfied by learning that his pay had been spent in repaying all his dues.² In comparison, the domestic servants employed by the European officers earned a sum varying from four to twenty rupees,³ and the palankeen bearers, seven to eight rupees⁴ per month. The sepoy undoubtedly enjoyed other advantages - promotion in the service, a pension for himself in old age or for his family in the event of his death in action, rations in the field, perhaps prize money in action, batta certainly - but still it cannot be said that the sepoy were favourably placed in terms of pay. It should be noted that the European soldier in the Company's service was scarcely any better off than his Indian counter-part. He received eight rupees, nine annas and ten pies per month.⁵ Like the sepoy he also had to pay for his dress and the other articles supplied

1. Briggs - op.cit., p.12.

2. Durgādās Bandopadhaya - Bidrohe Bāngālī, pp. 67-68.

3. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. pp.26-27.

4. Maria Graham - Journal of a residence in India p.2.

5. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. Ap.66.

by the Government.

To establish the relative range of the earnings of the sepoys it is essential to state the rates then prevalent in the country, for other professions. Mufti Ghulam Hazrat, the Law Officer and Sadr Amīn¹ of Gorakhpur district, stated that in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, ordinary coolies in the district did not get more than three pice and masons and carpenters did not earn more than two annas a day.² In 1831 Raja Rammohan Ray deposed before the Select Committee that "at Calcutta artisans such as blacksmiths and carpenters (if good workmen) get from ten to twelve rupees a month (that is about 20 to 24 shillings); common workers who do inferior plain works, five or six rupees (about 10 or 12 shillings), masons from five to seven (10 to 14 shillings) a month; common labourers about 3½ and some four rupees a month and palanquin bearers the same. In small towns the rates are something below this, in the country places still lower."³ In the first half of the nineteenth century a field labourer in Bareilly earned from two to six rupees per month. The earning of a carpenter in the same district varied between five and ten rupees and those of blacksmiths from five to twenty rupees.⁴ The free male

1. Sadr Amīn - The designation of the second class of native judge in Bengal: Hobson-Jobson p. 862.

2. MSS. Per I.O. 4540 p.29. (The volume contains the Persian MSS. and an English translation.)

3. P.P. 1831, V, (320A), H.C. Ap.40.

4. District Gazetteers of the United Provinces, Bareilly, p.62.

domestics in Shahabad district were usually allowed from eight to sixteen annas a month in addition to their food and clothes; in Arrah their wages often rose to two rupees a month.¹ The native soldiers who served the Indian powers had been paid at the following rates: under Shivaji in the 1660's "the pay varied from rupees 9 to 3 for the infantry and rupees 20 to 6 in the cavalry according to the higher or lower rank of the soldier or trooper,"² and in the 18th century the monthly scale of the infantry soldiers of the later Indian Mughals had varied from six rupees and eight annas to ten rupees³. The Sikh sepoy, in Ranjit Singh's day received between seven and eight and a half rupees a month.⁴

Comparing the pay rates enjoyed by the sepoys under the service of the Company with that of the soldiery of Indian powers, or even with what was earned by different tradesmen, a question may arise as to what made the service of the Company so much sought after. The answer most probably lies in the regular payment of wages, the pension benefits and certain other advantages that were enjoyed by the sepoys. During the Mughal and Peshwai administrations the soldiers often remained much in arrears. William Irvine states that the "pay due from the imperial treasury . . . from the mansabdars to the private soldiers, was always in arrears. I think . . . this was the case in the very best times. Nizam-ul-Mulk is credited with the

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1. District Gazetteers of the United Provinces, Shahabad, p.90.
 2. S.N. Sen - The Military system of the Marathas p.110.
 3. W. Irvine - The Army of the Indian Mughals, p.172.
 4. N.K. Sinha - Ranjit Singh, p.207.

boast that he never withheld pay for more than three months, Hazi Mustafa ... says the troops are wretchedly paid, twenty or thirty months of arrears being no rarity."¹ The reasons for keeping the men in arrears, Irvine suggests, "may have been that more men were entertained than could be easily paid, and the feeling that they were thereby prevented from transferring their services to some other chief quite as readily as they might have done if there were nothing owing."² Surendra Nath Sen similarly comments that the Maratha soldier "was allowed to fall in arrears in the Peshwa days."³ Besides this practice of keeping men in arrears, under the Mughal and Maratha powers the soldiers were regularly deprived of one or two months pay in a year. Akbar deducted one month's pay every year from every horseman on account of the horse. Irvine quoting Abul Fazl states that "the Commander of every contingent is allowed to keep for himself the twentieth part of his men's pay which reimburses him for various expenses."⁴ In Manucci's time the Mughal soldier did not get even ten months pay.⁵ The case of the soldiers under the Peshwa was similar, and much the same was true of the Sikhs in Ranjit Singh's day. N.K. Sinha records "The cash monthly payment was a system borrowed from the East India Company.....But the monthly payments were not regularly made, The troops as a rule, were in arrears for five to six

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1. Irvine - op.cit., pp.13-14.
 2. Irvine - op.cit., p.13.
 3. Sen - op.cit., p.57.
 4. Irvine - op.cit., p.29.
 5. Ibid., p.29.

months, They were normally paid five times a year."¹ In comparison therefore, the Company's sepoy were better off as they had the advantage of enjoying a regular payment each and every month.

Besides the regularity of payment, a native infantry soldier of the Company was at times granted extra allowances either in cash or in kind or both, depending upon the service in which he was engaged. As the Bengal native soldiers were not recruited for general service, special volunteer corps were raised from amongst them whenever required to proceed on a sea voyage² and they received an additional allowance. Besides, native infantry troops frequently proceeded on foreign service involving crossing the limit of the Bengal Presidency by land and then fighting in foreign territories. On such service the soldiers were permitted to enjoy certain privileges. He could secure a family certificate by which a certain portion of his salary was paid to his family every month.³ Rations were also allowed to the native soldiery on foreign service, although the ration issue was not of the same quantity in all the three Presidencies. Madras native soldiers "received larger issues of rations when on foreign service than the corresponding classes of troops of the Bengal Presidency."⁴ Since this difference proved to be a source of constant irritation to the Bengal

1. Sinha - op.cit., p.208.

2. This order was rescinded by Dalhousie on 20 September 1852.

3. M.C. 28 March 1808. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817. Sec.IX, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852. p.96.

4. D. to Bengal 8 September 1816. para.8, M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.6.

sepoys, the Court in 1816 ordered the Supreme Government to introduce an uniform rate of rations for all the native armies of India.¹ The Supreme Government in its desire to carry out this order thought fit to issue money in lieu of rations to the Bengal troops when on foreign service.² But even then the rate did not exactly correspond with that prevalent at Madras.³ The Directors being informed of this anomaly again asked the Supreme Government "to assimilate as nearly as possible the practice of the three Presidencies in the issuing of rations to troops on foreign service."⁴ On receipt of this order the Supreme Government instituted an enquiry into the matter and forwarded the letter of the Commissary General to the Court in which it was pointed out that "there is a material difference of caste (amongst the sepoys of the different presidencies) and this cannot be interfered with without giving rise to dissatisfaction as the High caste Bengal Brahmin is perfectly content with the description of ration and any change would be impolitic."⁵

It was for this very reason, the Supreme Government argued, that they had decided to grant "a money compensation equivalent to the difference in the allowances received by the

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1. D. to Bengal 8 September 1816. para.10.M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.6.
 2. Bengal Mily.Cons. 9 January 1818. No.19.
 3. Genl. Observation of Court of enquiry Barrackpore, 2 January 1825, para. 26. Bengal Mily.Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18.
 4. D. to Bengal 28 May 1828. para.23, M.D. sent to Bengal, Vol.14.
 5. L. from Bengal 14 October 1830. para.56. M.L. received from Bengal, Vol.22.

several ranks of native troops of different Presidencies meeting on service."¹ The practice prevailed in the Bengal army upto the year 1837 when Bentinck's proposals to equalise the pay and allowances of the native soldiers of the different Presidencies were implemented and the Bengal rates became the standard one. Thus, from 1837 onwards the rations allowed to the native soldiers of the three Presidencies became the same.

The sepoys in ^{the} Company's service also enjoyed furlough privileges which were first introduced in 1796. Furlough with pay was allowed to each native soldier once in five or six years. Under ordinary circumstances, at any one time ten to fifteen sepoys and a corresponding proportion of commissioned and non-commissioned officers from each regiment were permitted to be absent on furlough. The commanding officer had, however, the right to recall at any time any soldier from his furlough if circumstances so demanded. The men generally proceeded to their home in parties so as to escape attacks from dacoits and thugs. A native soldier, while on furlough, enjoyed his pay but not the garrison batta. Thus the pay rates in rupees per month of the different ranks of the Bengal native infantry, when on furlough, were as follows:²

<u>Subadar</u>	<u>Jamadar</u>	<u>Havildar</u>	<u>Naik</u>	<u>Sepoy</u>
Rs. 52	17	9	7	5½

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1. L. from Bengal 14 October 1830. para.60. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 32
 2. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations 1799, p.184, ^{/code} Carroll's Bengal / 1817, Sec XXXVI Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852. p.175.

The soldier while on furlough was furnished with a pay certificate by producing which he could claim his pay on return. Moreover, if he had to cross the limit of the Presidency on his way home he was provided with a passport written in his own language.

Besides this furlough privilege, which was enjoyed by the native soldiers, the award of pension was yet another attractive feature of the Company's service. "The pension is our great hold on India,"¹ said Viscount Gough before the Select Committee of 1852. Malleeson observed, "one resource upon which the Government relied above all others to influence their sepoy" was "the establishment of a pension list, by which a soldier was enlisted to have a fixed monthly allowance after his retirement."² This boon of a pension, enjoyed by the Company's soldiers, was generally unknown to the soldiers serving under Indian Princes. Wounded soldiers of the Maratha army received a special allowance in keeping with the nature of their wounds, while widows and orphans of soldiers who fell in active service were awarded pensions by the State.³ Irvine is silent over the issue whether the Mughals like the Marathas paid any regular pension to the minor children and widows of soldiers killed in action, though he does mention that the Mughal Emperor Humayun provided for the widows and orphans of his soldiers who fell in service.⁴ Under Ranjit Singh there

1. P.F. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.C. p.175.

2. G.B. Malleeson - The mutiny of the Bengal army, p.3.

3. Ser. - op.cit., p.71.

4. Irvine - op.cit., pp.178-179.

was no regular pension, though what N.K. Sinha calls " a kind of allowance" was sometimes granted to the families of the dead and wounded.¹ It would thus be fair to say that no regular pension system had existed under the leading Indian rulers and that such a system was a fresh innovation, and a great attraction at that, in the Company's service.

Under the Company's pension rule for its army personnel, every native soldier was allowed to enjoy a pension provided he had served for a minimum of 20 years. After completion of this minimum period, a sepoy was annually examined first by a Medical Committee and then by a Committee of competent officers who had to report to the Government on his fitness. If he was found to be incapable of active service either from age, infirmity or wound, he was pensioned and received an allowance at the rate of three rupees per month.²

Besides this money pension a jagir system was also in vogue in the Bengal native army.³ The practice of granting lands however, fell into disrepute because of difficulties in obtaining land for assignment to the retired soldiers. Usually, plots of waste land were allotted to the pensioners but as these plots had to be developed prior to cultivation, the invalided or retired soldiers frequently found this task beyond their capacity. Further most of these waste lands were either swampy or densely forested and were unhealthy, so that the grant of

1. Sinha - op.cit., p.208.

2. M. C. 8 August 1796, Grace Bengal regulations 1799, p.201. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec.L. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852 p.182.

3. It was introduced in 1782. See Chapter I, p. 93.

such plots of land frequently failed to be of any use to either the Government or the receiver. Moreover, the conferring of jagirs attracted and drew the immediate relations of the assigned party from their village to the places recently reclaimed. In addition, the Police authorities complained to the Government that the invalids and their families were troublesome and were suspected of harbouring offenders against public peace. In the face of such adverse criticism, the authorities decided not to continue with this practice¹ and they withdrew the privilege in 1811.² The money pension was however continued.

The major reform on this issue as on so many others, was initiated by Bentinck. In 1835 Bentinck, in his attempt "to improve the general condition of the native soldiery and to increase their efficiency and contentment which have of late years been very much impaired,"³ suggested to the Court that the rate of pension among the native soldiers should be increased and that it should be made uniform in the three armies of India. The Court in its reply agreed to his proposals and ordered that, "the rate of pension of the three Presidential armies should be uniform and it would be regulated by the Bengal standard."⁴ It was also laid down that native soldiers would be entitled to enjoy a pension after either 15 years or

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1. D. to Bengal 4 June 1810. paras. 7-10. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 3.
 2. M.C. 30 July 1811. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817. Sec.L.
 3. L. from Bengal 28 February 1835. para 19, M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 39.
 4. D. to Bengal 13 January 1836. para 8. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 21.

40 years of service and not after 20 years only as had been the practice in the past. This regulation was published and promulgated in 1837 and continued in force till 1852. The monthly rates sanctioned were as follows,¹

	<u>After 15 years of service</u>	<u>After 40 years of service</u>
Subadar	Rs. 25	Rs. 40
Jamadar	12	20
Havildar	7	12
Naik	7	12
Sepoy	4	7

Compared to the pay earned by a native officer and a sepoy, their pension rates were widely disproportionate. In effect, the sepoy on pension was much the better off. The rates were such that to a sepoy to be transferred to pension list and to get out of the service was a great inducement since the pension of four rupees was free of any deduction. To a native officer however, transfer was a severe loss. A large number of sepoys therefore entered the army with the intention of retiring on their pensions at the end of fifteen years service. Since a sepoy could easily earn four or five rupees a month in his village, over and above his pension of four rupees a month, he could proceed on pension without any loss to himself or even with a positive gain. "It was a matter of surprise to see young and strong men in the full enjoyment of health and vigour relinquishing a service which offered to them certain promotion

1. G.O.G.G. 1 February 1837. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment, 1840 and 1852.

and increased pay, in order to retire upon this scanty pittance. And yet it was so. Men starved themselves for months and became weaker and emaciated solely to pass for invalids."¹ For a native officer, however, the situation was different because the pension granted to him was not adequate for his position. Further being an old man, as almost any native officer necessarily was, it was not possible for him to earn his livelihood by some other occupation. Besides this, the difference between the rate of pension granted for a service period of fifteen years and that granted for forty years was wide enough to make the longer service more attractive for a native officer though not so for the sepoys. For whereas a sepoy had to serve for an additional period of 25 years, to secure an increase of three rupees, the increase for a Subadar after the same period was one of 15 rupees. This wide difference made it sufficiently attractive for the native officers to continue to serve and qualify for the higher rates.

Further to the system of pension based on years of service, yet another pension scheme was suggested by Sir John Barlow, the Governor-General, in his letter of 25 July, 1805, this time for wounded men. He requested the Home authorities to approve his suggestion "on principles of policy and humanity" and proposed that "the sepoys who have lost their limbs or have been disabled by wounds received on service shall be allowed a pension of five rupees, instead of three rupees per month and

1. M.R. Gubbins - An account of the mutinies in Oudh and of the siege of the Lucknow Presidency pp. 108-109.

a proportional increase shall be made to the pensions of native commissioned and non-commissioned officers too for the same cause."¹ The Court, on the grounds of financial difficulties did not approve of this measure.² Long after, in 1835, the question of wound pensions was again brought to the notice of the Directors by Bentinck, who though unpopular with the European officers for his measures of economy, made a determined effort to improve the condition of the native soldiers. In his minute of 1835 he proposed to grant a pension for any wound received by the native soldiers.³ The Court, in this instance, approved the recommendation but on condition that the wound in question must completely disable the soldier and that he must have served the Company for at least fifteen years.⁴ This pre-condition was however withdrawn in the middle of the 19th century. During the Sind (1843) and Panjab (1849) wars when desertion became rampant in the Bengal native infantry the Court ordered the Bengal Government to revise the regulation regarding its wound pension scheme. From 1852 the wound pension was thus granted to any native soldier wounded in action or injured on duty, "without any reference to the period of service."⁵

Besides these privileges, the Company also instituted

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1. Board's Collection, 4227, pp.89-90.
 2. D. to Bengal 19 March 1807, para.9, M.D. sent to Bengal, Vol.2.
 3. L. from Bengal 28 February 1835. para.30. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.39.
 4. G.O.G.G. 1 February 1837. Bengal Mily.Cons. 1 February 1837. No.65.
 5. D. to Bengal 3 March 1852. para. 2. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.39.

a system of honours and awards for its soldiers for meritorious service. Medals were awarded to commemorate participation in important battles. In fact the Company's Government was the first in India to grant campaign medals and so to recognise the part played by the bravery of the sepoy in securing victory. In 1834, Bentinck proposed to introduce the Order of Merit in the native army. He argued that, "as natives are now employed in important civil situations with corresponding salaries, justice and policy alike require that some improvement be effected in the condition of their military brethren."¹ This letter reached England in 1835 and the Court in 1837 sanctioned Bentinck's request. From that year onwards the Order of Merit was open to all ranks of the native army for conspicuous gallantry in the field or in the attack or defence of fortified places. The object of the institution of an Order of Merit, was "to reward personal bravery without reference to claims founded on mere length of service or general good conduct."² The Order consisted of three classes and it was necessary for a soldier to obtain the third class before any act of bravery could entitle him to the second class and in like manner the award of the second class was considered as a condition of eligibility for the first class. A native soldier having an Order of Merit was allowed to enjoy, over and above his pay or his pension on retirement, an allowance equal either to one-third or two-thirds

1. L. from Bengal 24 October 1834. para.5, M.L. received from Bengal Vol.38.

2. D. to Bengal 2 May 1837. para 18, M.D. sent to Bengal.Vol.22.

or to the entire amount of the ordinary pay of the soldier's rank, depending upon the class of the Order. After the death of the recipient of the Order his widow was allowed to enjoy the pension conferred by the Order for a period of three years.¹ This innovation was introduced in 1838.²

Though introduced with the best of intentions, this measure evoked little or no enthusiasm amongst the native soldiers. Although the award was not positively limited, there were many restrictions to its obtainment. Consequently, "the decorated were so few as to be hardly discoverable."³ Moreover this honour did not bring in its wake any relaxation of the rules of promotion. The soldier who had obtained an Order of Merit was still considered and remained nothing but an ordinary sepoy, naik or havildar. Further, since this order was freely conferred on civilians it ceased to be treated as a strictly military award and lost much of its grandeur among the native soldiers.⁴ Besides, there being no special Order for general merit, the Order of Merit was frequently given for meritorious general service and not only for conspicuous bravery. This practice lowered the prestige attached to it to such an extent that the Panjab Committee, in 1859, described the system as "inappropriate."⁵

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1. D. to Bengal 2 May 1837. para. 20. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 22
 2. G.O.G.G. 3 January 1838, Bengal Mily. Cons. 3 January 1838 No. 36.
 3. Lawrence - op.cit., p.98.
 4. Lawrence - op.cit., p.98.
 5. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.19.

Special distinction and honours were also at times instituted by the Company for its native army. Under the regulations of 1796 a native officer could expect to achieve the ultimate rank of Subadar in his regiment through a promotion strictly regulated by seniority. The Bengal Government, criticising this state of affairs, in 1813 observed of their subadars that "once they have attained the rank of Subadar they have nothing more to look to, and having got all that they can get, they have no further inducement and are dissatisfied."¹ It was suggested that "there ought to be some higher object kept in their view to which by diligence and fidelity they may still attain."² It was therefore recommended that one Subadar in each regiment of native cavalry and one in each battalion of native infantry should be granted the rank of Subadar Major and be made entitled to an extra allowance of twenty five rupees per month. The Home authorities sanctioned the proposal and ordered that "the rank of Subadar Majorship should be awarded on the most distinguished and deserving Subadar and an allowance of twenty five rupees per month in addition to the pay and allowance as a Subadar would be attached to this post."³ While sanctioning this proposal, the Court, however, imposed a condition that the post of subadar major should be recommended by the officers commanding regiments to the Commander-in-Chief and that the

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1. L. from Bengal 17 October 1813, para 20. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.7.
 2. L. from Bengal 17 October 1813, para 21. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.7.
 3. D. to Bengal 8 November 1814. para 44. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol.5

rank should "not continue after his (the Subadar-Major) transfer to the invalid establishment."¹ The Governor-General in his reply dated 21 July 1818 suggested that "the pay of the Subadar Major should accompany him in his retirement, [and] if this stipend so dearly purchased, so honourably earned by a whole life of meritorious service on the part of a few selected veteran officers was not to be continued to them, during the short remainder of their lives and when age and infirmities did but augment their claims on the state, whom they served in their days of youth and vigour, the whole scope and object of the institution would be defeated. That admirable regulation would indeed become worse than nugatory. . . ." ² But the Court did not approve the proposal of the Governor-General on the ground of cost. ³ The rank of subadar-major instituted as it was in 1814, therefore remained unchanged during the remainder of our period. ⁴

The award of a subadar-majorship was purely an honorary one given in recognition of the most meritorious service. But it did not confer any superior authority upon the occupier though he was generally looked upon as the first among the native soldiers of the regiment. On general duties, therefore, a subadar-major, by virtue of his rank, was required to take

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1. D. to Bengal 8 November 1814, para 44, M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 5.
 2. Board's Collection, 14,396, p. 57.
 3. D. to Bengal 23 December 1819. para. 22, M.D. sent to Bengal, Vol. 8.
 4. G.O.G.G. 16 February 1816, Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec. XLVII, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1830, 1840 and 1852.

precedence of all other subadars even in the case of their having a date of commission earlier than his.

There was yet another award open to the native commissioned officers of the sepoy army - the 'Order of British India'. This order was suggested in 1835 by Bentinck who argued that "to increase the respectability and to improve the prospects of the native commissioned officers, honours, distinctions and superior emoluments should be placed within their reach without imparting to them such additional power or influence to the authority."¹ Bentinck further claimed that an "Order or other corresponding measure appears to be absolutely indispensable to India," because in the native regiments, "all the usual incentives to great deeds are almost wholly wanting, the connection is altogether mercenary and the strongest bonds of such a connection, all the higher honours, emoluments and commands are necessarily withheld."² The Directors accepted Bentinck's suggestion and the Order of British India was instituted for the native commissioned officers from 1837 onwards. This order consisted of two classes, the first class was confined to subadars only while the second class was open to both subadars and jamadars. The conferring of this honorary award rested with the Governor-General of India, who was guided in his selection by the representation of the local Governments. The title of 'Sirdar Bahadur' and that of 'Bahadur' with an allowance of two

1. L. from Bengal 28 February 1835, para 29. M.L. from Bengal. Vol. 39.

2. L. from Bengal 28 February 1835, para 31, M.L. from Bengal. Vol. 39.

rupees and one rupee respectively per day over and above the regimental allowance and retiring pensions, were conferred on the holders of the first and second class of the order respectively.¹ But the best intentions of Bentinck were not fulfilled because of the nature of these awards - the greatest drawback being that the Government wrongly adhered to the line of seniority in conferring the order. As a consequence, it had a very limited effect. Moreover as the order was granted only for good service, it virtually became a reward of old age. "The wearers were mostly invalids at their homes"² and hence the institution lost much of its value as a stimulant to ~~the~~ the native soldiery.

In contrast to the pension regulations, the practice of awarding rewards and honorary titles was by no means unknown in the armies of princely India. Renowned warriors and commanders of brigades of the Maratha army were given horses and elephants as reward. Some were awarded ornaments while others were assigned villages. Following the Muslim precedent, titles were also conferred on successful Maratha generals.³ According to Irvine, jewelled ornaments, weapons with jewelled hilts, palanquins with fringes of gold lace and pearls, horses with gold mounted and jewelled trappings and elephants were presented by Mughal Emperors to their military officers in acknowledgement of their service to the state. A soldier in the Mughal army

1. G.O.G.G. 1-February 1837. Bengal Mily. Cons. 1 February 1837. No.65.

2. Lawrence - op.cit., p.34.

3. Sen - op.cit., p.110.

might also be awarded, among other distinctions, the right to carry a flag or simple standard and the right to use kettle-drums and to beat the naubat.¹ The Chaughadas granted by Maratha rulers were nothing but kettledrums and the principal Maratha sardars had their naubats as well.² Familiar as the native soldiers were with such awards and honorary titles, the institution of these orders by the Company failed to impress them very much, the more so because of the very limited award of the orders.

It becomes obvious from the details listed above that the honorary distinctions available to the native soldiers were unlikely to fill them with any great enthusiasm. The award of the Order of British India was very limited and was given only for long, faithful and honourable service. The other award, the Order of Merit, instituted to honour personal bravery, irrespective of rank or grade or length of service was so often given for general service that it lost its original purpose. Consequently, there was no order or any other form of recognition for valour alone for an ordinary native soldier.³ This state of affairs did not permanently escape the attention of the administrators, Sir Charles Trevelyan correctly summed up the problem by stating before the Army Commission of 1859 that "in governing a body of men you must have in view the ordinary motives of human conduct and if we give our native troops

1. Naubat - Big drum.

2. Sen - op.cit., p.110.

3. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.19.

nothing to expect, no reward to hope for from consistent fidelity and good conduct, we cannot expect those qualities from them."¹

In addition to the systems of reward and pension, the native soldiers while in the Company's service also enjoyed certain privileges in civil life. From 1796 to 1815, in any civil court of justice both in the Company's territories and those of Oudh, a sepoy's representation for any wrong done to him or his family found precedence over all other cases.² This preference may have been granted by the Company while it was busy fighting the Indian powers and could ill afford to sanction frequent or long leave of absence to its sepoys. To the small landholders however this facility was considered to be as great a privilege as any and they were anxious to have their sons or relations in the Company's native army so that they might secure it.³ With a sepoy in their family they expected to gain some influence over the collectors and other civil authorities in pushing through their own law suits. This measure was considered as an interference by the civil authorities, and in 1815 the Directors ordered the Bengal Government to issue an ordinance prohibiting army officers "from furnishing native officers and soldiers going on furlough with any letter or other writing to the Magistrate in whose districts

1. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. p.108.

2. G.O.C.C. 14 December 1789, Grace Bengal regulations 1799, p.293, Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec. L.

3. G. Tucker - Review of the financial situation of the East India Company. p.105.

their families reside with a view to an early adjustment of such suits as they may have in his Court."¹ During the Sind and Panjab wars, however, when desertion in the native infantry regiments increased to a great extent, the Court, in its anxiety to make its military service as attractive as it used to be, retracted this order and asked the Bengal Government to reintroduce the privilege of early hearings for sepoy in the civil courts.² Again, the Hindu soldiers of the Company were exempted from the taxes usually levied on pilgrims at Puri, Gaya and Allahabad.³ Further all native soldiers, like their European colleagues, were allowed to send letters to their families once a month without any postal charge, provided each letter weighed less than one ounce.⁴

The sepoy undoubtedly benefitted by all these privileges but when considered in the proper perspective, it has to be realised that they were really more interested in their immediate earnings and more important still, in their future promotion prospects. In terms of relative importance, the rules and regulations governing promotion occupied second place only to the pay rates. The special character of the interest taken by the sepoy in matters of promotion may be explained by the fact that all the native officers in the Company's army rose from

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1. D. to Bengal 20 October 1815. para.26, M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 5
 2. G.O.G.G. 8 November 1852, Bengal Mily.Cons. 8 November 1852, No. 78.
 3. M.C. 13 March 1810. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817.Sec.L. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852, p.172.
 4. M. C. 8 August 1796, Grace Bengal regulations, 1799, p.234. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec.L. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment / p.172. /1852

the ranks so that every sepoy could aspire to occupy those posts. This was in sharp contrast to the practice followed in the European wing of the Company's army as also in the royal army. In those two armies, officers almost never rose from the ranks but were directly recruited as cadets. Usually these cadets hailed from the middle and upper classes, whereas the European privates were recruited from the lowest rank of society.¹ Because of this distinct classification, European privates had very limited scope for promotion. The case with the native soldiers in the Company's army was however different as any sepoy could rise to the seniormost position available to an Indian in the Company's army. It was no wonder therefore that they took a very close interest in this issue.²

Even before 1796, promotion amongst the native soldiery in Bengal regiments was generally made on the basis of seniority. The regulations promulgated in 1796 restated the Company's determination to adopt this practice as a general rule, although it was agreed that merit should also be taken into consideration. It was laid down by this order that in the case of a vacancy in a regiment, the commanding officer was to recommend to the Commander-in-Chief the seniormost soldier in the next lowest rank and that "in all recommendations for promotions the fullest consideration and attention should invariably be given to the claim of seniority in every grade where no

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1. G.M. Trevelyan - English Social history. A Survey of six centuries. pp. 499-503.
 2. C.J. Napier - Defects Civil and Military of the Indian Government p. 257.

such disqualifications as want of respectability of character or other equally proper and just cause of objection to the advancement of the seniors should exist."¹ This rule remained effective upto 1852, and in actual practice, more and more emphasis was placed on the seniority aspect in the granting of promotion, so much so that promotion on merit became a rarity in the Bengal native infantry regiments. The universality of the practice was amply testified to in the depositions of the European officers before the Army Commission of 1859. "In the native regiments of the Bengal army the system of promotion was based on seniority, for the senior was never passed over unless he was imbecile,"² or "in the great bulk of the Bengal army the promotion of native officers was entirely by seniority; they went up by a sort of routine. They felt themselves under no obligation to their commanding officers for their promotion."³ For such a state of affairs, which was to earn severe criticism at the time of the Mutiny, the Home authorities no less than those in Calcutta were responsible. They wrote to the Bengal Government, first in 1837 and then again in 1850 warning army officers for disregarding this system of promotion by seniority. The Government of Bengal followed the lead thus given and issued a General Order to its military officers in 1837 mentioning the letter of the Court and pointing out with disapproval "cases where disregard of the long

1. M.C. 8 August 1796, Grace Bengal regulations 1799, p.288, Carroll's Bengal Code 1817; Sec. LVIII, Standing Order in Bengal regiment 1852, p.175.

2. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. p.34.

3. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. p.107.

service had been made regarding promotion in the non-commissioned ranks." ¹ Again in 1850 the Bengal Council censured its army officers and noted that in defiance of the system of promotion by seniority, "a Naick superceding 17 seniors, and a sepoy 23rd on the roll of the Company and 216 on the gradation roll of the regiment, were promoted." ² The Council also reiterated its order that "full consideration be given to the point of seniority." ³ It may well be that it was for such occasional 'lapses' that the Council thought fit gradually to denude the commanding officers of native infantry regiments of their authority to promote. Prior to 1796 sepoy soldiers were promoted within the battalion at the will and pleasure of the commanding officer. The regulation of 1796 vested the commanding officer of a regiment with the authority to promote the native soldiers, but according to seniority, and such promotion was ordered to be published in the Regimental Orders. In 1834, however, the Court in its effort to centralise the administration, curtailed the authority of the commanding officers of the native regiments, so that only the Commander-in-Chief at each Presidency was empowered to order "the promotion of Native Commissioned officers in the Company's army." ⁴ This measure was adopted to make the system conform with the prevalent

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1. G.O.G.G. 5 May 1837. Bengal Mily. Cons. 5 May 1837. No.47.
 2. G.O.G.G. 18 October 1850, Bengal Mily. Cons. 18 October 1850. No.89.
 3. G.O.G.G. 18 October 1850, Bengal Mily. Cons. 18 October 1850, No.89.
 4. D. to Bengal 5 August 1834. para 11, M.D. sent to Bengal 5 August 1834. Vol.19.

system of promotion of the European officers. In the opinion of the Court the procedure of promotion should rest with the Supreme power of the state.¹ Accordingly from 1834 onwards, "the promotion of the native soldiery to the several orders of Commissioned officers, were made by the Government of the Presidency to which the individuals belong,"² their commissions being signed and issued by the Governor and Council. The Directors, in lending their support to this order, argued that "this will bring their merits and services to the frequent notice of Government through the recommendation of their immediate Commanding officer and the Commander-in-Chief."³

The practice of basing promotion purely on seniority which found favour with the Home authorities proved to be a very controversial one. Experienced army administrators were sharply divided in their opinions over the influence that such a policy exerted on the attitudes and morale of the native soldiery. Thus, Sir Charles Napier, a supporter of the practice, in his evidence before the Select Committee in 1852, observed that "the Bengal native soldiers enlisted with a pledge on the part of the Government that they were to look to seniority for their promotion and it would have been a complete breach of the promises of the Government to those old and respectable men to be put aside."⁴ But there was constant criticism of its effect

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1. D. to Bengal 5 August 1834, para.11, M.D. sent to Bengal 5 August 1834; Vol.19.
 2. D. to Bengal 5 August 1834. para 14, Ibid.
 3. D. to Bengal 5 August 1834 para. 14, M.D. sent to Bengal 5 August 1834. Vol.19.
 4. P.P. 1852-53. XXXI, (527), H.L. p.243.

in India. The court of enquiry, assembled at Barrackpore in 1824 reported that this practice of promoting by seniority obviously led to a state of affairs in which the native soldiers, at the fag end of their lives, occupied the stations of native officers when they were physically unfit for any active service, and incapable of either strict performance of duty or maintenance of discipline.¹ Captain Macan, who had been with the Bengal army for 23 years from 1805, giving evidence before the Select Committee of 1831 blamed the practice of promotion by seniority for producing "a great feebleness of character and physical incapacity, arising from age and infirmity, in the higher native officers of the service."² The press of the period also criticised the system. The Friend of India commented that fifty-seven or sixty years, the average age of a jamadar or a subadar might not be considered too old for efficiency among officers in England but in the Indian climate³ the men broke sooner than in Europe and rendered them quite certainly unfit, by that age. The Athenaeum agreed that an exposure of more than one third of a century to all the labour of sepoy life quickly undermined an Asiatic constitution.⁴ Lord Dalhousie described the system as "the bane of the Indian service."⁵ He advocated instead, the adoption of efficiency

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1. Genl. Observations of the court of enquiry Barrackpore 2 January 1825, para. 29. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825 No. 18.
 2. P.P. 1831-32. XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.150.
 3. Friend of India, 29 March 1849.
 4. Athenaeum 12 April 1849.
 5. William Lee-Warner - Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie Vol. II, p.287.

as the main ground of selection for promotion and wrote "the claims of old officers stand high, but the interests of the state are, above all, and ought to be, paramount in the eyes of those who are entrusted with the charge of them. No system can prevent the intrusion of occasional incapacity or inefficiency among officers who hold regimental command. A rigid system of seniority must of necessity increase the probability of such deficiencies and must multiply instances of them ... the governing principle should not be ... the rejection of no man unless he is notoriously and scandalously incapable but rather the selection of no man, ... who is not confessedly capable and efficient."¹ John Jacob commenting on the Bengal army wrote in 1859 that the evident and unavoidable consequence of promoting according to the seniority system had been the paralysation and ultimate ruin of the army. Talent, skill, energy, high principle and soldier-like pride were crushed, and "old men with three or four medals on their breast but as unfit... as any old woman taken as haphazardly out of a village are recommended for promotion."² The author of the Red Pamphlet called the seniority system a "soulless system", because promotion, being regulated merely by the length of service without any regard to efficiency, reduced regimental life to a dull routine. A sepoy entering the service at the age of 14 could not expect to become a Subadar before he was 60, when

1. William Lee-Warner - op.cit., Vol.II, p.287.

2. John Jacob- The views and opinions, pp.212-213.

"the blood in his veins and the marrow in his bones were dried up or wasted by constant exposure to the trying climate of India."¹ Holmes observed that "though he might give signs of the military genius of a Haidar," a promising and ambitious sepoy knew that he could never attain to commissioned rank before some thirty odd years of faithful service. On the other hand, the dullest man knew that if he served out his time, he was certain to succeed to the highest ranks on a vacancy occurring.² The criticisms made did not turn on the issue of old age alone. It was also argued with emphasis that a native officer, rising as he did from the ranks, being connected by ties of blood and the obligation of caste with his subordinates, and having daily intercourse with his comrades amongst whom he lived and passed his time, could seldom be respected or feared.³ This view finds support in John Shore's observation on the royal army wherein he stated that, "in the British army when a man was promoted from the ranks, although he was separated from the men and associated with the officers, it is generally several years before he could acquire the habits of the latter or before the men considered him with the same respect that they did the other officers."⁴ This was very true with the Bengal native infantry, wherein the native officers were without exception promoted from the ranks and were rarely able to

1. The Red Pamphlet p.5.

2. T.R. Holmes - A History of the Indian Mutiny. p.51.

3. The deficiency of European officers in the Indian army, p.17.

4. John Shore - Notes on Indian affairs. Vol.II, p.414.

establish the social differential considered by some to be so very necessary for gaining the respect of their subordinates. The blame for such a state of affairs was not to be borne by the Indian officers - the defect lay in the system itself. Events which occurred during the period would suggest that there was a great deal of truth in this criticism.

Besides this controversial aspect of regulating promotion by seniority, the very slowness of promotion robbed it of much of its attraction and value. It was neither extraordinary nor exceptional to see a long list of men who continued as sepoy¹ even after a service of twenty to twenty five years. A sepoy entering the service at the age of 16 could not generally expect to become a naik before he attained the age of 36, a havildar before 45, a jamadar before 54 or a subadar before 60.² Military spirit and ardour could hardly be retained by the native soldier faced with such bleak prospects of promotion. As if this was not enough, he was most likely to be increasingly irked by the nature of his duties. Year after year, he would have to face the monotonous round of peace time duties; forenoon parades for cleaning his arms and accoutrement, evening parade for orders, guard duties, a brigade exercise once a week, regimental exercises four or five times a week, and would have to carry out these tasks as a sepoy with years to serve before he could expect promotion. There were interesting tasks,

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1. Genl. Observation of the court of enquiry Barrackpore 2 January 1825, para 25, Bengal Milly. Cons. 6 January 1825, No. 18.
 2. The Red Pamphlet p. 5.

such as the target practice, gun handling, drill and manoeuvre in battalion and brigade, and instruction in the duties of outposts and picquets and in the art of escalade.¹ But it so happened that after the first decade of the nineteenth century, campaigns during which all that he had learned could be put into practice were waged at less and less frequent intervals and the native soldiery was restricted to duties which it considered to be monotonous and tiring.

To make matters worse, while the submission of one native power after another and the steady annexation of territory reduced the opportunities for active service, the very same acquisitions led to an increase in the demands for police to control the newly won districts. In an effort to meet this growing need, the Home authorities decided to deploy soldiers from its native armies for the purpose,² seeking thereby to save the expenditure on a new police force as well as to utilise the native soldiers during peace time. Thus, from 1814 onwards, the sepoys were called upon to escort treasure, to guard prisoners, and to carry out a variety of similar police duties. These duties were not only non-military in nature but, as Bentinck observed, the duties of the sepoy corps were often very harrassing and distressing.³ The Court, however, paid no heed to this remark of Bentinck and the native soldiers

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1. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations 1799, p.314. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817; Sec. XXX, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852, p.185.
 2. D. to Bengal, 8 November 1814, para.28, M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 5.
 3. L. from Bengal 13 March 1835, para.39. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.39.

continued to be loaded with police duties which ought by no means to have been expected of them as sepoy. In 1849-50 more than 30,000 Bengal native soldiers were engaged in guarding treasure, and that too for a total period of fifteen months.¹ These escort duties often proved to be very trying and disturbing to the sepoy. Napier forcibly took up the issue after Bentinck's initial comment and warned the Supreme Government of the damaging effect of such a policy on the morale of the native infantry. Napier wrote to the Duke of Wellington on 27 November 1849, stressing that the great principle to follow in India, as regards armed forces, was this: "to have a large well-organised police to do all those duties for the civil branches of the Government, [that required] armed men; such as occasional guards for civil servants, escorts of treasure, putting down robbers, arresting men by order of the civil power; in short a constabulary force [that would] leave the military to their own duties."² In 1852 he again raised the problem before the Select Committee and observed from the constant harrassing and performance of escort duties, the army had not generally speaking above two nights in bed in a week. In many cases there were "permanent guards, who, having done duty every night had not been relieved for months."³ This was nothing but bad management and served only to lower the spirit of discipline amongst the native soldiers. While it has to be granted that during the

1. The deficiency of European officers in the native army -p.23.

2. P.P. 1857, XXIX, (219), H.C. p.12.

3. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.88.

period under review the political picture of India had undergone a complete transformation, so that not a single native power remained to oppose the Company, which therefore could only employ the armed forces upon garrison and frontier duties, the actual use to which this body of men was put proved to be greatly detrimental to its morale. In effect, "The sepoy army was chiefly employed, not so much in the support of the civil power, as in the actual performance of civil duties, such as guarding the kutcheries,¹ gaols, and treasuries, furnishing escorts etc. All these services ought to be executed by a police force organised on the principle of the Irish constabulary and the English county police."² In addition to these harrassing and monotonous civil duties, there was the problem of long and sustained marching. With the accession of new territories, the limit of the Bengal Presidency extended far beyond its original confines and the infantry units were frequently required to march to distant places. Frequently the native troops who were "very hardly worked" were found to be "three or four months upon the march".³ This naturally imposed endless hardship on the men and also put them to a very considerable expense.⁴

The rules of conduct framed for the governance of the native soldiery became yet another source of irritation. These

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1. An office of administration, a court-house, Hobson-Jobson p. 287.
 2. Reconstruction of the Bengal Army. p.13. (Supposed to be written by Sir Charles E. Trevelyan.)
 3. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI; (627), H.L. p.34.
 4. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. Ap.70.

rules were regulated in common with the Articles of War of the royal army. Also known as 'Articles of War', these were printed in English and in Hindustani and were read out to all the serving sepoys by the interpreter of the regiment - some of the Articles being read every month while the rest were read quarterly.¹ Borrowed as these were from those of the royal army, the suitability of these rules to regulate the activities of the native troops was open to question. The authorities seemed to have forgotten the potent fact that the royal army in England and the Company's sepoy army in India were two widely different entities and that the regulations which suited one might not be suitable for the other. The press of the mid-nineteenth century criticised the formal reading of the Articles of War as one of the greatest farces which were enacted in the routine of the native army. To the military authority the custom of reading out the Articles of War may have appeared to be one of vital importance, "a solemn warning against the commission of crime and ... a stimulus to zeal for John Company's Service,"² but to a native soldier it meant practically nothing and left him, if anything, rather confused.³ A native soldier never took the slightest trouble to follow the intricacies of English military law, neither was he capable of doing so. Consequently, the framing and reading out of the Articles of War had very little effect on the thinking of the

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1. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations, p.70. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec.X. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1830, 1840 and 1852.
 2. Athenaeum, 6 July 1844.
 3. Ibid.,

sepoys. Almost all the European officers of the Indian army, giving evidence before the Army Commission of 1859, questioned the utility of the Articles of War in the native army. As Major W.L. Merewether of the Bombay army put it, to read the Articles of War was to treat "the Indians with a code which was made up for Anglo-Saxons."¹ H.B.E. Frere, the Commissioner in Sind, observed that, "a code like the Articles of War and army regulations by giving rise to vague notions of some ill understood rights which some unknown authority [was] apparently suspected of wishing to subvert," created a "vague feeling of suspicion and discontent."² Major-General Sydney Cotton's comment was that "these Articles of War were beyond the comprehension of a native soldier,"³ and that of General John Jacob that "the Articles of War, which were in force in the native army were entirely opposed to every oriental idea of Government."⁴ Not merely were the Articles of War difficult reading in English or in Hindustani - they were necessarily useless in either language to an illiterate sepoy army. "Had the Articles of War been read half a dozen times a year to the troops, it would not be of any purpose," said the Adjutant General of the army, Lieutenant-Colonel Mayhew, who from his experience of the Bengal army from 1825, estimated that "not above ten men per company [could] read in the vernacular dialect."⁵ Moreover the

1. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. p.58.

2. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.58.

3. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.130.

4. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.98.

5. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.141.

Hindustani of the Articles of War, which had a great deal of Arabic and Persian words in it, made it difficult even for a lettered sepoy to understand. Consequently when the Articles of War were read out to the sepoys, the great majority of them probably never understood even a sentence of what was being read. Indeed the situation was so anomalous that The Times after criticising the Articles of War aptly observed, "we should much like to have a really intelligent native's opinion or ideas on the Articles of War as read to him."¹ Authorities like Henry Lawrence² and John Jacob³ were even of the opinion that the reading of these Articles before the new sepoys put into their minds ideas of desertion, mutiny and disobedience by the constant occurrence of references to them in these Articles. They argued that instead of preventing the men from committing these offences, the reading of these Articles corrupted them instead.

Not only the Articles of War but the oath of allegiance which every sepoy was bound to take was also severely criticised by some of the European officers who testified before the Army Commission in 1859. According to Keith Young, the Judge Advocate-General, the oath served no purpose and "a sepoy's fidelity could not be ensured by administering it,"⁴ because, as was rightly observed by Sir John Grant it was "nothing but a form to them."⁵ Some other officers also expressed their views

1. The Times, 15 January 1849.

2. Lawrence - op.cit., p.132.

3. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.79.

4. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.143.

5. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.276.

that in the prevalent form the unconscientious would boldly disregard it while the conscientious would find loopholes in it. A mutinous sepoy could take the colour or the gun with him and stand against his officers with the impression that he had kept the pledge not to desert the colour. He could also argue, Major General Sir Hugh Rose pointed out, that an oath to the English masters was not binding because they were of a faith, country and colour different from his own.¹ The observations of these officers, with an experience of twenty or thirty years of service in the sepoy army prior to 1859, clearly revealed that although the sepoys never objected to taking the oath of allegiance, they never regarded it as anything more than a mere formality and the seriousness of the occasion was hardly ever realised by them. It is evident therefore that on this issue the Company, in its management of the native army, resorted to European standards of discipline to a far greater extent than was necessary.

Such being the state of affairs, it would not have been illogical to expect the Bengal native soldier to have taken a carefree attitude towards the rules of conduct of his army life. This, however, was not the case. On the contrary incidents of crime and individual disobedience amongst them were quite negligible in number. Desertion of men from the lines was not unknown on occasion but such cases amongst the Bengal infantry sepoys occurred only under special circumstances. Thus, an increase in desertion was recorded in 1824 during the Burmese

1. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. p.73.

war, and may well be ascribed to the fact that "the private soldier and native commissioned officers of the Madras native infantry received higher pay when marching in the field and larger issues of rations when on foreign service than the corresponding classes of troops of the Bengal Presidency."¹ Consequently, when the Bengal native soldiers came in contact with their colleagues of the other two Presidencies on the march or on campaign, desertion took place - a sign of their protest against such discrimination. Increased desertion was also experienced in the Bengal native infantry whenever "the troops were placed under the uncertainty in regard to their future destination." The Bengal Government in an effort to root out the evil adopted "flogging and other forms of severe and degrading punishment."² This practice was strongly criticised by the Enquiry Committee of 1824 as being an impediment to recruiting. It also pointed to the "imperious calls of religion and caste which [compelled] the higher classes of these men to visit their homes periodically, as affording great excuse for an act (desertion) which however culpable in a military view [was] deemed by them to be comparatively venial and in many cases inevitable."³ The Court when informed of this criticism

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1. Genl. observation of court of enquiry Barrackpore, 2 January 1825. para 23, Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825, No.18.
 2. Genl. observation of court of enquiry Barrackpore 2 January 1825, para 23, Bengal Mily Cons. 6 January 1825 No.18.
 3. Genl. observation of enquiry committee Barrackpore 2 January 1825. para 24, Bengal Mily Cons. 6 January 1825 No.18.

ordered the Bengal Government not to inflict severe punishment for desertion and also to enquire into the causes of the desertion which had occurred in the Bengal army in 1824.¹ The Bengal Council in its letter of 1830 informed the Court that the Bengal Sepoys had been ordered in 1824 to march from the northern regions of India to the north of Bengal proper to invade Cachar, Assam and Arakan. This marching order was the main reason for the increased desertion as in those days of slow communications the Bengal infantrymen were reluctant to march to so great a distance from their families in Bihar or Oudh.² Besides, the Bengal sepoy, recruited as they were from wheat eating regions, disliked service in the eastern provinces of India where rice was the staple food and the climate was humid and unsuitable for them. Desertions frequently increased whenever troops were ordered to the Eastern provinces.³ Although, according to the authorities both in Bengal and in England, the number of desertions was high during the Burmese war in 1824, Captain Hough has shown that over the years 1825 to 1833 only 16 men deserted from all the sepoy infantry regiments in Bengal.⁴ Indeed so insignificant is this number that it could easily be ignored, especially as the deserter might often be a guilty sepoy anxious to escape punishment. A young sepoy lost very little by desertion, since he could join

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1. D. to Bengal 18 May 1828, para. 115, M.E. sent to Bengal. Vol. 1.
 2. L. from Bengal 14 October 1830. para 57, M.L. received from Bengal. Vol. 32.
 3. L. from Bengal 14 October 1830. para. 58. M.L. received from Bengal. Vol. 32.
 4. W. Hough - The practice of court-martial and other military courts, table no. 2.

another regiment and start life afresh,¹ During the Sind and Panjab wars, the number of desertions increased again. The Government on this occasion tightened² up the enlistment rules. But all the same it can be concluded that desertion was never a great problem to the military authorities in Bengal.³

The tally of other military crimes committed by Bengal sepoy who were brought to trial was also very low, as will be seen from the following table:⁴

Number of Military cases tried in ten years
in Bengal (Officers not included)

1825-33.	Ab- sence.	Deser- tion.	To enemy.	Drunk- ness.	Embez- zle- ment.	Maling- ering.	Misc. Mut- iny.	Sleep- ing.
Brahmins	-	4	-	-	1	-	-	2
Rajputs	-	10	-	-	-	-	2	1
Other Hindus	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Muslims	1	1	-	-	-	-	6	3
Total-	1	16	-	-	1	-	8	6

In 1825 and 1826 the Bengal native infantry was composed of 73 and 76 regiments respectively.⁵ After 1827 there were 74

1. E. I. U. S. J. May 1834, p. 504.

2. See pp. 211-212.

3. P. P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H. L. p. 220.

4. W. Hough - Military Law authorities p. XIII.

5. P. P. 1831-32, XIII (735-V), H. C. Ap. A. No. 29 and 31

regular native infantry regiments in the Bengal establishment and each of these regiments had about 1000 men on an average. The figures mentioned in the above table, indicating the crime rate of about 484,160 men¹ over a nine year period, establish beyond all doubt that the incidence of crime amongst the Bengal native soldiers was extremely slight. It will also be of special interest to note that between 1825 and 1833 not a single Bengal sepoy was tried for drunkenness - which speaks highly of the moral standards of the Bengal native soldiery. Evidence given by Major-General Nicolls before the Select Committee of 1831 also supports this conclusion. He deposed that, "in three years of 28,000 men I had three instances of intoxication ... and two of those were from the immoderate use of opium."²

The following statistics, covering the period 1824 to 1837 indicate an almost similar picture of the very low incidence of military crimes amongst the native officers.

Number of officers (native) tried.

	<u>Regular and Irregular regiments</u>	
1824- 33 - - -	37	3
1834- 37 - - -	20	4

1. In 1825 and '26 there were 68 regiments with 1000 sepoy in each but in 1827 while the number of regiments remained the same that of the privates was reduced to 680 in each regiment. Again in 1828, the number of regiments increased from 68 to 74 but with 680 privates in each. Thus, in 1825/26 there were 68,000 sepoy, in 1827 - 46,240 and from 1828 to 1833 Bengal native infantry establishment consisted of 301,920 sepoy. Bengal Military Statement. 1825-1833.
2. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.17.
3. Hough - The Military... p.XIV.
4. Hough - The practice... p.XIII.

Besides military crimes, the Bengal native soldiers were also liable to be tried by Civil Courts for crimes such as arson, burglary, child stealing, embezzlement, counterfeiting, forgery, theft, highway robbery and murder.¹ But whatever might be their incidence, neither the Select Committee of 1852-53 nor the Army Commission of 1859 (both appointed by the House of Commons) asked the Army officers who appeared before the enquiry a single question on the problem of crimes or drunkenness amongst the Bengal infantry soldiers. This silence itself supports the view expressed by the Press of the time that "the Bengal sepoy were of sober habits."²

Generally for a minor offence a native soldier was punished with either extra drills or extra guard duty. The commanding officer of a company could punish his men by ordering ten days of the former or four of the latter.³ But if an offence demanded more severe punishment, a report was required to be sent to the commanding officer of the regiment for a trial by a court-martial. This procedure of trial by military courts, though prevalent in some form or other before 1796, was formally established and promulgated in the reforms of that year.⁴ By the regulations of 1796, three types of courts-martial were established to sit in judgment over the accused native soldiers.

1. Hough - The practice ... p.XIV.

2. Bengal Hurkaru 25 June 1845.

3. M.C. 8 August 1796, Grace Bengal regulations 1799. p.304. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817. Sec. XLIX, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1830, 1840 and 1852.

4. M.C. 8 August 1796, Grace Bengal regulations 1799, p.310. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec. XLIX, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1830, 1840 and 1852.

These were known as the regimental, the district or garrison, and the general courts-martial. (These were 'Native Courts' as distinct from courts which sat in judgment over the European soldiers). Native officers were selected to sit with European officers as judges in these courts. This honour was given only to those native officers who had qualified themselves in an examination in the Articles of War governing the native soldiers and had obtained certificates to that effect from the Adjutant-General of the native army. A general court-martial was the only tribunal before which a native commissioned officer could be tried, the other two being authorised to try sepoy and non-commissioned officers only. Moreover, only a general court-martial had the power of awarding the penalties of dismissal or death. Every soldier brought for trial before any native court-martial was at liberty to ask to be tried only by European judges. But in that case no appeal was to be allowed from one court to another. The composition of these courts was as follows:

(a) general courts-martial (native) were formed of five to nine native commissioned officers, appointed only with the sanction of the Commander-in-Chief. Sentence of death could only be passed by a two third majority. One European officer was to superintend the proceedings of such courts.

(b) garrison courts-martial were also similarly composed, with the exception that their officer members were drawn from the different native regiments in the garrison.

(c) Regimental courts-martial were appointed by the Commanding

Officer of a regiment and tried all crimes that were not capital. This Court consisted of five to nine native officers under the superintendence of a subaltern officer.

Decisions of the regimental and garrison courts could be approved and carried out by the officers commanding a regiment, who had to convey this information to the Headquarters. The decision of a general court-martial had, however, to be approved by the Commander-in-Chief before it could be carried out.

The constitution, jurisdiction and power of the native courts-martial came under the severe criticism of the press and the European officers of the Indian army. The Mofussilite wrote "a native court-martial was often found to be unacquainted with the principles upon which it was convened."¹ According to Brigadier-General John Jacob the system involved "the unspeakable absurdity of an assembly of native officers judging between the English commandant and the men under his command."² The Panjab Committee commented that, "native courts-martial [were] a farce because native members [were] always guided by the superintending European officer."³ It is difficult, however, to accept such sweeping remarks without limitation, for Major-General Hearsey giving his opinion to the Army Commission of 1859 stated that a native officer was generally as well qualified for such duty as the officer of any army.⁴ Most probably confusion arose because the military codes were foreign in origin and concept to the native officers. As Major-

1. The Mofussilite, 8 June 1847.

2. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.98.

3. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. p.34.

4. P.P. 1859, VIII (2541), H.C. p.176.

General Hancock observed "the native mind [was not] a whit less acute than the European and if left to follow pretty much their own way of examining witnesses and of sifting evidence, as under their own system of punchayets,¹ these officers would be much better enabled to form a just decision whatever might be the case submitted to their investigation."² But under the accepted official English system, the European officer, who was assigned to superintend the court proceedings, exerted so great an influence, that the native officers were found to readily give their assent to his findings and conclusions.³ The proceedings were thus often reduced to a farce, as one man's conclusions carried the day.

Native courts-martial were authorised to deal out any form of punishment ranging from simple imprisonment, corporal punishment or even capital punishment depending upon the gravity of the crime. Since the infliction of corporal punishment caused much resentment amongst the native soldiers, Combermere, the Commander-in Chief of the Bengal army, impressed as he was by the orderly habits of the native soldiers, endeavoured in 1826 to win the Directors to his belief that, it could "very seldom be necessary to inflict on them (Bengal sepoys) the punishment of flogging [and that it might be] almost entirely⁴ abolished with great advantages to their character and feelings.

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1. Punchayets - A Council assembled as a Court of Arbiters or Jury, or as a committee of the people of village, of the members of a caste or what not, to decide on questions interesting the body generally, Hobson-Jobson, p.560.
 2. P.P. 1859, V, (2516), p.33.
 3. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), p.133.
 4. L. from Bengal 26 January 1826. para 20. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.23.

He succeeded in winning the approval of the Home authorities and in 1827 ordered that "no native soldier [should] in future be sentenced to corporal punishment unless for the crime of stealing, marauding or gross insubordination, where the individuals [were] deemed unworthy to continue in the ranks of the army."¹ It was also laid down that in case of an award of corporal punishment, the divisional commander should be referred to and given every detail of the prisoner before the sentence was carried into effect and if he confirmed it and did not see cause to remit the punishment he would at the same time direct the man to be discharged from the service.² This was but the first restrictive step taken to curtail the award of corporal punishment. In 1832 Sir Edward Barnes, the Commander-in-Chief, retraced the step, and the power to sanction the sentence of corporal punishment was no longer confined to the divisional commander. Instead, the officer who assembled the court-martial was permitted to confirm the proceedings and then to carry the sentence into effect or to remit it altogether.³ Sir Edward obviously issued this order to uphold the authority of commanding officers of native regiments. But as Bentinck pointed out in 1835, it was these very officers who in the past had abused their power. Bentinck also took exception to the action of the Commander-in-Chief on this issue and remarked: "the power should not be left to the caprice of an individual but to be settled by the Legislative Council."⁴ Acting on this belief

1. G.O.C.C. 19 March 1827. Bengal Mily. Cons. 19 March 1827.No.70

2. Ibid.

3. G.O.C.C. 15 June 1832. Bengal Mily. Cons. 1832. No.65.

4. L. from Bengal 16 February 1835. para.11, M.L. received from Bengal Vol.39.

and on his conviction that corporal punishment was a degrading measure he referred the issue for detailed investigation to three Presidential committees. These committees after enquiring into the matter were unanimous in their opinion that though there must be some restriction in inflicting corporal punishment upon the sepoys, that punishment "however degrading and injurious, [could not] entirely be abolished."¹ Bentinck's humanitarian views were not satisfied with the finding. He criticised the observation of these committees and stated, "an insuperable terror appears to reign over the imagination of all and like the native superstition which sees in some charm or amulet the only protection against all evils that can affect the body or haunt the mind, so corporal punishment is venerated as the sole security against every military distemper and as the sole guarantee for the efficiency and good regulation of the army."² He answered the apprehension of the committees - that the abolition of the corporal punishment would bring disastrous consequences - by reminding them that the abolition of Suttee had been advocated upon the grounds of humanity, that danger had then been apprehended, unnecessarily as it now appeared, and that fears of ill consequences from the present measure be held to be equally unreasonable. Advancing his reasons for the total abolition of corporal punishment, Bentinck argued that the Bengal native soldiers were already subordinate to all superior authority and were proverbially faithful to their salt.

1. L. from Bengal 16 February 1835, para 1, Ibid.

2. L. from Bengal 16 February 1835, para 19, Ibid.

Moreover, as the Company's Military service was greatly esteemed by the Indian soldier, "discharge" he said, was "the most complete substitute for corporal punishment."¹

The Directors were convinced by the argument of Bentinck and approved the total abolition of corporal punishment.² An order was accordingly issued in 1837 discontinuing the practice of punishing native soldiers by using the cat-o-nine-tails or rattan. It was also ruled that "a soldier was to be sentenced to dismissal from the service for any offence which might now be punished by flogging."³ This order abolishing corporal punishment almost immediately met with severe opposition and criticism. "Letters and articles appeared in almost every Journal in the country. An old Bengal Subadar who had served the Company from 1804 remarked that 'Fauj be dar hogya,' (the army has lost its fear)."⁴ Colonel Alexander said before the Select Committee of 1852 that the abolition of corporal punishment and the introduction of hard labour in irons for serious offences had "told on the discipline of the native army."⁵ Not that Bentinck's measure went unsupported. Colonel Sleeman observed that "it had a very good effect [a sepoy knew] that these courts [could] sentence him to be dismissed from the service, [that he was] liable to lose his bread for ordinary

1. L. from Bengal 16 February 1835. para. 20. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.39.

2. D. to Bengal 16 June 1836, para.4, M.D. sent to Bengal, Vol.21.

3. G.O.G.G. 24 December 1836. Bengal Mily.Cons. 24 December 1836. No.50.

4. Cardew *op.cit.*, p.164 fn.

5. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.92.

transgressions and be sentenced to work on the roads in irons for graver ones..."¹

This controversial order, however, was a shortlived one. In 1845, Hardinge noticing an increase in the number of mutinous incidents and consequent courts-martial in the Bengal native army held that this unsatisfactory state of things had mainly come to pass because of the abolition of corporal punishment. Hence, with the approval of the Directors, an order was issued in 1845 and corporal punishment was again introduced in the native army of India and remained in force down to the year 1852.²

The validity of Hardinge's conclusions, supporting the reintroduction of corporal punishment, may well be questioned. Detailed statistics presented by Bentinck in his letter of 1835 indicated that the number of cases of flogging in the Bengal native army had always been very low. Over a period of five years from 1829 to 1833, it was in fact as low as three per regiment of about 1000 men. Bentinck had also remarked that this was so because Bengal sepoy were mostly drawn from people of high caste who were responsible and sober in their habits. To them flogging was a degrading experience and as Bentinck argued "the relatives of native officers and young men of respectable connections [were] deterred from entering the ranks by the existence of corporal punishment."³ Hardinge, on the other

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1. N.H. Sleeman - On the military discipline of the Indian army, p. 3.
 2. G.O.G.G. 16 August 1845. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852, p.98.
 3. L. from Bengal 16 February 1835. para.22, M.L. received from Bengal Vol.39.

hand, reintroduced corporal punishment on the mere supposition that its retraction had led to the increased incidence of crime which might well have been caused by various other reasons. Whether it did or did not lessen the incidence of crime, its retention certainly was held degrading by the sepoys, and so affected their morale.

The rules and regulations about the dress of the sepoys was another source of irritation to them. The Company dressed its native soldiers in the fashion of the British troops of the royal army. Of that fashion Fortescue has observed: "in a general way their clothing itself was bad. The coatee, or swallow-tailed coat, was in itself an ill-designed garment;... The pack was hard, rigid and quadrangular; and was so adjusted as to arrest circulation. Round the neck was worn a stiff black leather stock, which the men rather delighted in for its smarter appearance, though they always took it off and hung it in their musket-stocks when hard work was in prospect."¹ From the list of things mentioned in the regulations of Bengal native infantry relating to the dress of sepoys² it can be said that an Indian soldier in the Company's service, except for his sandals and turban, was accoutred like his European comrades, and was equally inconvenienced. He had a heavy unwieldy shako on his head, upon his left arm a heavy musket was placed and on his back was slung a great knapsack which contained all his

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1. J.W. Fortescue - History of the British army, Vol.XI, p.12.
 2. M.C. 8 August 1796, Grace Bengal regulations 1799/ p.105. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817 Sec.XXXII, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment, 1852. p.223.

regimental necessaries. Across his chest he had two broad belts in criss-cross fashion held together by a brass plate. To one of these his bayonet was fastened and to the other his pouch or cartouch box, a huge leather thing which was large enough to contain some sixty rounds of ball ammunition. There was yet another belt round his waist which was intended to keep the others together. On his feet he had a pair of clumsy sandals.¹ With this dress on, when the regiment was under arms and in heavy marching order at an inspection parade, a native soldier could hardly stand still and often earned the criticism of being 'unsteady' from reviewing Generals.² Shore criticising the mode of dress of the native soldiers observed "the native soldiers bedizened after our English fashion, reminded me of the monkeys who accompany the dancing bears in England."³ Henry Russell, a Bengal Officer, also criticised the dress of the Indian soldiers before the Select Committee of 1831 and commented that the authorities "thought that everything depended on show and that no sacrifice was too great for the attainment of outward smartness and uniformity."⁴ The full dress cap of a native soldier was of the inverted bell shape and consisted of a wicker frame covered with blue cloth. The upper and lower rims were bound with brass. It was also furnished with a thin strap of brass scales (which was never worn down) and a device and number of the same material. The average weight of this cap

1. Bengal Hurkaru, 24 June, 1845.

2. Captain A. Hervey - Ten Years in India, Vol. II, p.29.

3. John Shore - op.cit., Vol. II, p.414.

4. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.29.

was from two and a half to three pounds.¹ This cap was so heavy and unsteady that a native soldier could rarely move without being obliged to raise his disengaged hand to his head to keep the cap on.² If Fortescue was critical of the mode of dress of the British troops in England, his conclusions were still more valid and justified in the climate of India. In fact, such a mode of dress most literally oppressed the native soldiers of the Bengal infantry. Even in a temperate region, no one would willingly buckle round his throat "that rigid apoplexy-endangering stock or impede his action with braces (not inappropriately called by them gallows) or squeeze his limbs into the closely fitting trouser or the tightly buttoned cloth or superadd to these the cross and waist belts - the heavy knapsack, with its chest cramping, arm galling belts, a heavy cartouch box ... and a haversack."³ Napier stated before the Select Committee in 1852 that "their own native costume would be far better, then he would look as well in rank and be far more efficiently clothed for service than in the European dress."⁴ The Times also observed that it would have been better for him to be armed, accoutred and dressed in native fashion so that he could do his work with ease. "The soldier ought to be so clothed that his natural acquirements may be as little cramped as possible. Every exception to this rule

1. Athenaeum, 26 May, 1845.

2. Delhi Gazette, 24 April, 1852.

3. The Times, 12 January, 1853.

4. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.135.

diminished his utility and rendered him ridiculous."¹ The European officers in their evidence before the Army Commission of 1859 also criticised the European mode of dress of the sepoys. The Panjab Committee observed that "a sepoy in his European dress could neither stoop to the ground nor take rest in his accoutrements."² Sir Charles E. Trevelyan commented that it was "by no means necessary that they should be dressed according to the European fashion; on the contrary there would be great advantages in dressing them according to the native fashion, it would make the service more popular."³ In fact, he was critical of the very basic idea which brought about such a measure and warned that "particular care should be taken to avoid the pedantry of European discipline."⁴ Indeed, in full dress a native soldier wore a ludicrous and almost pathetic air of uneasiness and rigidity. His clothes hung on him as though he were a very angular wooden frame. Besides, "from a distance a sepoy in his scarlet coat and black trouser, presented a sufficiently military appearance but on closer inspection it was not pleasing to the eyes. The coat ... was as old fashioned and uncouth an article as could be conceived. The pantaloons were as primitive as possible."⁵ Moreover, as "no oriental [seemed] at ease in tight European costume, least of all in the English uniform," it often happened that during a long march, the sepoys often requested to be allowed to wear their own native

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1. The Times, 12 January, 1853.
 2. P.P. 1859, VIII (2541), H.C. p.28.
 3. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. p.106.
 4. Ibid.
 5. G. Trevelyan - Cawnpore, p.14.

dress.¹ In addition to all this, some of the officers even pointed out that the knapsack and the English musket were both too heavy for a sepoy. Sir Mark Cubbon, who served in the Indian army from 1810, said because of the introduction of present knapsack in 1817 more men had been "invalided and pensioned from the chest-founding action of the knapsack than ever would have been the ordinary risks of the sepoys."² Napier remarked that the weight of the sepoy's musket ought to be reduced.³ Again Colonel Alexander observed "the natives carry from 47 lbs. to 49 lbs.; you may take their own weight at from 100 lbs., to 120 lbs., or 125 lbs., and it is extraordinary the marches that they make, and the powers of endurance they exhibit."⁴ This statement is proof enough of the harrassing nature of the sepoy's dress.

While the organisational pattern, the rules of governance, the Articles of War, the method of training and even the mode of dress of the native soldiery were mainly modelled on the practices followed by the British troops of the royal army, the Bengal native infantry could claim to be as widely different as was possible from its model body, if not unique in itself, in one respect - in its social habits. Whereas the accepted practice in European armies was to house the troops in barracks

1. G. Trevelyan - Cawnpore p.14.

2. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.106.

3. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.89.

4. "The weight of the bayonet is 11½ lbs.; the weight of the knapsack is about 12 lbs., his accoutrements, with 12 rounds of ammunition is 6 lbs.; but in field service he would carry 60 rounds, which would be about 6 lbs. itself - including the clothes and accoutrements."
P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.141.

and provide them with food from a common mess, the mode of living of the Bengal native infantry soldier was diametrically the opposite. The Company did not provide the native soldiers with any built up accommodation at cantonments. Instead of barracks, certain ground was allotted in a cantonment for the residence of the native regiments.¹ On this allotted ground a native soldier had to build a hut for himself, and though Madras and Bombay native soldiers received hutting money for the erection of new huts, the Bengal sepoy never enjoyed any such privilege. Not till 1846 did Hardinge in his efforts to equalise the service conditions of the three Presidential armies, ordered hutting allowance to be granted to the Bengal sepoy, but only on their changing stations.²

The military regulations,³ an article on the Bengal army published in Bengal Hurkaru in 1845 and G. Trevelyan in his book Cawnpore all throw light upon the hutting lines as well as the living condition of the native soldiers. Each native private was allotted a space of 30 x 10 feet and the commissioned and non-commissioned officers were allotted slightly larger plots. In the ground allowed to a regiment, lines were marked out and divided into ten rows, one per company, with a street between those of each company and a broader one to separate the two sections. Those huts belonging to native sepoy and non-

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1. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations p.319. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec. LVI, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852, p.175.
 2. G.O.G.G. 15 July 1845, Bengal Mily. Cons. 15 July 1845, No.68.
 3. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations, p.184, Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec. XLIX, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852. p.182.

commissioned officers in a cantonment consisted of quadrangular buildings with mud walls generally surmounted by chuppar or thatch of grass or palmyra leaves, with a small enclosed yard or compound in front.¹ The huts of the native officers were attached to the company lines. An officer had two or three huts round a tiny court-yard, fenced in with a mud wall a few feet in height.² The Quartermaster of the company or the regimental officer was responsible for the cleanliness of all the huts of the soldiery. As cases of fire were quite frequent and often dangerous, every man was ordered to keep two pots of water outside his door. The furniture and fixtures in a native soldier's hut consisted of a charpoy,³ a daree⁴ and a few cooking vessels. The native officer's domestic arrangements differed very little from those of a sepoy, except that there would be a few more cooking vessels and perhaps a 'boy' to cook for him.⁵

The public buildings attached to a native line consisted of a barrack for arms, the stores, the Sergeant's quarter and the congee house.⁶ A barrack or Bell of Arms was built immediately in front of the line of each company. The arms and accoutrements of the native soldiers were lodged in this building and a native non-commissioned officer was placed in charge. A guard-room and a prisoners cell were also attached to the Bell of Arms. The colours and cash chest were lodged in the guard

1. Bengal Hurkaru, 25 June 1845.

2. G. Trevelyan - Cawnpore, p.12.

3. A charpoy - A bedstead.

4. A daree - A mattress.

5. Bengal Hurkaru, 25 June 1845.

6. Congee House, Conjee House - "The cells (temporary lock-up) of a regiment in India." Hobson-Jobson, p.245.

room while prisoners, under trial by court-martial, were confined in the prisoners' room.

On a change of station, a Bengal native soldier required carriage for transferring his personal belongings such as his cooking pots, bedding and clothes. A regiment often moved to a station at a distance of five, six, seven or even eight hundred miles. The usual march was ten or twelve miles per day with a halt every fourth day.¹ The Company provided tents for the men during the march, and these tents were pitched in continuous lines with a small street between each and a broader one, dividing the sections, in front of all the small streets. The arms of each company were piled in front of the tenth company of the regiment. Immediately in the rear of the companies tents the Sholdarees² of the native officers were pitched, and behind these again were ranged in three lines the tents of the subalterns, captains and of the commanding officers and staff. The regimental bazaar was pitched in the rear aloof from the camp.³ Arriving at the new station, a native soldier had to buy or build for himself a new hut. When a regiment was about to quit a station, a committee of valuation composed of native officers under the superintendence of an European officer, assembled to value the huts. The relieving regiment, if there was any, usually took the lines on that valuation. The huts were then apportioned to the men of the relieving regiment and

1. Bengal Hurkaru, 25 June 1845.

2. Sholdaree - A tent - Hobson-Jobson, p.680.

3. G.O.C.C. 8 February 1802. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817. Sec.XI, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852. p.95.

the value was deducted from their pay. The money realised was proportionately allotted to the owners of the huts.

This system of housing for the native soldiers was vehemently criticised by the press of the time. Sir Charles Napier was requested to bring the subject to the notice of the Government and to take immediate measures to abolish the "wretched huts."¹ The authorities were asked to build barracks for the native soldiers at public expense and to do away with the antiquated and most unmilitary system of lodging them in their own huts. The lines of a native regiment were described as a relic of barbarism. As permanent habitations, even for native soldiery, these huts were described as a disgrace to any army. They were constructed in such a manner that if a single hut took fire, as frequently happened, the entire lines of several regiments were burnt out. Moreover, these huts, particularly at certain seasons, were extremely unhealthy. In the rainy season they were wet. Because of defective drainage most of the native lines remained swampy almost throughout the year. In addition, the ground allotted for the construction of huts was generally limited and the consequent overcrowding caused a serious lack of ventilation.² Criticising the state of affairs, in a letter dated 27 November, 1849, Sir Charles Napier informed the Duke of Wellington: "the disgustingly filthy nature of the source from which the water used at Bangalore [was taken, had been] brought to notice scores of times by me during the last

1. The Times 15 January 1849.

2. Ibid., 15 January 1849.

four and a half years but as usual nothing [had] been done."¹ Analysing the causes of illness amongst the European soldiers, he wrote in the same letter, there was "scarcely any illness, which the troops [suffered from, that might] not be traced to want of room in barracks. Besides this, the bazaars were allowed to spring up near barracks, and the stench from the bazaars affected the health of the troops."² Florence Nightingale, while expressing her concern with the unsatisfactory condition of the European barracks in India, remarked, "But all these conditions paled before what was endured by native troops. The native troops had no barracks, no lavatories, no baths, no kitchens. no sanitary supervision of any kind. They used the ground round them as privies without hindrance and left cleansing to the rains. The squalor of their huts was indescribable, bodies of animals and of human beings were left unburied for days; the water they drank was stinking. Consequently, though temperate, the Bengal native soldiers were decimated by disease."³

In spite of such requests and criticisms, conditions remained as unhygienic as ever until after the Mutiny of 1857. The sanitary arrangement of all army stations under the Company, was described in the Report of the Royal Commission in 1859 as 'quite infamous'. The Report further observed, "none of the stations had any subsoil drainage and there were no other means of removing the rainfall, except surface gutters. The ground about the lines' was often broken in pits and hollows filled

1. P.P. 1857, XXIX, (219), H.C. p.125.

2. P.P. 1857, XXIX, (219), H.C. p.125.

3. C.W.Smith - Florence Nightingale. p.48.

with stagnant waters."¹

It was however to be admitted that the Company was not completely indifferent on this issue. To look after the health of the native soldiers the Army administrators had attached two native doctors with one surgeon and one surgeon's mate to each sepoy regiment.² These men regulated the hospital service attached to the unit in all situations. The native soldiers while in hospital had to pay for medical service and the charges for a day were four annas for a subadar, two annas for a jamadar, a havildar or a naik and one anna for a sepoy, this sum being recovered from their pay. Since complaints were often received that native soldiers in order to avoid duty, pretended illness and tried to get admission into the hospital, the Government, in 1840, increased the hospital charges and the daily rate for native soldiers was raised to eight annas for a commissioned officer, three annas for a non-commissioned officer and two annas for a sepoy.³ For a soldier wounded in action or on service, however, there was no hospital stoppage. During the time of a war or in a distant campaign, general field hospitals were also established whenever necessary at fixed situations. The issue of a stringent order by the Government in 1816 to keep the hospitals clean⁴ makes it evident that before that date not much attention had been paid to the clean-

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1. J. Martin - Report of the Sanitary Commission in India, p.63.
 2. M.C. 8 August 1796, Grace Bengal regulations 1799, p.284. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec.XLVII, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852. p.168.
 3. G.O.G.G. 8 June 1840. Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852, p.168.
 4. G.O.G.G. 6 April 1816. Bengal Mily.Cons. 6 April 1816. No.62.

liness of the hospitals. Not that this order improved matters appreciably, as was proved by the report of the Sanitary Commission of 1859, which stated: "The native hospitals were almost altogether in a hopeless state. They were lacking in means of cleanliness or bathing, in water supply and drainage."¹ Though there were two native doctors and one Brahmin and one Muslim cook to prepare medical prescriptions which required boiling and to prepare the food of these native patients who were unable to cook for themselves, the Sanitary Commission observed that "there was no trained attendants on the sick. In brief there was want of everything, but strangely enough, except of medicine. By management and conciliation much might have been done to improve the state of native hospitals."² Even in construction, the hospitals, for both the native and European soldiers, were inferior to the much criticised barracks of the European soldiers. The hospitals were built "without any through draught between the floors and the ground,"³ stated the Sanitary Commission in its report. In fact matters were so bad that as Florence Nightingale observed "the troops would conceal their illness rather than go into hospital."⁴

Such then was the state of affairs regarding housing and medical facilities. As for food, the native soldier while in garrison had to purchase his requirements of food grains and other eatables for himself from the regimental bazaar. When in the field, "there was a general bazaar to which he had access

1. J. Martin - op.cit., p.69.

2. Ibid., p.74.

3. Ibid., p.74.

4. Smith - op.cit., p.48.

to purchase," said Napier before the Select Committee in 1852.¹ From the description of rations supplied to the native soldiers while on foreign service, it may be concluded that flour, dal or dhall (split peas, lentils etc.) and rice were the staple food of the Bengal infantry sepoy.² Consumption of meat was not unknown, excepting of course by the Brahmins, but was very uncommon because of its high cost. Beef, of course, was not taken by the Hindu soldiers, but goat's meat or mutton or fish was at times included in the diet.³ However, the pay of the native sepoy was such that he usually had nothing more than chapatis and cooked dal. He could hardly afford to purchase fish or meat or even vegetables for his curry and had to be satisfied with a curry made of the cheapest possible vegetables, known in India as 'Kachu'.⁴ It was not unknown for a sepoy to live only on cakes of ragee or jowar (cheap grains) with a little pickle.⁵ Except when on foreign service, the native soldiers received no ration from the Government and was left by himself to pay for and procure his provisions. In 1847, on the receipt of a report from Hardinge that the native troops were suffering

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1. P.P. 1852-53.XXXI, (627), H.C. p.29. Napier accepted an Indian commission in 1841. This view was also supported by Durgadas Bandopadhaya who joined the Bengal Army in 1851.
 2. The sepoy used to draw his daily rations from the grocer of his regimental bazaar; some used to draw three fourths of a seer of Attah(flour) or rice, some a seer, others seer and a quarter. Besides 1/8 seer of dal, 1/16 seer of ghee and 1/64 seer of salt were also drawn by him daily. The sepoy was also extended a credit of two pice a day. (This, along with the price of provisions, was recovered from his pay) which he spent in purchasing firewood or vegetables if he could so afford. - Bandopadhaya - op.cit., p.68.
 3. The Bengal Hurkaru, 25 June 1845.
 4. Bandopadhaya - op.cit., p.68.
 5. Hervey - op.cit., p.115.

from the high price of grains, the Court permitted the Bengal Government to declare that "native troops, whenever the price of provisions forming their diet [should] exceed rupees three and annas eight per maund," would get a compensation for the high price of provisions.¹ Although this privilege was granted from 1847, how far this concession helped soldiers is difficult to ascertain because the price of rice or flour seldom exceeded this limit between 1847 and 1852. Detailed statistics about the expenses incurred by a sepoy for food are not available but Durgadas Bandopadhaya estimated that the average expenditure of a Bengal sepoy on this account varied between three to five rupees per month. He also observed that if a sepoy was anxious to send a remittance to his family, he would often live for much less.²

The other aspect of the social habits of the native soldiery which bestowed uniqueness upon this body of soldiers was the influence exerted on the men by their social and religious prejudices. Durgadas Bandopadhaya observed that so deep-seated were the caste prejudices amongst the Bengal sepoys that even in the field they used to carry their own cooking pots and each individual prepared food for himself.³ Lord Gough told the Select Committee of 1852 "The sepoy generally carry (sic) his cooking pots - three brass pots himself and two upon the baggage cart;" the three which he carried with him were "one to draw water, two for cooking his food."⁴ To partake of food

1. G.O.G.G. 17 December 1847. Bengal Mily. Cons. 17 December 1847. No. 78.

2. Bandopadhaya - op.cit., p.69.

3. Ibid.

4. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.C.† p.145.

cooked by a low caste man was taboo and so strong was this caste consciousness amongst the Bengal sepoy, recruited as they were mainly from high caste Hindus, that they often starved rather than take any cooked food from polluting hands. Pollock stated in 1859 that, during the Sikh war, the men of three native regiments had lost their cooking pots. The Commanding officers of the regiments had arranged to supply them with provisions in the camp but found themselves in a strange predicament. "They had had nothing for twenty-four hours, they were very hungry, but they would not, even one of them, touch the provisions because they had not their own cooking pots and they would not cook in the cooking pots of others."¹ Indeed so strong was the hold of caste over the Bengal sepoy, that a low caste Hindu subadar of the Bengal native army might be found, while on off duty, crouching to a Brahmin non-commissioned officer or to a Brahmin private.² Such a slave was the Bengal native soldier to his rigid social prejudices, that he would strongly resent without fear of consequence, any intrusion made upon his social arrangements. As Colonel Pennington, who had served the Bengal army for 40 years from 1783 to 1823, while testifying before the Select Committee of 1831, observed: "treated kindly, [one might] rest assured of their devoted attachment; But [one] must not interfere in their religion, nor in their prejudice regarding caste, Any wrong done to them on these points [could not] be atoned for by apologies or express-

1. P.P. 1859, V, (2515), H.C. p.8.

2. The Red Pamphlet, p.16.

ing of regret."¹ The Army administrators were fully conscious of this peculiarity of the native character. In fact, many concessions had been made in the mode of governance of the Bengal native army to accommodate these prejudices, and the army was considered by some authorities for that very reason, to be quite unreliable and unmilitary. The Calcutta Review explained the situation by saying, "if Queen Victoria engaged in an attempt of governing Ireland by the help of a Romish native army, swarming with Jesuits and officered by Protestants, she would have been in a situation somewhat similar to that of the East India Company relying on a Brahminic Bengal army for the security and stability of their Empire."² These doubts about the reliability and efficiency of the Bengal army were, however, of questionable validity. Though described as caste-ridden and otherwise prejudiced a Bengal sepoy hardly ever allowed these factors to lower his military efficiency. A great majority of the European officers in their evidence before the Select Committee in 1831 were of the decided opinion that the Bengal sepoys, in spite of their caste prejudices, had well performed their military duties.³ It was stated before the same Committee that though working in trenches was considered to be unsuitable and undignified work for a high caste man, yet during the war at Bhurtpore in 1804, "the sepoys worked in the trenches at very laborious employment in direct contradiction to their own religious feelings."⁴ Again Hardinge said before the Select

1. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. Ap.B.

2. Calcutta Review Vol. XXIX, 1857, p.417.

3. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.XIV.

4. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.18.

Committee of 1852 that even amongst the men of the highest caste in the Bengal army, there were very few occasions when they had shown disinclination to work in the trenches.¹ It may therefore be concluded that though concessions might have been made to their caste prejudices it is doubtful if these had any seriously detrimental effect on efficiency.

In fact, the general state of discipline in the Bengal native infantry was normally very good. The Duke of Wellington, in his letter of 17 March, 1804, described the Bengal sepoy as "not to be objectionable on the score of discipline."² In 1831 Lord Combermere, the Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal army praised the discipline of the Bengal sepoy in his report to the Directors.³ Sir Charles Napier said in 1843, "if these sepoy were not the best men in the world, they would give their commanders much trouble,"⁴ and again he could "never think of them without respect and admiration."⁵

Indeed the fidelity of the Bengal native infantry soldiers was something proverbial. In the Maratha wars of 1803 and 1804 their pay was seven months, and in some instances as much as thirteen months, in arrears. To make the situation worse, the sepoy were also exposed to starvation and great hardship. Yet not a single complaint was heard. "There are no men more patient in submitting to privation than the Bengal sepoy,"⁶

1. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.212.

2. Wellington Despatches ed. Owen, p.1103.

3. L. from Bengal 19 October 1831. para.9, M.L. received from Bengal Vol.34.

4. Napier - Life ... Vol.III, p.73.

5. Ibid., Vol.IV, p. 312.

6. Tucker - op.cit., p.103.

It was also stated that during the Punjab wars in 1849 Sikh emissaries tried to tamper with the loyalty of the 5000 to 10,000 native soldiers then stationed at the cantonment at Ferrozepore by "holding out to them the greater advantages of double pay and high rank like Major, Lieutenant-Colonel and General - it could shake the fidelity of our troops, but the Bengal sepoys stood the trial."¹

Loyal and faithful, the Bengal native soldiers, on more than one occasion, "proved that they yield to none in bravery."² At the storm of Bharatpore in 1804 the Bengal sepoys gave astonishing proof of chivalrous gallantry.³ In 1841 during the Afghan war the Bengal sepoys fought bravely under Nott and Pollock. Again in the Conquest of Sind, in 1843, "the sepoys earned the praise of a Commander who knew, better than any man, how to gauge a soldier's qualities. And within the next five years, the native army covered itself afresh with glory in the two wars against ... the formidable warriors of the Khalsa."⁴

Indeed, for his fidelity, gallantry and devotion to duty the Bengal native soldier was much lauded. Though he gave ample proofs of having deserved this praise, how far he remained happy and content with his service conditions over the period under review is open to question. It has to be accepted as a major premise that he was a mercenary soldier and had joined the service of the Company not for any patriotic motive but mainly, if not only, for its monetary and other practical

1. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627), H.L. p.76.

2. Wellington Despatches - Gurwood, Vol.II, p.1046.

3. J.S.Hodgson - Opinions on the Indian army, p.90.

4. Holmes - op.cit., p.57.

attractions. Since a Bengal sepoy, unlike the Madras and Bombay sepoys, left his family at his native village, he wanted regularly to remit a large part, even as high a proportion as three-fourths of his pay to his family for their maintenance. Indeed so strong was their sense of responsibility that "if he failed to do this he was a marked man in his regiment."¹ For this, if not for other reasons as well, the money earned by the Bengal sepoy assumed vital importance. From his monthly pay of only seven rupees in a cantonment, a Bengal infantry sepoy had to meet his personal expenses for food, stoppages for clothing, medical and other services. With his remittances to his family which assumed the importance of a sacred duty, he found himself in strained financial circumstances indeed. As Durgadas Bandopadhaya had observed, a Bengal infantry sepoy after paying all the dues for his food² and dress, at times received nothing in cash.³ It was no wonder, therefore, that he lived on the cheapest kind of food, chapatis and dal, to economise and thus remain in a position to remit money to his family. It had also been said that a Bengal sepoy at times starved so as to fulfil this social obligation.⁴ If such was the state of affairs in the cantonment, the Bengal infantry sepoy was no better off during a march. Though he received an additional sum of one rupee and eight annas per month during a march, he had to clear

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1. J.W.Kaye - A History of the Sepoy War in India, Vol.I, p.334
 2. The credit position of the Bengal sepoys was so hard that the grocer of the regimental bazaar refused to give any more food grains than that could be covered by his monthly receipts.
 3. Bandopadhaya - op.cit., p.68.
 4. Hodgson - op.cit., p.82.

his debts before setting off from cantonment,¹ pay for his food and also for the carriage of his baggage. Since the hire of the bullock-cart usually used for carrying baggage was about one rupee eight annas a day, the consequent expense to a sepoy, (the carriage being shared by about 30 or 40 sepoy) was about one rupee eight annas to two rupees per month.² The additional marching batta, therefore, did not relieve his financial condition in the least and he was, in fact, put to more strain. Further, in the latter part of the 18th century, the sepoy regiments were rarely ordered to change cantonments before three years, but afterwards from the early 19th century changes of station became so frequent as to be a real burden to the Bengal sepoy³ on account of the expense which they had to incur on carriage and hutting. Besides, the pay rates of the Bengal sepoy remained static throughout the period (despite an increase in the cost of living) whereas the wages of the husbandman and the labourer increased ~~more than 60%~~ ^{about 70%} between 1796 and 1852.⁴

Nor could the sepoy look to early promotion for relief. All promotion being regulated by seniority under the rules enacted in 1796, a sepoy could rarely receive his first promotion as Naik before completing 20 years of service as a sepoy. Thus there was hardly anything in the service to stimulate his ambition. It was no wonder therefore that a great majority of the

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1. Seetaram - op.cit., p.65 and Bandopadhaya - op.cit., p.64.
 2. Bengal Hurkaru 26 June 1845.
 3. P.P. 1852-53, XXXI, (627) H.L.p.73.
 4. Ap.-D.

sepoys sought to retire and enjoy a pension after completing the minimum period of service (i.e. 15 years). "Ambition and love of military glory is strong in the hearts of the Sepoys till long service renders them desirous of rest and when it comes they reflect on the bitter disappointment of their youthful ambition."¹ Although steps were taken by Bentinck's administration to grant the sepoy a nominal increase in pay after a certain period of service, this measure did not remove his disappointment over not securing promotion and the money and prestige that went with it.

Added to this disappointment, the Bengal sepoy also brooded increasingly over the security of his job, a feature which used to be considered as one of the greatest attractions of the Company's service. Lieutenant-General Sir William K. Grant said before the Select Committee of 1831: it had "ever been the system in India to recruit with a lavish hand, ... on every probability of hostilities; the occasion over, the force so raised and disciplined, [was] with as lavish a hand discharged,A policy so short-sighted as this, so composed of shifts and expedients, [could] never be calculated to impress our own subjects with respect....."² In 1847/ 48 Hardinge, by discharging a number of sepoy, reduced the strength of each native infantry regiment from one thousand to eight hundred men.³ Nor were these the only examples. Rather in their desire to economise, the Bengal Government resorted to the policy of

1. Napier - Defects Civil and Military ... p.256.

2. P.P. 1831-32, XIII; (735-v), H.C. Ap.B. 2541.

3. P.P. 1859, VIII (2541) H.C. p.155.

decreasing the internal strength of their native infantry regiments at every possible occasion.¹ Such retrenchment naturally caused a feeling of insecurity.² Moreover the policy adopted by the Bengal Government after 1825 - of raising irregular corps in which the sepoys were granted only temporary appointments - caused even greater uncertainty in their minds about their future prospects. The old Bengal sepoy was prone to compare the security of his job to that of the appointments offered to his son or relative in the irregular corps and drew his own conclusions about the deterioration in the Company's service.

The sepoy also had his grievances regarding the system of rewards instituted by the Company. It may well be questioned whether the grant of rewards was made on considerations of true bravery or on favouritism and the principle of rewarding the already honoured. Sir Henry Lawrence observed that "Sir Charles Napier was the first of our Generals who mentioned a native private soldier in his despatch."³ He further commented, "How rarely [had] the good example been followed ... Napier's and a very few other cases excepted," nobody remembered "ever seeing a native soldier 'in Orders', though we could narrate scores of instances of individual valour."⁴ Indeed, the Order of Merit, which was open to all ranks of the native army for "individual gallantry was worn by only a dozen or so in the entire army"

1. Lawrence - op.cit., pp.137-138.

2. It also happened that whole regiments were disbanded. In 1824-26 six regiments were raised and were ordered to be disbanded because the Court, on the grounds of economy, was unwilling to maintain them. See Chap. II, p. 186.

3. Lawrence - op.cit., p.193.

4. Ibid., p.193.

and Sir Henry "could not recollect ever seeing a golden one,"¹
[the first class of the Order].

Besides these causes of dissatisfaction, changes that were made in the nature of duties assigned to the sepoy's irritated them no less. A Bengal sepoy rarely grumbled at an onerous duty that might be allotted to him in time of war and put up with many privations. But on his return to the cantonment, instead of enjoying the rest to which he was eagerly looking forward he was again required to attend all the regular drills and to perform tiring and unattractive police duties like . escorting treasure or guarding prisoners, putting down robbers, arresting men by order of the Civil power and even occasionally mounting guards for civil servants.² These non-military assignments irked the sepoy's very much as they considered these tasks to be oppressive and not befitting them.

The peacetime discipline of the army was yet another cause of dissatisfaction, because so much attention was paid to pettifogging ceremonial and show. "Our system of discipline," said Captain Macan from his 23 years experience in the Bengal army, was "against the habits of the sepoy's,"³ and though as Macan said they did assimilate it, many officers noted the sullen antagonism of the sepoy's to the imposition of the rigid European system of discipline.⁴ Henry Russell, from his personal experience of the Bengal army, said in 1831 "with respect to

1. Lawrence - op.cit., p.193.

2. P.P. 1857, XXIX, (219), H.C. p.25.

3. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.156.

4. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.164.

the sepoys, much of that care which ought to have been bestowed on securing their attachment and improving their efficiency" had been "wasted in a frivolous vexatious attention to outward forms."¹ "The details of the army" Russell added "had ... fallen into the hands of a school who thought that everything depended on show, and that no sacrifice was too great for the attainment of outward smartness and uniformity. ... the disgust which such a system as this could not fail to excite is manifest. ... it was the fashion of the day to enforce everything with rigour, and the sepoys were already in a frame of mind ill suited to bear the trials they were exposed to. ... discontent and disaffection had been growing for a length of time ; by degrees the mine was charged, and any accidental spark was sufficient to inflame the mass."² John Jacob wrote in 1854, "the assimilation of everything to an European model, however absurd that model might be, had enabled the native army to accord in all outward appearances, ceremonies, and forms, to the European armies, but its real efficiency [had] been thereby destroyed."³

Thus the Bengal infantry sepoys, with miserable pay, long delayed promotions, tiring civil duties and hardly any incentive or opportunity to show their valour, were left to brood over their status. Brigadier Troup said in 1859 from his personal knowledge "it was not that the material was bad, it was first rate, it was the system that ruined it, as it would

1. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.162.

2. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. pp.161-162.

3. Jacob- op.cit., pp.128-129.

have ruined any other" A sepoy, "were he allowed ten rupees a month on enlisting, ' to cover everything in the shape of marching batta, etc., in fact to be the maximum of a soldier's pay in all situations, with the chances of promotion and good conduct pay, . . . would even gladly forego a service pension."¹ The comment relating to the foregoing of pension is difficult to believe, but from the discussion of the service conditions of the native infantry under Bengal establishment, it can be said that Brigadier Troup's other remarks were not far from the truth.

Indeed it had become a common theme amongst the sepoys to discuss the gradual deterioration of their service conditions and to this the hereditary character of the recruitment in the native infantry contributed in no small measure. "Often, indeed, in one household you might see the Past, Present and the Future of this coveted military service."² There was the old pensioner who talked about the glories of service under Coote, the sepoy on furlough from the military service with his story about 'Lick Sahib', (Lord Lake) and the young boy who looked forward to the day when he could step in his father's shoes.³ Experiences were exchanged and talked over and it was not to be wondered at that the past glory was sadly recounted and compared with the unfavourable state of affairs then existing. A question may arise as to why, if conditions in the Company's military service had deteriorated so much, the Company never failed to

1. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.155.

2. Kaye - The Sepoy War. p.255.

3. Ibid., p.255.

raise enough recruits whenever it so desired. The only plausible answer to this query is that however bad the service of the Company was, it was still the best in the field and the only one with some semblance of future prospects for men interested in martial activities.¹ It should be pointed out, however, that the élite of the Indian society, who in the fag end of the eighteenth century had eagerly sought to enter this service, gradually turned their attention to other fresh fields to show their ability. The Company's ranks thus came to be filled by the common peasantry of which there was an unlimited supply.²

Such then was the case with the sepoy. The native officers, who rose from the ranks, fared no better if not positively worse. Under the system of promotion by seniority the situations of native commissioned officers in the Bengal native infantry came to be regarded as a reward for past services and good conduct. To be promoted as a non-commissioned officer after serving as a sepoy for twenty-five years and to be appointed as a commissioned officer at the age of approximately fifty-five - such unfavourable terms of service made "the deserving native soldiers of all ranks suffer and they were often driven with disgust from the service."³ Moreover, the pay of a subadar, the highest rank that a sepoy could achieve in an infantry regiment, was only 67 rupees a month - against that of a freshly imported English subaltern at 180 rupees a month. The native officers, with years of service, resented this wide difference

1. J. Raj - British land Policy in Oudh 1856-68. p. 23. (Thesis submitted in London University for Ph.D. 1957).

2. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.156.

3. Lawrence - op.cit., p.190.

in earnings. The award of the superior title and rank of subadar-major which was introduced in the first quarter of the nineteenth century no doubt granted the recipients of this honour some additional allowance, but on the whole, honours and distinctions were so tardily bestowed that the native officers feeling that they had "that in them which elsewhere would raise them to distinction"¹ looked towards other avenues of employment or served slackly and without interest.

In addition to this tardiness of promotion and of awards of distinctions and honours, the different treatment meted out by the Government to the European and the native officer of the Bengal infantry became yet another sore point. Thus when an award of campaign medals was made in 1824 after the Burma war, separate 'Ava' medals were minted for the European and the native commissioned officers.² The native soldiers regarded this distinction as degrading and unjustified, Napier echoed their view when he observed that the sepoys were given "peculiar decorations indeed; but they were eager to share ours! And why not? They [had] shared the danger..... Equality between Native and European gentlemen [was] being ceded in the civil service; so it must be for the military."³

The native officers were also aggrieved over the gradual curtailment of their authority. This trend had been visible in the Bengal native army from 1786 onwards when "an European Subaltern was appointed to every company and the native officers

1. Lawrence -- op.cit., p.190.

2. F.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.128.

3. Napier - Defects ... pp.256-257.

collapsed into something little better than a name."¹ By increasing the number of European officers in native infantry regiments, both in the line and on the staff, and by codifying military regulations, the reforms of 1796 denuded the native officers of the remnants of the authority that had rested with them. "As soon as the English ventured to acknowledge to themselves the fact of their supremacy, the same self-assertion which led to the substitution of their own for native administration in Bengal, showed itself in their growing tendency to add to the number of their officers with each battalion, and to concentrate all real power in their hands."² From being leaders of their men, the native officers were reduced to playing the role of contact-men between the sepoy and the commanding officers of their regiments. Their main duties were the reporting to the commanding European officers the condition of the sepoy in the lines and cantonment, the conveying of any grievances or reactions of the sepoy to the officers, and the transmitting to the sepoy of the sentiments of the officers and the Government. They had virtually no effective authority and merely served as go-betweens, go-betweens who however distinguished in service were at the command of the juniormost European subaltern. This feeling was further aggravated when the native officers of the infantry compared themselves with their native civilian colleagues who received a much better

1. Kaye - The Sepoy War, Vol. I, p.211.

2. Holmes - op.cit., p.120.

deal. A Munsiff¹ and a Sadr Amin² was very much more favourably placed in respect of pay, promotion or authority. Indeed so acute was this feeling that, "a comparison [was] often drawn by native officers," between these civilian ranks and those of themselves, "at the station where their corps [might] happen to be located."³ The monthly pay of the native civil officers, in almost every district of Bengal, was on an average 250 rupees, with two or three on 400 or 500 rupees,⁴ whereas even with the grant of the subadar-majorship no native army officer could earn more than 92 rupees per month. Their complaints did not stop only at comparisons with the native civilians but also with the Europeans. If the sepoys won a country by the sword, they bitterly said, these cowardly civil Sirdars entered that country and ruled over it, and in a short time filled "their coffers with money ... but if a Sepoy [laboured] all his life, he is not five couries the better."⁵ Bentinck realised this disparity between native military and civil officers and requested the Court to place the two classes of service on an equal footing. He argued, "as advantages [had]

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1. Munsiff - In British India the title of a native civil judge of the lowest grade, established in 1793. Hobson-Jobson p. 581.
 2. Pay scale of Sadr Amīns and Munsiffs in Bengal per annum. :-
 Sadr Amīns - from £300 to £720
 Munsiffs - from £100 to £200
 (1 rupee = 2 shillings)
 P.P. 1852-53, XXXIII, (627-II), H.L. Ap.c.
 3. A General Officer - Memorandum re: our native army. p.4.
 4. Lawrence - op.cit., p.191.
 5. Kaye - The Sepoy War Vol. I. p.263.

been conceded in the civil department of administration, namely increase of rank, authority and emolument, [it appeared] indispensably necessary to the well being and contentment of the native troops to provide in their case some comparatively economical and acceptable substitute for those advantages."¹ The Court however seemed to be indifferent to this important suggestion and the service condition of the native army officers remained almost the same in 1852 as it had been in 1796.

It was often said that the native officers were dull and inefficient.² But as John Jacob pointed out in 1854 "the native officers of the Bengal army [had] been purposely made powerless for evil or for good." It was wrong to "blame these poor old gentlemen." The remedy was in the Government's own hands. "Make them really efficient, by promoting, not the oldest, but the most able and deserving men; ..."³ The failings of the native officers could to a large measure, be laid at the door of the defective system itself, rather than of the individuals.

The native officers of the Bengal infantry were made to feel their inferior status and they greatly resented the harsh and contemptuous behaviour of the European officers towards them. Indeed, the deterioration of relationships, which much increased during the period under review, overshadowed all

1. L. from Bengal 24 October 1838, para.5. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 43.
2. P.P. 1831-32, XIII, (735-v), H.C. p.38.
3. Jacob - op.cit., p.211.

other grievances and more than anything else caused the native officers to lose all interest in their profession. Instead of "the strong sense of comradeship between them, which atoned for the absence of other ties,"¹ "a wide chasm [separated] the European officer from his native comrades...."² The personal contact between the European officer and the native soldiers of his company had ceased with the passing of the 18th century and the officers knew very little of their men, or what was going on in the native lines. The contempt for and irritation with the native soldiers which was felt by the Europeans, was shown in a multitude of ways.³ Further, meetings between an European commanding officer and a native officer, which had once been informal, gradually became so formal and official that the native officers were expected to come and meet the regimental officer always in full dress uniform.⁴ Commanding officers had no feelings for their old and veteran native officers and to converse with native soldiers off parade and enquire about their welfare was beyond the imagination of most European officers. Subadars and Jamadars, whose military experience extended over 30 or 40 years might be "commanded, bullied and abused by a fair-faced beardless Ensign just arrived from England... but ignorant of military matters."⁵ The native officers, thus ill treated and abused by the European officers, often wondered if the "Sahib logue who now came to India [were] of different

1. Kaye - The Sepoy War Vol.I, p.257.

/g 2. Hod/son - op.cit., p.103.

3. H. Bevan - Soldier's life (1803-1838). p.89.

4. Napier - Defects p.254.

5. Ibid., p.256.

caste to those of former days."¹ Seetaram's comment indicates the frustration and resentment felt by the native soldiery over this rude and undignified behaviour.

Unlike their European colleagues, the native infantry soldiers of the Bengal establishment did not send any memorials or letters to the Government. But this should in no way lead to the conclusion that the Bengal infantry sepoy and native officers had no grievance or cause of complaint with the military service of the Company. The absence from the India Office records of such communications is perhaps to be attributed to the fact that it was a general practice among the native soldiers to send their complaints or grievances to the European commanding officers through their native officers. The representations seem to have stopped at that level. But their grievances might be voiced in the letters the sepoy wrote to their villages or to their comrades in other regiments. Henry Lawrence had rightly stated, "If the correspondence of Native soldiers was as patent to us as that of our European comrades we should better understand their feelings. Those who associated with them could testify [he said], to the disgust of the very best at their present position."² Statements by officers with two decades or more of service in the Indian army made before the Army Commission of 1859, show that many of them had been well aware of the disaffection and discontent that prevailed in the native infantry regiments.

1. Seetaram - op.cit., p.20.
2. Lawrence - op.cit., p.191.

John Jacob commenting on the Bengal army said, "all vital power, all good feeling, all personal attachment, all binding force of reason and moral sense had been eradicated from our native army. The outward appearance, the showy form, the mechanical discipline were greatly improved; but the ties which formerly [bound] the sepoy to his English officer were completely destroyed."¹ Brigadier Coke from his long experience of Bengal infantry (since 1827) expressed his opinion "it appeared that of late years there has, generally speaking, been a great want of sympathy between the European officers and his men, a great deal too much of the 'damned black nigger' style of speaking."² As H.B.E. Frere, the Civil Commissioner in Sind observed, "the native soldiers should be treated as men with feelings, passions and prejudices, capable of being developed and worked on for good or for evil not as mere machines or animals obeying some invariable instinct of caste or race."³

A variety of reasons had conspired, by 1852 to make the Company's military service steadily less attractive to sepoy, non-commissioned and commissioned native officers alike. Discontent was not often openly expressed, though as will be seen, a number of warnings had been given before 1852 of the widespread alienation from the service. But those warnings were not heeded, the superficial calm was blindly expected to continue, and it required the storm of 1857 to sweep across North India and

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1. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.92.
 2. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541) H.C., p.282.
 3. P.P. 1859, VIII, (2541), H.C. p.65.

through the whole Bengal native army before the importance, even the reality of the sepoy's grievances was grasped. Only after the whole fabric of the army organisation had been shaken were the first remedies applied, and the Augean stables given their much-to-be-desired, much postponed cleansing.

CHAPTER IV

THE MUTINIES (1796- 1852)

In preceding chapters the reorganisations that were carried out in the Bengal native infantry over the period from 1796 to 1852 and the effects of these measures on the European officers and the native soldiers have been discussed. During that period, the Bengal native infantry had often been required to help the Company in its expansion and more than once it had covered itself with glory. But side by side with the laurels the sepoys wore, were evident the marks of a deterioration in their morale and discipline. While earning plaudits for their military activities, the Bengal sepoys had caused alarm by giving vent to their discontent with the military service of the Company - a discontent at times expressed in an open defiance of authority. The purpose of this chapter is to recount occurrences of and the reasons for these variant outbreaks, and by an examination of the campaigns in which the sepoy armies took part to provide the background from which these outbreaks emerge.

It may be recalled that even before 1796 the loosely-joined collection of military units which constituted the East India Company's native army in Bengal had often proved rebellious. Thus, in 1764 closely following the European mutiny more than one native infantry battalions had

risen in protest over the reduction of prize money and batta and Major Hector Munro had had to crush this incident severely. Again, in 1782 and in 1795 several sepoy corps had stood in open defiance of authority over the question of their being transported to Madras by sea. Though the offending sepoy units were dismissed with ignominy, the Government failed in its attempt to persuade the Bengal sepoys to proceed by sea to the field of action. Thus, even before 1796 standing against authority and trying thus to win a point had not been an action unfamiliar to the Bengal sepoys. Indeed one of the reasons for the army reorganisation in 1796, - the year it might be said, when the Company's native army came of age - had been to improve the European Officer strength of each army unit and to inculcate a European discipline amongst the native soldiers. Thus from a handfull of untrained men employed in emergency the Bengal sepoy army gradually grew into a major force, equipped and disciplined in the European way and providing the greater portion of the British strength in Bengal.

The army reorganisation of 1796 allowed a Bengal establishment of 12 double battalion regiments of native infantry. Each of these battalions consisted of 800 sepoys divided into ten companies, giving a total army strength of 19,200 men. Though "the closing years of the eighteenth century were peaceful ones in Bengal, the rapidly increasing influence of the British and the responsibilities which it involved together with indications that yet another struggle was at hand in Southern India",¹ soon made the strength fixed in

1796 inadequate and further additions had to be made. In October 1797 the Governor-General ordered "that the native regiments now serving under this Presidency, be augmented each battalion one hundred privates."¹ Each Commanding Officer of a regiment was asked to employ one European officer on recruiting service. The recruiting officers were to raise new recruits at Fatehgarh, Cawnpore, Chunar, Dinapur, Gaya, Kishanganj, Berhampur, Midnapore, Chittagong and Dacca. But it was soon felt-- the presence of the Afghans under Zaman Shah in the Panjab in 1796 probably decided the issue - that an addition of 200 men per regiment was not enough for the purpose. Hence in November 1797 two new sepoy regiments (the 13th and 14th) were ordered to be raised at Benares, Dinapore and Buxar. To officer these new regiments every existing sepoy battalion was asked to furnish a proportion of Jamadars, Havildars, Naiks and Sepoys who were to be promoted to the next higher rank in the new regiments. Vacancies thus caused in the old battalions were to be filled by promotions within the respective battalions.

The European officers, detached on recruiting service, were allowed 100 sonaut rupees per month to answer all contingent expenses of every nature. These officers were also ordered "as soon as practicable to commence with the drill and formation of the recruits" and they were furnished "with a due proportion of native commissioned and non-commissioned officers

1. G.O.G.G. 12 October 1797. Grace Bengal Regulations 1799.
p.196.

under the orders of commanding officers of stations from the nearest corps."¹ The authorities expected that when it should be known throughout the country that new regiments were to be raised for the Company, men desiring to serve would report, in great numbers, to the Head Quarters of the different regiments.² In this, the Company proved to be correct, as it encountered hardly any difficulty, not only in finding additional sepoy for the old regiments but also recruits for the 13th and 14th, and within the year men for three more sepoy regiments (the 15th, 16th and 17th), for service against the enemy in Mysore. The recruits for the 15th were raised at Buxar, Sasaram and that neighbourhood³ while those of the 16th and 17th were recruited at Jaunpur, Gaya and Dinapur.⁴ As was the practice, a proportion of native officers and privates was also drafted from the old regiments to serve "as a foundation for the new regiments." The Commander-in-Chief laid down that "as much" would "depend upon their qualifications for bringing on the new raised men no native officers or sepoy [should] be sent who" would "not be useful or not trained soldiers and good duty men".⁵

Before the enlistment of these three (the 15th, 16th and 17th) double battalion regiments the Bengal sepoy had been called upon to volunteer for service in the Madras

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1. G.O.G.G. 14 November 1797. Grace Bengal Regulations 1799. p.199
 2. G.O.G.G. 14 November 1797. Ibid.
 3. G.O.C.C. 15 September 1798. Ibid.
 4. G.O.C.C. 30 November 1798. Ibid.
 5. G.O.C.C. 30 November 1798. Ibid.

Presidency against Tipu Sultan. About 3000 men were raised from whole sepoy army. A bounty of one month's pay and full batta was given to each man, and the Commander-in-Chief assured them that every possible attention would be paid to their comfort and convenience on board ship and that the greatest care would be taken in laying in their water and provisions under the inspection of their own representatives.¹ As a further inducement promotion was granted to a few of the Jamadars, ~~H~~avildars, ~~T~~naiks and ~~S~~epoys who offered their service for this expedition.

The Bengal Council in its minute of 29 October 1798 ordered these volunteers to sail for Madras under Major-General Popham. The 10th Bengal native infantry regiment, then stationed in the Nizam's dominion, was also ordered to march from Hyderabad.² The whole force assembled at Ambur for the invasion of Mysore under General George Harris. In this siege and capture of Seringapatam all the five battalions of Bengal sepoy (two from the 10th regiment and the three battalions of volunteers) were employed. After the treaty of Seringapatam of 1799 these Bengal sepoy forces helped Colonel Arthur Wellesley in reducing refractory chiefs in the country on the northern frontier of Mysore. The whole detachment returned by land to Bengal in May 1800. The soldiers were received with honours and at a special parade medals were awarded to the native commissioned and non-commissioned officers and

1. G.O.C.C. 31 August 1798. Grace Bengal regulations. 1799. p.230
 2. M.C. 29 October 1798. Ibid. p.220

to the privates of the three volunteer battalions.¹ It was also declared that the native soldiers would be allowed to enjoy dividends of Seringapatam prize money. But the actual amount was unknown to the soldiers in 1800 and the prize money was not issued till October 1808.²

The three volunteer battalions were formed into two sepoy regiments of the line - the 18th and 19th.

In North India, during these years nothing of much military importance happened. Zaman Shah did not advance beyond Lahore³ and with the threat of immediate danger removed, the Government busied themselves with their measure of economy. As an immediate step all recruitment to the Bengal native infantry regiments was stopped in February 1802

1. G.O.G.G. 19 June 1800. Carroll's Bengal Code, 1817. Sec. XLVI.

2. The shares eventually allowed to each rank of native infantry were as follows:

Subadar	- 6 shares	=	378 rupees
Jamadar	- 2 shares	=	126 rupees
Havildar	- 1 share	=	63 rupees
Naik and Sepoy) each $\frac{2}{3}$ share	=	42 rupees

The amount of each share was 18 pagodas, one pagoda being equal to $3\frac{1}{2}$ rupees.

G.O.G.G. 10 October 1808. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec. LIX.

3. Oxford p.554.

and five months later¹ every sepoy battalion of Bengal infantry regiments was reduced to a strength of 700 men,² - a reduction of 200 men per battalion.³

This reduction however was shortlived, for in the very next year the disturbed nature of the Company's relationship with the Maratha power and the possibility of a general war, caused the strength of each battalion to be raised to 900 privates again. Besides this, two additional regiments (the 20th and 21st) were added to the line of native infantry - recruited at Cawnpore, Gaya and Benares and officered by drafting from the existing regiments.⁴

The Maratha war began in 1803 and soon after two more regiments, the 22nd and 23rd, were raised at Fatehgarh and

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1. In February 1801 an expeditionary force was despatched by Lord Wellesley to Egypt to co-operate with the British army there under Sir Ralph Abercromby to fight against the French. A battalion of native infantry volunteers was furnished by the Bengal sepoys for this force. The event was specially remarkable as being the first instance of Indian troops being employed out of Asia. Alexandria, the last stronghold of the French in Egypt, had already capitulated before the arrival of the Indian troops who did not see any actual fighting but during their stay in Egypt "the smartness and high state of discipline of the Indian contingent excited general admiration and astonishment." The troops returned to India in July 1802. Medals were promised to all ranks employed on the expedition and were actually awarded by G.O.C.C. 13 May 1811 for their long and toilsome march through the desert from Kosseir to Keneh in May and June 1801. It was after the return of these volunteers that the strength of the native battalions was reduced.
 2. G.O.C.C. 8 July 1802. Carroll's Bengal Code, 1817, Sec. XLI.
 3. By G.O.C.C. 12 October 1797, sepoy battalions consisted of 900 sepoys but the two new regiments the 18th and 19th had only 750 privates in each.
 4. G.O.C.C. 13 July 1803. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec. XLI.

Cawnpore.¹ "The two main theatres of the war were to be the Deccan under Colonel Arthur Wellesley and Hindustan under General Lake."² But subsidiary campaigns were also planned in Bundelkhand and Orissa, in order to secure the southern frontier of Hindustan and the districts lying between the boundaries of Bengal and Madras.³ Bengal sepoy regiments joined in all these campaigns against the enemies of the Company. The operations were speedily successful. The victories of Assaye in September 1803 over the Raja of Berar and of Laswari in November 1803 over Sindhia forced both of them to sign treaties with the English. But then, when the campaign had seemed at an end the invasion of Rajputana by Jaswant Rao Holkar of Indore caused the Maratha war to continue. In 1804 Lord Lake and Colonel Monson marched against Holkar and on 16 May captured Rampur, 60 miles south of Jaipur.

Because of the intense heat Lord Lake, leaving Monson with his detachment to guard the Jaipur frontier, returned with his troops to Agra. Monson, however, refused to accept a passive defensive role, and he followed Holkar reaching Kotah in June 1804. Still following up the success Monson next month captured the fort of Hinglasgarh. Then Holkar, with his whole army, turned, and advanced upon Monson. Monson's long pursuit, inadequately supported, had been a blunder. Now, with the rains upon him, the country flooded to an extent that rendered all movements difficult and precarious, and with

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1. G.O.C.C. 30 September 1803. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec. XLI.
 2. Roberts - op.cit., p.256.
 3. C.H.I. Vol. V, p374.

supplies hard to come by Monson and his small force had to face the whole strength of Holkar. He decided to retreat and "after a march of great difficulty and suffering, which was increased by the harassing attacks of Maratha force and of the hill people and banditti of the country, the detachment arrived at Rampur on the 27th of July."¹ Here Monson was joined by a detachment under the command of M'Culloch. The country was destitute of provisions and Holkar was advancing in considerable force. Accordingly, Monson decided to leave some of the troops behind at Rampur and to march again with the bulk of his force towards Agra. "But the last days of the disastrous retreat proved even more trying than the earlier portion, for the attacks of the enemy became more vigorous and incessant and food became daily more scarce."² Yet with all these harassments throughout the retreat the sepoy's remained remarkably steady. On 31 August 1804 straggling remnants of the ill-fated force reached Agra. Major Thorn reported that the sepoy's of "Colonel Monson's unfortunate division . . . had lost nothing of their discipline and gallantry; and though a partial disaffection existed, which caused this desertion of some companies it did not appear to have been very extensive."³ Immediately after Monson's arrival Lord Lake marched from Cawnpore with all the force available at that station and after reaching Sikandra he was

1. Cardew, op.cit., p.91.

2. W. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India---p. 365

3. Ibid., p. 369

joined by the troops at Agra and Mathura. The troops under him thus consisted of ten sepoy battalions with other artillery and cavalry forces. At the same time to weather the crisis the Bengal Government ordered the raising of four additional regiments (the 24th, 25th¹ 26th and 27th²) at Cawnpore and Fatehgarh, principally from levies³ which had been organised at these places.

Monson's retreat encouraged the Company's enemies. Sindhia showed a disposition to fight again and the Jat Raja of Bharatpur who had signed a treaty with the English in September 1803 joined with Holkar in an attempt on Delhi. Lord Ochterlony, however, repulsed this attack. In November 1804 Holkar's armies were defeated - one at Deeg and another at Farrukhabad-by Lord Lake. Four successive assaults were launched on Bharatpur," all of which were beaten back", and Lake, "was driven to make a peace with the Raja of Bharatpur in April 1805",⁴ leaving him in possession of the fortress.

During this period Colonel Burn had been employed in the districts to the north of Delhi against the Sikhs. After several skirmishes the British detachment defeated them on 23 November 1804. In the next year Holkar being driven from

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1. G.O.C.C. 24 September 1804. Carroll's/Code 1817.Sec.XLI./Bengal
 2. G.O.C.C. 26 October 1804. Ibid.
 3. These were irregular levies. "The raising of Irregular forces was a common recruiting expedient. They served temporary purposes, were cheaper, easily disbanded after the purpose was served. --- The Irregular system was a great relief. to Indian finance, as the great levies which the nature of Indian warfare demanded in those times could be quickly reduced when peace returned."
M. Ruthnaswamy - Some influences that made the British Administrative system in India. p. 179.
 4. Roberts, op.cit., p.261.

Farrukhabad entered the Panjab hoping to induce the Sikh to join him against the English. But Lake chased him to the banks of the Beas where he finally surrendered.

In all these campaigns Bengal sepoy took part and they earned praise from almost all the army leaders. The Duke of Wellington described their achievement in the storming of Aligarh (4 September 1803) as "one of the most extraordinary feats" he had heard of in India."¹ Colonel Burn wrote from Shamli to Colonel Gerard on the 3 November 1804, "notwithstanding the sepoy were almost destitute of everything, too much credit" could "not be allowed them for the patience with which they supported it for four days."² Lake wrote to Wellesley from Ketowlie on 7 November 1804, expressing his confidence that "every instance of the good conduct firmness and steady attachment of our native troops" would "afford your Lordship sincere pleasure ...".³ It would appear that the measures adopted by the Company to inculcate discipline, when coupled with the leadership of the Duke of Wellington and General Lake yielded considerable profit.

Prize money and medals were promised to the troops employed at Aligarh, Delhi, Laswari and Deeg.⁴

The prospect of peace was immediately followed by extensive reductions and retrenchment in the army. The Directors were opposed to any extension of their Indian empire, the more

1. Cardew, op.cit., P.82.

2. P.P.1806, XVI, (257), H.C. Ap.D.

3. Ibid.,

4. G.O.G.G. 30 January 1806. Carroll's / Code 1817. Sec. LIX. | Bengal.

so as "the Indian debt had increased by almost £20,000,000 - a rate of increase which frightened the home government."¹ Naturally the axe fell on the strength of the army. Each sepoy infantry battalion was reduced from 900 to 800 privates.²

It is easy to understand the attitude of the Company. In the opinion of the authorities "England's conquests were becoming too large for profitable management."³ Monson's disaster and Lake's failure before Bharatpur had broken the spell woven by Wellesley's continuous series of successes and had given new point to the alarm felt by the Directors at the scale of his activities. As a necessary preliminary to a change of policy, they determined to reduce the army, to recall the Governor-General and to entrust the task of making peace with the various Indian powers to Lord Cornwallis.

Cornwallis, however, could effect little, for he died in October 1805 within three months of his arrival in India. He was succeeded by Sir George Barlow, the senior member of the Council, during whose administration the treaty with Holkar was concluded.

In 1807 Lord Minto assumed the post of Governor-General in India. The Bengal sepoy regiments, since January 1806, had

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1. It was only in 1829 - 25 years after these wars - that the prize money was actually distributed to the survivors of those who had taken part in these actions. The respective regiments were allowed in 1829 (G.O.G.G. 30 November 1829) to bear Aligarh, Delhi, Laswari and Deeg on their colours. Medals for these wars were granted in 1851 (G.O.G.G. 14 April 1851) - 47 years after the battle of Deeg.
 2. G.O.C.C. 16 January 1806. Carroll's Bengal Code. Sec.XLI.
 3. C.H.I. Vol.V, p.375.

been kept at a minimum strength - that is 27 double battalion regiments with 800 men in each battalion. But the demands upon the weakened regiments, curtailed in strength, was very great for the Maratha wars of 1803 - '05 had added much territory to the British possessions. Along the Jumna and Ganges much Maratha territory had been acquired. (This did make communications easier - possession of Delhi, Agra and Kalpi secured the free navigation of the Jumna). Then in the east the greater part of the province of Bundelkhand, and Cuttack in Orissa had been acquired, and in the west much valuable territory in Gujarat.

All these far-flung new territories,¹ most of which were added to the Bengal Presidency required garrisons - to be supplied by the reduced number of weak Bengal sepoy regiments. In addition to these garrison duties the Bengal native infantry were also employed in reducing forts in Bundelkhand and various refractory zamindars in Oudh. Moreover in 1808 Ranjot Singh, the Sikh Chief who had used the death of Zaman Shah to build up his own power over most of the Panjab, crossed the Sutlej and attacked Sikh chiefs who were under British protection. Early in 1809 a British force (including three Bengal sepoy regiments) was ordered to assemble in the vicinity of Ludhiana. The threat was sufficient to induce Ranjit Singh to conclude a treaty by which he acknowledged the Sutlej as boundary to his ambition, and in May 1809 the force

1. From Dacca to the Sutlej Bengal troops were deployed over nearly 1200 miles of the Ganges valley.

returned to cantonments. In 1810 a similar demonstration of strength, mainly provided by Madras forces, but aided by five Bengal native regiments,¹ put a stop to the attacks on the Raja of Berar by Amir Khan.

In January 1809, on account of such increasing demand, an increase of ten sepoy per company had been ordered.² It was well that their relief was granted, for a series of expeditions outside India now began, for all of which Bengal forces were used.

In 1808 volunteers had been furnished by the Bengal native infantry soldiers for an expedition to the Portuguese island of Macao, "the object of which was to occupy that place in order to prevent its falling into the hands of the French."³ In August 1810, two volunteer battalions of Bengal sepoy were despatched with an expedition against the Ile de France or Mauritius. Further in December 1810, five more volunteer battalions of Bengal sepoy infantry were raised, this time for service in Java.⁴

1. M.C. 18 January 1810. Carroll's Bengal Code, 1817. Sec.XLI.

2. G.O.C.C. 8 January 1809. Ibid.

3. Cardew - op.cit., p. 105.

4. By 1810 France and Russia were at war again and the Indian Government turned its attention from defensive diplomacy to offensive warfare. Expeditions were undertaken, not only against French possessions in the East, but also against those of other nations forced into unwilling alliance with Napoleon. When Portugal seemed likely to pass under French control, Goa was occupied, and in 1809 Macao, a Portuguese station in China, was seized. France still held the Ile de France and the Ile de Bourbon in the southern Indian ocean and controlled the Dutch East Indies through her supremacy in Holland. The French frigates and privateers that made their headquarters at the Isles de France and Bourbon inflicted damage on British shipping. In 1811 an expedition under Sir Samuel Auchmuty, with which Minto himself sailed, wrested Java from the French - controlled Dutch Government after severe fighting. Oxford, pp. 560 - 561.

It is surprising that so many volunteers for all these overseas expeditions were available from the Bengal sepoy to whom a sea voyage was a social and religious degradation. Special arrangements were made for their food and water on board ship, arrangements which were inspected by the volunteers themselves, and presumably found satisfactory. The award of the bounty money - one months pay and full batta which was granted to each man before embarkation in all these expeditions also seems to have encouraged these volunteers. Moreover, these battalions were officered by drafts from existing regiments and a number of Jamadars, Havildars, Naiks and Sepoys were promoted to the next higher rank. The Government always promised that as far as possible these volunteers would not be separated from their own officers and that they would return to India soon after the fighting.¹ Even so the discomforts of the sea voyage, and the danger and difficulties of such distant expeditions might have been expected to discourage volunteers.

Politically all these campaigns were successful and within India itself there was no actual conflict from 1805 until 1813, when Minto sailed for England. But by the latter

1. In this respect the Government broke its faith with the Java volunteers and a mutiny was the consequence. In September 1811 on the surrender of Java the Bengal troops with the exception of three volunteer battalions returned to India. These volunteers remained in Java till October 1815 when they became discontented and broke into open mutiny. 18 sepoy were tried by Court martial for having conspired with other volunteers at Djocjocarta, and were found guilty and sentenced to death. W. Hough - India as it ought to be. - p. 88.

date it was becoming clear that action to check the encroachments of the Gurkhas, the outrages of the Pindaris and the aggression of the Burmese could not be long delayed.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the Gurkhas in Nepal had been pressing hard on the ill-defined frontiers of Bengal and Oudh. In 1814 they seized some districts in the southern lowlands claimed by the East India Company and hostilities began in November 1814. No new regiments were added to the sepoy establishment though the strength of each regiment was augmented again from 800 to 900. New recruits were ordered to be raised in the Dinapore, Buxar, Benares districts, and at Allahabad, Cawnpore and Fatehgarh.¹ Further, in the middle of the campaign local auxiliary troops² were raised.³ The total forces employed in the Gurkha wars consisted of 42,000 men (including 12 native infantry regiments in four divisions) who were assembled under Ochterlony. Major-Generals Morley and Wood advanced upon the Gurkha capital, Katmandu, from Patna and Gorakhpur, while Major-Generals Gillespie and Ochterlony started from Saharanpur and Ludhiana respectively. They expected an easy and speedy victory. But the forces employed, like their commanders, had no past experience of fighting in hill country.⁴ There were no good roads and the difficulties of transport were exceptionally great. Hence, the first campaign of 1814-15 came perilously near to

1. G.O.C.C. 31 December 1814. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817 .
Sec. XLI.

2. Two Nasserri and one Sirmur and one Kumaon battalion were raised in Sabathu, Nahan and Kumaon.

3. G.O.C.C. 24 August 1815, Carroll's Bengal Code 1817. Sec. XLI

4. C.H.I., Vol. V, p. 378.

being a failure. Fortunately after Morley, Wood and Martindale had failed Ochterlony succeeded in inflicting a severe defeat upon the Gurkhas at Makwanpur on 28 February 1816. The English army advanced to within easy reach of the Gurkha capital. Hostilities were immediately suspended and the treaty of Sagauli was signed in March 1816.

The conclusion of the Nepal campaign gave the authorities an opportunity of lightening the strain on their reduced exchequer. Thus following the practice of previous years the men who had been recruited and disciplined with a lavish hand and at an immense expense were immediately discharged after the treaty of Sagauli - and the Bengal sepoy regiments were once again reduced to 1600 privates only.¹

But the reduction of the army strength, on the termination of the Nepal war, was premature. The authorities seemed to have ignored the fact that "the Pindarees, consisting of lawless persons of all castes and classes" had already² "developed into a formidable menace to the whole of India."³ Moreover behind the Pindari question loomed the Maratha question. With the murder of Gangadhar Sastri, the minister of the Gaekwar at Poona in July 1815, the conflict between the Peshwar and the Gaekwar became bitter. Besides this, the Peshwa Baji Rao was engaged in laying plans for a general Maratha combination against the British.

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1. G.O.C.C. 10 April 1816. Carroll's/Code 1817. Sec. XLI. /Bengal
 2. In 1812 they had raided the Company's territory at Mirzapore and the southern districts at Bihar. In 1815 and 1816 they attacked the Northern Sarkars, plundering, torturing and killing the inhabitants, while Amir Khan and his Pathan followers over-ran Berer. Roberts - op.cit., p. 283
 3. C.H.I. Vol. V, p.377

Such was the situation in September 1816 when the Board in England reluctantly allowed Lord Hastings to "plan a comprehensive drive for the cold weather of 1817-'18,"¹ designed to exterminate the Pindaris."²

Confronted by the Pindari menace, the hostile intrigues of the Peshwa and dangerous unrest among the other Maratha chiefs, Lord Hastings thought it better to deal with his problems piecemeal. He therefore concluded subsidiary treaties with the Maratha³ and Rajput⁴ chiefs and with Amir Khan.⁵ Lord Hastings then proceeded to attack the whole Pindari group. The plan was to surround the Pindaris in Malwa by a large army consisting of a northern force of four divisions and a Deccan army of five divisions. Local troops were also raised and^{as} with all the previous wars, the strength of each sepoy regiment in Bengal was immediately increased from 1600 to 1800 privates.⁶ In November 1817, 100,000 men including 15 sepoy regiments marched against the Pindaris. By the close of 1817 the Pindaris had been driven across the river Chambal and by January 1818, they had been dispersed for ever.⁷

The Maratha problem alone remained to be solved. Already the Peshwa on 5 November 1817, and the Holkar or rather his

1. Oxford, p. 568

2. Philips, The East India----- p.217.

3. Treaties were signed with Bhonsle (May 1816), the Peshwa (June 1817), and Sindhia (November 1817).

4. Treaties were concluded with Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bhopal, Kotah, Bundi and 13 other Rajput states.

5. Amir Khan was granted the principality of Tonk as the price of neutrality.

6. G.O.C.C. 18 July 1811. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817. Sec.XLI

7. Oxford, p571.

his government (because he was a minor) in December 1817 had risen against the English. However Elphinstone, the Resident at Poona had beaten off the Peshwa at Kirkee and the Peshwa had fled southwards from Patna. British forces had followed him and eventually on 18 June, 1818, the Peshwa Baji Rao had surrendered to the British. The commanders of Holkar's army, being defeated at Mahidpur on 21 December 1817, had signed a treaty on 6 January, 1818. When, therefore Appa Sahib, the regent for the Young Bhonsla raja in his turn was defeated, first at Sitabaldi¹ (27 November 1818) and again at Nagpore (16 December 1818) and when in March 1819 Asirgarh (the commander of which fort had afforded help to Appa Sahib) fell,² the Maratha bid for power and freedom was plainly at an end.

Thus, by 1819 the Company had successfully disposed of two great enemies, the Pindaris and the Marathas, and had succeeded in establishing its hegemony in the northern India up to the Sutlej.

These years had not seen any major change in the Bengal sepoy infantry regiments except for the addition of three new regiments, to the line - the 28th, 29th and 30th, raised at Cawnpore, Fatehgarh, Benares, Dinapore and Buxar. This addition was unusual. Hitherto the Government had always raised new regiments and increased the strength of each sepoy battalion at the beginning of a war but as soon as the war was over had disbanded the new regiments and reduced the old

1. Oxford, p. 571.

2. C.H.I. Vol. V, pp. 380-381.

battalions to a minimum strength. But in 1819 at the close of Lord Hasting's campaigns the strength of the battalions not only remained unaltered but also these three new regiments were added to the sepoy establishment. The expansion was required by the immense acquisition of territory after the Nepal and Maratha wars, which made the extremities of the Company's territory, and especially those of the Bengal Presidency so distant that very often "armies were required to cover districts double the size of those originally intended for them."¹ Moreover, in addition to the ordinary duty of maintaining peace the native forces, from 1814 onwards, were often required to do what were really police duties. These were the reasons which led to the retention at full strength of all the old military forces. What is more, not only were three regiments added in 1819 but a further four new regiments were raised in 1823 at Cawnpore, Dinapore, Mainpuri, Mathura and Benares.²

Thus, in August 1823 when Lord Amherst took office at Calcutta the Bengal army had 34 double battalion sepoy regiments in its establishment. In thirty years the Bengal sepoy forces had all but trebled in strength.

Lord Amherst had been told by the Directors that there was now no occasion for further wars and that a period of peace was expected. But no sooner had he arrived in India than

1. Badenach - op.cit., p.6.

2. G.O.C.C. 28 June 1823. Bengal Mily. Cons. 28 June 1823. No.38.

a fresh war cloud rolled up from Burma. But before proceeding to consider the cause of the Burmese War it is necessary to mention certain important changes which were made in 1824 in the organisation of the Company's army in India.

In 1824 the existing system of double-battalion regiment was abandoned in favour of single battalion regiments. Between the army organisation of 1796 and that of 1824 the Bengal native infantry establishment had grown enormously. A force of 12 double-battalion regiments in 1796 and of 34 in 1823 now became one of 68 single regiments.¹ This change was introduced mainly to improve the promotion prospects of the European officers attached to the native regiments under the Company. This was necessary because an army career had begun to seem less attractive to officers at the very moment when many military officers already serving the Company were being attracted to non-military pursuits. The Bengal army in the 1820's experienced all the outside pulls which the Bombay army was to feel in the 1830's. The new commitments of the army were not merely military. The administration and development of the vast accretions of territory were mostly undertaken by the army officers. "In the newly acquired territories there were roads and bridges to be built, surveys to be made, land revenue to be settled, and districts to be administered."² Hence, all the qualified army officers were tempted

1. G.O.G.G. 6 May 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 May 1824. No. 28.

2. H.T.Lambrick - John Jacob of Jacobabad, p.13.

to look outside the regular service for emoluments and reputation.

While the changes of 1824 were introduced to improve the position of the European officers, the authorities obviously did not give much thought to the state of the native soldiers. It was left to the sepoys of the Bengal army to show that they were not satisfied with their service condition.

When Amherst arrived it might have seemed "to those who desired peace and the maintenance of equilibrium that a period of quiescence had arrived,"¹ but appearances were misleading. By 1822, the British possessions in Bengal had everywhere made contact along their ill-defined north-eastern frontier with the Burmese, and the Burmese, ignorant of the Company's strength were in an expansionist mood. The immediate cause of rupture was an attack made by the Burmese on the small island of Shahpuri off the Arakan coast, which was occupied by a detachment of Bengal troops, but Burmese threats to Assam, Cachar and Manipur were also felt. War was immediately declared, and as the swamps and jungles of Manipur and Arakan were considered too difficult to allow a successful attack on that side, the Bengal Government decided to send an expedition to Rangoon by sea.

Since the aversion of the general mass of Bengal sepoys to crossing the sea was well known only a small detachment of volunteers was sent from the Bengal sepoy regiments and the Madras Presidency. The expedition reached Rangoon in

1. Roberts - op.cit., p292.

May 1824 under the command of Sir Archibald Campbell to find the town entirely deserted. This was a great blow. The boats for an advance up the river Irrawaddy were unprocurable, and supplies failed. As the authorities expected to find abundant supplies of meat and vegetables at Rangoon the expedition had been sent out with little more food than was sufficient for the voyage. But nothing was obtained at Rangoon and the soldiers suffered from want of supplies. Their privations increased with the onset of the monsoon and they suffered greatly in health. Large numbers of soldiers, both Europeans and native, perished from fever, dysentery and other diseases incidental to the climate and locality.¹ The loss of life in the few engagements with the Burmese forces was not great - it was "the want of the simplest articles of diet", the sickness, the effects of leechbites, which for want of medical stores, developed into hideous ulcers and were arrested only by amputation, which kept the rate of mortality high.² But still the British force did not fall to pieces. In August 1824 Tennasserim was reduced and Campbell waited anxiously for October when the rains should come to an end, so that he could attack Lower Burma.

Meanwhile, another disaster was being experienced by the British on the south-eastern frontier of the Bengal Presidency. A force of about 1100 native soldiers (500 from the regular infantry line and 600 irregular levies) under Captain Norton had assembled at Ramu, 90 miles to the north-west of

1. J.J. Snodgrass - Narrative of the Burmese War p.88.
2. Fortescue - op.cit., Vol.XI, p.292.

Arakan. On 17 May the irregulars abandoned their defence, the position of the Bengal sepoy detachment became untenable. Norton began to retreat while the Burmese pressed him hard. About 250 sepoys were either killed or taken prisoners and of nine European officers only three including two who were wounded made their escape.¹

The news of the disaster at Ramu as well as that of the detention and high rate of mortality of the detachment at Rangoon caused wild panic at Calcutta. "The very name of Burmhan spread dread and terror among the native population. The peasants on the frontier fled in dismay from their villages; ... and the native merchants of Calcutta were with difficulty persuaded to refrain from removing their families and property from under the very guns of Fort William."²

All this disturbing news from the theatres of war naturally led to serious concern amongst the army authorities and it was decided to rush up reinforcements. Since Madras had already supplied the bulk of the expeditionary force employed in this war the Supreme Government decided the Bengal sepoy army ought to be called upon to furnish these further troops.

The choice fell on the 26th, 47th and the 62nd sepoy regiments of Bengal army which were then camped near Mathura. These troops were ordered to march to Barrackpore near Calcutta from where they were to march again for Rangoon one after the other at an interval of a few days.

The three regiments reached Barrackpore in July 1824.

1. Cardew - op.cit., p.148.
2. Snodgrass - op.cit., p.74.

Many had deserted during the march from Mathura and as far as possible new recruits were enrolled in these vacant places. The regiments also suffered for want of food en route - though the Collectors and the Magistrates had been informed betimes, supplies of the most common articles of food had been found wanting.¹

After reaching Barrackpore Lieutenant-Colonel Cartwright, the commanding officer of the 47th regiment was told by Major-General Dalzell - the Commander of the Presidency Division - that though the 26th regiment had originally been scheduled to march first, the programme had been changed because a company of the 26th was absent at Midnapore. Hence, it had been decided that the 47th regiment should lead the way starting on 28 October. As the regiment was to proceed by land to Chittagong, Cartwright requested the local Magistrate to procure 120 bullocks as carriage cattle for the use of his men and received the reply that the cattle would be secured later i.e., by the end of October 1824.² In September Cartwright again tried to draw the attention of the Magistrate to this point, but on this occasion, he replied that it was impossible to hire bullocks and that it would be better to purchase them.³ The Commissary-General also supported the view of the

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1. Bolton before enquiry committee Barrackpore, 17 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18.
 2. Cartwright before enquiry committee, Barrackpore 15 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18.
 3. Letter from the Magistrate 13 October 1824. Produced before enquiry committee. Barrackpore 15 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18.

Magistrate. The Adjutant-General of the army, being informed of this matter wanted to know from other Regimental officers what measures they had taken for obtaining carriage cattle for their respective units.¹ It appeared that no other Regimental officer had given any thought to the question. Meanwhile, Sir Edward Paget, the Commander-in-Chief had been informed of the difficulty of hiring carriage cattle and of the suggestion of the Magistrate. In his reply Sir Edward advised the Commanding Officers to remember, "that the efficiency of the army would be destroyed were the troops taught to depend on the commissariat for the carriage of their private baggage" but at the same time he admitted that "the only alternative left" was "to purchase bullocks as recommended by the Commissary-General". The Commander-in-Chief went on to advert to the liberal pay of the troops and his confident reliance on the zealous exertions of the officers and to express the hope that the necessary purchases could be made without imposing too heavy a burden on the soldiers or any delay upon the expedition. Much would depend upon proper steps being taken to prevent the men taking with them anything beyond what was actually necessary.²

On 25 October Lieutenant-Colonel Cartwright, through the Subadar-Major of the regiment informed his men of the order of the Commander-in-Chief. The sepoys in a body refused

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1. Cartwright before enquiry committee. Barrackpore 15 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18.
 2. Quarter Master Genl. to Dalzell. Calcutta 23 October 1824. No.861. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18.

to purchase the cattle. Cartwright tried to persuade them to do so, "for which they had ample time", but "finding the men determined not to purchase the bullocks and considering the importance of the service on which the regiment was ordered," he told them that he would try to induce the Government to purchase 100 bullocks for the sepoy's sole use. The non-commissioned officers and drummers were at the same time informed that they should not expect the use of any of these bullocks as their pay was "fully sufficient to enable them to supply themselves" though Cartwright, "was willing to make them any advance of cash out of his own private funds for this purpose"¹. After all these explanations the Lieutenant-Colonel dismissed the parade of the day.

Next day (26 October) Cartwright wrote to the Commissary-General and requested him to purchase 100 bullocks and to hire a sufficient number of drivers, saying that he himself would be responsible for the payment.²

On the next afternoon (27 October) Cartwright "having urgent business at Calcutta", left Barrackpore. But before starting for Calcutta he informed his sepoy's through the regimental Havildar that ten bullocks per company would be made available for them. He also advanced 300 rupees to the ~~no~~ non-commissioned officers and drummers of the regiment according to his promise of 25 October.

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1. Cartwright before enquiry committee. Barrackpore 16 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18
 2. Cartwright to Commissary General. Barrackpore 26 October 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18

Just a few moments before his departure for Calcutta Captain Bolton, the officer commanding the second Grenadier company of the 47th regiment reported to Cartwright that his company had behaved in an improper and insubordinate manner. Cartwright, asking him to write to him at Calcutta, advised him to appeal to the good sense of the sepoys.¹

At Calcutta the Lieutenant-Colonel came to know that the Commissary-General had been partially successful in his attempt to purchase the bullocks and that "he hoped to succeed to the full extent". Next morning (28 October) a letter arrived from Barrackpore informing Cartwright that the second Grenadier company of the 47th regiment, without any order, had assembled at the bell of arms and had requested the Subadar-Major and the Havildar of the regiment to inform the Commanding-Officer of the company that "it would be impossible for them to march with their things".² The sepoys further stated that during their journey they would not undertake even a short passage by boat: rather they would halt in their march and proceed no further.

This letter came with a covering letter from Captain Winfield, the Adjutant of the 47th regiment, who also incidentally conveyed the news that the men of the 62nd native infantry regiment had "refused to purchase the bullocks."³

On the same afternoon another letter reached Cartwright

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1. Cartwright before enquiry committee, Barrackpore 16 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18
 2. Bolton to Cartwright, Barrackpore, 27 October 1824. Bengal Mily Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18
 3. Winfield to Cartwright Barrackpore 27 October 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18

informing him that Bolton himself had appealed to his company, expecting his appeal to reconcile the sepoys to the arrangement. But to his utter surprise when he had ordered those sepoys who still refused to obey to step out in front, the entire company had stepped out to show their resolutions of purpose.¹

Next morning (29 October) Cartwright met the Adjutant-General, who, on learning about the conduct of the 47th regiment, thought it proper to inform Paget. Meanwhile he advanced 4,000 rupees to Cartwright for the purchase of bullocks.

On his return to Barrackpore on the afternoon of 29 October Cartwright was informed by the Subadar Major and the Havildar of his regiment that since his departure for Calcutta nightly meetings had been held among the sepoys of the 26th, 47th and the 62nd regiments.

On the following day (30 October) Cartwright attended parade to inform the regiment that 100 bullocks would arrive next day from Calcutta and that the regiment was to march on the day after that.² On the morning of 31 October the Subadar-Major came to Cartwright, and told him about meetings of the sepoys of the three regiments, and also of the great disaffection which prevailed among the native soldiers. He ascribed the causes of this discontent to the insufficient number and weak health of the bullocks, the poor pay, the order of march

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1. Bolton to Cartwright Barrackpore, 28 October 1824. Bengal Mily.Cons. 6 January 1825, No.18.
 2. Cartwright knew before that his regiment was to march on 1 November but strangely enough he did not inform the sepoys of this before 30 October.

on 1 November and the rumours which prevailed that the troops would be put on board ship and sent by sea to Rangoon.

Cartwright asked him to explain to the sepoy that they had no right to disbelieve the Government about their destination and that he "neither expected nor would hear any further complaints respecting carriage". He also asked the Adjutant to call to his quarters such sepoy as had any grievance and he himself went there to listen to them. The sepoy who came to state their grievances repeated the points made by the Subadar-Major. Besides this, it was also evident that "none of the whole regiment was inclined to join the first batch." It seems that Cartwright, though he listened to what they had to say to the Adjutant, did not himself speak to the sepoy and after hearing from the Adjutant he advanced four rupees to each native soldier and paid the balance of their pay for September.

In spite of these attempts to still their fears, another remonstrance was staged by the 47th on the morning of 31 October. The sepoy were specifically ordered to bring their knapsacks to the parade. But they came without them. Being asked to explain their conduct they stated that their knapsacks were not in a condition to be produced - and that most of them had given them in for repairing. Cartwright informed them that new knapsacks were on the way and repeated the order to the sepoy to bring their old knapsacks. But the sepoy persisted in their refusal. All efforts made to win over the sepoy proved futile. They started complaining that though

stoppages had been made from their pay a long time ago, they had not so far received the new knapsacks. They also reiterated that they were not willing to embark for Rangoon or anywhere else. The explanation of Cartwright that the Government had neither passed nor contemplated any such order and his attempt to remind them of the liberality of the Government in sanctioning a cash advance of 4,000 rupees, for the purchase of bullocks did not pacify the sepoys. They then claimed double batta like the Syces and Drummers who had been granted increased allowances, arguing that the provisions were very expensive on the Burma front. Cartwright, in reply assured the sepoys that "on no account would they have to pay more than a rupee for 15 seers of rice." But all these assurances proved to be of no avail and the sepoys continued with their demand for double batta.¹ Being disgusted, the Lieutenant-Colonel left the parade ground with the remark, "it would be seen who would march on the following morning."² The regiment was left on the parade ground as Major-General Dalzell was expected to come direct from Calcutta to the parade. The regiment remained the whole day on parade till seven o'clock when Major Pogson the Brigadier-Major of the Presidency Division took the responsibility of dismissing the parade.³

At four o'clock on the next morning (1 November) the

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1. Cartwright to Dalzell Barrackpore, 31 October 1824. Bengal Mily.Cons. 4 November 1824. No.75.
 2. Cartwright before enquiry committee, Barrackpore, 17 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18
 3. Cartwright before enquiry committee. Barrackpore, 17 November 1824. Bengal Mily.Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18

47th regiment was called to parade. But not more than 360 men turned out. Consequently one of the officers, Lieutenant Macdonald proceeded to the sepoy lines. The sepoys asked him to turn back. The Subadar Major warned Cartwright that if he made any attempt to turn out the sepoys by force they would not hesitate to open fire. Dalzell accompanied by Pogson then proceeded to the sepoy line. Seeing him advancing the men came out in a tumultuous manner and seized the colours of the regiment. There was complete disorder and a mutiny in the regiment was obvious. One sepoy told Winfield that if the Government would neither grant his discharge nor allow him a family certificate on which his family could subsist on during his absence, he would desert.

The sepoy was imprisoned but was immediately set free by his colleagues. The attitude of the sepoys was most threatening, and as Cartwright later testified only the presence of other troops prevented violence. "The 26th regiment was drawn up in close column on the right flank of the 47th and the steady and imposing appearance it presented... greatly overawed the mutineers who would otherwise ... have fixed upon the group of officers in their front".¹ Dalzell, in spite of all this chaos, wanted to drill the regiment. But after considering the seriousness of the situation this idea was dropped. Instead the regiment was sent "circuitously to Colonel Cartwright's quarters with an European officer not of that corps". The Major-General retired from the parade ground,

1. Cartwright before enquiry committee, Barrackpore 17 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18

and though their grievances had already been repeatedly stated, Cartwright again "went among the men in order to ascertain the cause of discontent." "The causes," as he later reported before the enquiry committee "were trifling - the want of knapsacks, the great influence possessed by the Subadar - Major over the Lieutenant-Colonel, and all his predecessors in command, the great increase of pay made to every description of people while their pay was continued at the same rate." Cartwright was accused of forcing them to sell everything including their quilts because of the want of carriage cattle, - the Subadar Major was accused of telling them that they would have to proceed on shipboard to Rangoon and that "he would there and then make them eat from the same dish." Cartwright offered to bring the Subadar Major to punishment provided the sepoys could prove his guilt. The sepoys did not answer this and the Lieutenant-Colonel, stating that all their statements were false, wanted to know about their real want. After some hesitation, the mutineers stated that, "if the Government" would "provide them with carriage cattle, double batta and if the Subadar ~~Major~~ and the Havildar were put to death, they would march."¹ During the whole discussion the mutineers as Cartwright observed, were respectful in their behaviour but as soon as they saw that one of the regiments (the 16th sepoy) was coming close to them, they became suspicious and requested Cartwright and other European officers who were with them to leave them. Cartwright, however, instead of leaving them asked

1. Cartwright before enquiry committee Barrackpore, 17 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18

them to go back to the parade ground.

After reporting the matter to Dalzell, Cartwright again came back to the parade ground. The 47th mounted guard as usual and pledged itself that no harm would be done to any officer either European or native while on parade.

Meanwhile Dalzell ordered a court of enquiry to be held at 11 o'clock in the morning (1 November). According to this order two sepoy¹s from each company of the mutinous regiment were asked to state their grievances before the Court. But the mutinous sepoy¹s refused to go before the Court without their arms, because they were afraid of being arrested, and expressed a wish to send a petition instead. Finding that he could not prevail upon the sepoy¹s any more, Cartwright left the sepoy¹s till the Commander-in-Chief arrived from Calcutta. The regiment thus stayed the whole night on the parade ground.

Sir Edward Paget arrived at 12 o'clock at night and found the 47th in a state of "daring mutiny and there was such a degree of ferment and wavering among the men of the other regiments at the station as warranted strong doubts of their continuing steady and firm in their duty to the State."² Under the circumstances, Sir Edward did not deem it proper to take any steps until a sufficient force had arrived from Calcutta to subdue the mutinous regiment as well as to overawe the others who were wavering. Early in the morning the required troops (the 68th native and two European infantry regiments, a

1. Order of Dalzell, Barrackpore, 1 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 4 November 1824. No. 76.
2. Pogson before enquiry committee, Barrackpore 20 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18

detachment of horse artillery and a troop of the body guard) arrived from Calcutta.

At about the same time a Persian petition had been sent by the mutineers to the Commander-in-Chief. The petitioners accused the two native officers - the Subadar Major and the Havildar - of threatening them that the regiment would be forced to embark on board ship for Rangoon. Referring to the rumour that the Government had obliged five companies of sepoy to embark on board ship without their consent the petitioners pointed out that because of their caste they would never sail in a boat and they had actually pledged themselves to that effect with Ganges water and Tulsi. The petition ended with an admission that they had drawn on themselves "much ignominy and disgrace" and a request that their names "be effaced and that every man" be allowed to "return to his home."¹

The Commander-in-Chief replied to the petition through Captain Macan, the Persian interpreter of the regiment. He declared that he had "never required any sepoy to embark on board ship, unless by his own consent," and that he would be ready to listen to the sepoy if they lay down their arms unconditionally.² But the mutineers refused to obey the order to ground arms. Moreover, though hitherto they had been steady and silent, now they began to murmur. Two companies of the 62nd and about 20 men from the 26th sepoy regiment had also joined the mutinous 47th. The mutineers suddenly seized the colours of

1. Persian Petition submitted by 47th and translated by Macan dated Barrackpore 1 November 1824. Bengal Mily.Cons. 4 November 1824. No. 77.
2. Reply of the C. in C. to the petition of the 47th. Barrackpore. 1 November 1824. Bengal Mily.Cons. 4 November 1824. No. 78.

the 26th and destroyed it.

As Macan had failed, two guns were ordered to fire upon the mutineers who after a few seconds broke and fled in all directions throwing down their arms and leaving their uniforms behind them. Few were killed but a considerable number fled. About 80 were taken prisoners. On 2 November a native court-martial sat in judgment and 41 prisoners were sentenced to death

Of these 12 were executed on the following day and the sentence upon the rest was commuted by the Commander-in-Chief to labour in irons for terms of years proportionate to the gravity of their crime. The number 47th was erased from the list of the army with a warning to the other native regiments, "to profit by the example of the 47th who" had "drawn down on themselves a punishment they most justly merited."¹ Further the native officers were severely censured because the Government thought they had indirectly encouraged the men in their mutinous conduct and had been indifferent to their duty. The Commander-in-Chief hoped that the discharge of these officers would leave "as a salutary example to the Native officers of the army in general", who would thence be made to feel that their all depended "on the good conduct and fidelity of their respective regiments."²

Lord Amherst immediately ordered a special committee

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1. G.O.C.C. 4 November 1824. No.335. Bengal Mily. Cons. 4 November 1824. No.81.
 2. Adj. Genl. to Mily. Secy. Barrackpore. 4 November 1824 Bengal Mily. Cons. 4 November 1824. No.81.

of enquiry¹ "to examine all the European officers of the late 47th regiment and such other witnesses, European or native" as they might deem proper to ascertain not only the points which might have led to the mutiny" but also of putting Government in possession of information that no want of attention or of exertion of zeal" had been manifested by the officers.²

On 24 November 1824 the enquiry committee after a thorough investigation into the matter submitted its report to the Government.

According to the report, the evidence of the witnesses and the letters submitted to the committee the causes of the mutiny of the 47th regiment could be divided under various headings as follows:

The Bengal sepoy, being recruited mainly from Bihar, Benares and Oudh, were never willing to come down to Bengal. They were more disinclined still to proceed to the eastern frontier "the climate of which", they were aware "from sad experience to be extremely hostile to the constitution of strangers and to have proved lamentably fatal to multitudes of their brethren."³

The public feeling regarding the nature of the war and the difficulties which the sepoy expected to meet

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1. Major-General Dick Commander of the 43rd native regiment was appointed President of the committee. Bengal Mily. Cons. 11 November 1824. No.174,
 2. G.O.G.G. 11 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 11 November 1824, No.174.
 3. Genl. Observation of enquiry committee. Barrackpore, 2 January 1825. Para.10. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825 No. 18

also influenced the 47th to refuse to march.¹ From the time when Colonel Noton's detachment was defeated at Ramu, most disheartening reports had prevailed in the country. Besides this, "the powerful influence of popular superstition in ascribing to the people of Assam and the countries to the eastward, the employment of supernatural agency in destroying their enemies" and the barbarous and ferocious treatment meted out by the Burmese to their enemies added greatly to the reluctance of the sepoys to proceed against them.

The aversion to embarking on board ship formed another cause of discontent. The Bengal sepoy regiments were mainly constituted of Hindus. It was strictly forbidden for any Hindu to eat anything which had not been prepared on land. "The distress and privation they consequently" had to undergo when embarked on board ship could hardly be believed and caused "their great aversion to go by sea."²

In addition to the distress and calamity which the sepoys often experienced on sea voyages, there was another cause which influenced the Hindu sepoys and made them "view with horror the idea of embarking on board ship." This was the long absence from their native villages and families which overseas campaigns entailed. Various religious rituals and customs often required them to visit their families. The

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1. The sepoys did not refuse to march by land provided the Government supplied the carriage cattle.
 2. Gen. Observation of enquiry committee. Barrackpore
2 January 1825. Para. 15. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825
No. 18

extension of the British empire had already scattered the native army into most distant positions and caused difficulty in obtaining leave of absence. Hence the service in Rangoon, whether the sepoys believed they were going, excited them to a great extent.¹

The next cause, the main cause as the Committee believed, was the want of carriage cattle. Each Hindu sepoy cooked his own food, and so had to carry a variety of bulky articles for its preparation. As the sepoys had also to carry the most essential things like uncooked food sufficient for two or three days, their arms and accoutrements and 40 rounds of ball ammunition in the knapsacks, it had always been customary for the Government to furnish hired carriage to the marching sepoys for their other baggage - at the sepoys' own expense. This baggage consisted of "a few linens, a carpet which they spread in the straw allowed them in camp and on which they reposed, a quilt to wrap themselves with in cold, damp weather, with five or six brass vessels for boiling rice, pulse etc., and for drawing water."²

As the Government was buying carriage cattle by the thousands for various purposes, the price of cattle had increased at least fourfold. For the sepoys to purchase bullocks and hire drivers was thus made impossible.

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1. Genl. Observation of enquiry committee, Barrackpore, 2 January 1825. Para 16. Bengal Mily.Cons. 6 January 1825, No.18
 2. Genl. Observation of enquiry committee, Barrackpore 2 January 1825, para 18. Bengal Mily.Cons. . 6 January 1825. No.18.

Cartwright, as the committee observed, being prompted by zeal for the service tried to secure cattle. But even he could do nothing without the assistance of the civil authorities. Moreover, when after considerable correspondence and delay, he secured cattle, as Cartwright himself said, they were not sufficient and "the old age of them rendered them very inadequate to the wants of the men." The committee further expressed its opinion that "in spite of every discouraging circumstances, if the means of carriage had been forthcoming at the proper period and in proportion adequate to the necessities of men marching on such arduous and trying service, more of the other points of complaints would have been heard and the late 47th regiment would now have been contending against the enemies of the state."¹

The demands of the public service for the prosecution of the war especially in the Rangoon and Chittagong Quarters were great and urgent. "Cattle provisions, extra establishment of every description and all kinds of non-military retainers were more numerous even than the fighting men". These people were provided and entertained at the Presidency at wages "double the ordinary rates." The Madras sepoy serving at Chittagong had not only higher rates of pay than those of Bengal, but were also supplied with rations at the expense of

1. Genl. Observation of enquiry committee. Barrackpore, 2 January 1825. Para. 20. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825, No.18

the state. Obviously the Bengal sepoy had compared their own situation with that of all these people. When they were then told that the Government was not in a position to grant double batta and at the same time were required to march on a certain day without any appearance of the carriage cattle, they were "filled with the impression that Government bestowed their care and attention on every body else but themselves."¹

The deductions from the pay of the sepoy in the Lower Provinces had been another source of dissatisfaction to the sepoy. In a cantonment a Bengal sepoy received seven sonaut rupees per month and eight rupees eight annas when marching or on service. In the Upper Provinces where the sonaut rupee was current he received the full amount but in the Lower Provinces of Bengal and Bihar where the sicca rupee formed the currency, his pay was discounted at a loss to him of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. It was a serious deduction in the pay of a sepoy and the committee remarked that it was "unquestionably a cause of discontent." As the committee pointed out from that seven rupees the sepoy provided himself with a great variety of articles - some of which like his white trousers and jackets, were required to be kept spotlessly clean. He also paid for his uniform, the expense of hiring carriage

1. Genl. observation of enquiry committee, Barrackpore
2 January 1825. Para. 22. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825
No. 18

while changing stations, erection of his hut, for keeping the line clean and for his subsistence too. To meet all these expenses, the sepoy received nothing else but their monthly pay and a regimental jacket (only worn when dressed for duty), a pair of woollen pantaloons every other year and tents when marching. "In no service in the world" was "the soldier required to contribute so much towards his own equipment."¹

The discontent about knapsacks had the same origin; their cost was deducted from the sepoy's pay at two rupees a time for two months. But "the general demand for the conveyance of troops, stores etc., caused the delay in procuring boats for their transportation from Futtyghur to Barrackpore." Consequently, the sepoy was asked temporarily to use their old knapsacks. Unfortunately all of them had not got knapsacks and those which some of them had, were in such bad condition as to be almost useless. Without paying much attention to all these facts the sepoy was ordered "to patch up their old ones the best way they could do so as to make them temporarily servicable and those who had none were asked to make up any sort of ones out of old trousers, pantaloons, etc."²

Sir Edward asked the sepoy to leave their superfluous property behind at Barrackpore and Dalzell gave a store room for the purpose. But the men on account of the numerous white ants and from previous experience of keeping their things in store objected to leaving their things behind. They were not

1. General observation of enquiry committee, Barrackpore. 2 January 1825. para. 23. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18.
 2. Genl. observation of enquiry committee, Barrackpore 2 January 1825. para. 25. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18

in a state to afford to throw away their things and there were no purchasers either.¹

Another cause of discontent was the undue influence of the Subadar Major on the Lieutenant-Colonel and the irregularity ~~in~~ promotion. The Subadar Major was an efficient officer but being a Muslim and being "extremely vituperative and abusive he was unpopular with the sepoys". Attempts had been made "to burn his hut and several suspicious persons had been turned out of the line."²

Because of the Subadar Major's influence with the commanding officer two of his relatives (one was the Havildar³) had been promoted without any regard to seniority. Naturally the sepoys had become discontented.⁴

In addition to such favouritism there had been other irregularities in promotion in the 47th regiment. During the march from Mathura some desertions had taken place. But Major Henley⁵ wanted to show that the regiment was superior to others. He had therefore not only withheld the reports of desertions from the Government but also had not altered the

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1. General observation of enquiry committee Barrackpore 2 January 1825. para.25. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825.No.25
 2. General observation of enquiry committee Barrackpore.2 January 1825. para.26.Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825.No.18.
 3. According to Bolton, "in 1806 the Havildar was a little boy not in the service of the Company. But in consequence of his relationship with the Subadar Major he was rapidly promoted to his present position - superseding a number of older men."
 4. Genl. observation of enquiry committee Barrackpore, 2 January 1825. para 27. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No.
 5. William Henley was with the 24th native regiment in 1823. As Cartwright started for Barrackpore earlier than his regiment Henley came on in charge of the 47th regiment. After reaching Barrackpore he became Political Agent at Bhopal.

rolls. "New men were entertained who were posted to fill vacancies in the names of their predecessors who had either died or deserted. One Jalim Singh died and another Jalim Singh a recruit was placed in his situation and consequently stood high in the roll."

Men had also often been passed over for alleged lowness of caste which had naturally irritated the sepoy to a great extent.²

Again the date of marching had been shifted from 29 to 1 November. The reason behind this change was never explained to the sepoy. The committee mentioned that "as the scale of mutual estimation between the European officers and the sepoy" had "greatly fallen" the sepoy imagined that there was some peculiar hidden cause for the change in date. They thus demanded to know why the 16th regiment, which was already in the station, had not been ordered to go when "the 47th had already had the fatigue and expense of coming all the way down from Mathura."³

The committee also pointed out that the European officers familiar with the language, manners and customs of the sepoy army had been employed in civil and diplomatic situations, on the staff of the army, in local or irregular corps or even in the service of the allies of the British Government.

1. Pogson before enquiry committee Barrackpore. 18 November 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No.18
2. Ibid.
3. Genl. observation of enquiry committee. Barrackpore 2 January 1825. para. 28. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18

Besides this, because of the recent reorganisation of the army new officers had been attached to the different sepoy regiments. "This being the case it was not a matter of surprise that the European officers of the 47th, 62nd and 26th regiment had no influence in preventing this mutiny and they had no knowledge some till the 31st October, others not till the 1st November, of the discontents which existed and irregularities committed by the sepoys in their companies many days previous to the mutiny." It also appeared that the European officers of the companies never attended the roll calls of their sepoys and very seldom attended the regimental parades. They were not acquainted with the sepoys under them, did not know their names and never spoke or communicated to them excepting through the native officers. Besides this, the European officers knew nothing of the orders signed by the commanding officers of the regiments. They did not take any measure to see them executed or take any part in the command or discipline of the troops. Under the circumstances, as the committee wrote, it was unnecessary "to seek for curious reasons the falling off in the discipline, efficiency and attachment to the Service of the native army in Bengal when such a state of things" existed "among the European officers in one of the favourite corps --- the 47th regiment".

Referring to Lieutenant-Colonel Cartwright the committee said that "he had not the art of gaining esteem but seemed to have an unhappy factious disposition - on parade he managed ill, got angry and harassed the men by continually

doing the same thing, ... and by keeping the corps out unusually long in hot weather." The men thus finding themselves deprived of their old officers and having little or no confidence in their successors, felt disheartened. The committee also pointed out that for one reason or another "the military profession was no longer considered an honourable one" either by the European officers or the sepoys. With the permanent establishment of the British empire and with the gradual reduction of powerful opponents the Military Authority had yielded to the civil authorities. European officers losing all their powers and importance to the sepoys were anxious to get rid of their regiments. On the other hand, the sepoys found the English laws and regulations irritating. Their pay remained the same but the demands upon their pay had considerably increased over the years with the different changes in regulations. Besides this they were often required to pay for one thing or another without any compensation for the additional expense.¹ Hence, a sepoy felt himself held in a lower degree of public estimation with more circumscribed means of subsistence and reduced facilities in the supplies and exhibited less zeal for the service. Moreover, the severe and constant duties where relief was only effected by the change of one duty for another - "the Fort duty particularly included" where they were "constantly annoyed by the European sergeants and women and by all new comers" had greatly tended

1. It can be said for example that the colour of the cap and sash had often been changed and the sepoys had to pay for it.

to lessen the zeal of the sepoy. In addition to all such harassment and annoyance, there was the question of slowness of promotion among the native troops. The committee thus expressed its opinion: "did quicker promotion exist ... a spirit would be revived in all classes of our native troops" and so in a great degree make the sepoy "what he once was, a soldier."

The committee while thus criticising and analysing each and every probable question, did not forget the native officers of the 47th. They were accused of "tacitly approving and consenting to every act of the misguided men" and of only separating themselves from them on the morning of 1 November.

The report concluded by pointing out that though each mutineer had had 40 rounds of service ammunition on him, not one had attacked or hurt a single individual. Considering all the causes of the mutiny of the late 47th regiment the Committee further remarked that "the whole incident seemed to have been the ebullion of despair at being compelled to march without the means of doing so", and neither the loyalty nor the fidelity of the men to the Government could be suspected.¹

The committee had thus fully expounded the probable causes of the mutiny, and there is nothing more to add to their verdict. It was obvious that by 1824 the sepoy were discontented with the military service of the Company and that for various reasons their morale and discipline had deteriorated to a great extent.

1. Genl. observation of ^{Enquiry Committee} ~~Enq. Com.~~ Barrackpore. 2 January 1825. para. 30. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825. No. 18

The Directors were informed about the mutiny at Barrackpore and the raising of a new regiment in place of the 47th. This new regiment, as the letter from the Supreme Government said, was numbered the 69th¹ to which the European officers of the 47th were posted.² The report of the enquiry committee was sent to the Directors in 1825.³ The Court expressed satisfaction at the information that the 26th and 62nd sepoy regiments had condemned the mutinous conduct of the 47th and in order to remove the stigma thereby cast on the native troops had offered their service "as General service regiments beyond sea". While expressing satisfaction the Court censured the Supreme Government for "the delay in sending the report", and pointed out the necessity of following as far as possible one uniform rule regarding the issuing of rations in all the three :Presidencies. The Directors ordered that "when troops meet on service compensation money should be given to bring up the lowest to the highest". Besides this order, the Home Government asked the Bengal Government to take adequate measures to improve the feelings between the European officers and native soldiers.

The Burmese war was still demanding attention from the British Government. The last months of 1824 witnessed the

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1. In 1828 the number 47th was given to this regiment.
 2. L. from Bengal 29 December 1824. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.20.
 3. L. from Bengal 15 March 1825. M.L. received from Bengal Vol.21.

massing of a large force at Sylhet¹ for an invasion of Burma through Manipur. Another, still larger army was ordered to march from Chittagong² into Arakan and thence to the Burmese capital. To supply troops for all these expeditions there took place in January 1825 a general augmentation of all native corps, not sent to the field, all being ordered to recruit an additional 20 sepoy³. Soon after, a still more extensive measure was resorted to and 12 additional sepoy regiments of 1,000 men, were raised. Of these new regiments the first six were fully officered, the others receiving only three officers each - borrowed from the other corps.⁴

The Sylhet force never came to grips with the enemy for the difficulties of the route and the incessant rain proved more formidable than any human foe. After experiencing great difficulty in February and March of 1825 it became evident that it was impossible to reach Manipore and consequently Shuldham with his force came back to Sylhet.⁵

The force for Arakan started its march from Chittagong

1. The Sylhet force under Brigadier-General Shuldham with other European force included the 7th, 14th, 39th, 44th, 45th and 52nd native regiments.
G.O.G.G. 20 June 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 20 June 1824.
No. 37.
2. The 33rd, 43rd, 59th and 63rd sepoy regiments - each contributed a grenadier and a light company to the army ordered for Chittagong. G.O.C.C. 12 July 1824. Bengal Mily. Cons. 12 July 1824. No. 40.
3. G.O.C.C. 23 January 1825. Bengal Mily. Cons. 23 January 1825
No. 18.
4. G.O.C.C. 21 February 1825. Bengal Mily. Cons. 21 February 1825
No. 27.
5. Cardew - op.cit., p. 149.

on 1 January 1825. On 26 March the Arakan¹ was attacked and the place was taken on 1 April 1825. As the passes over the Arakan mountains were unknown to the British troops no further progress was made, and the whole of the monsoon season was passed at Arakan. Fever of a most destructive type spread through the force and by autumn nothing but a mere skeleton of the army remained fit for work.²

Meanwhile Campbell, after staying nine months at Rangoon on 13 February 1825 had started his march towards the capital of Burma. After two successive attempts Donabyu was occupied on 25 April.³ But though both the India and the Burmese Government desired peace nothing actually materialised and hostilities continued.⁴

The effective force at Prome at this time was six weak European battalions numbering altogether about 2,800 men of all ranks and seven native battalions with a total strength of rather over three thousand of all ranks besides a proportion of artillery and a troop of the Governor-General's body guard.

1. "The city of Arakan - Myohaung -- it is situated in a valley on the banks of a small branch of the Arracan or Kuladyne river and in about fifty miles from the sea". Thornton's Gazetteer. p.43

"The old capital of Arakan was situated in the interiors of the country on a branch of the Kaladan river. But shortly after our taking possession of the country, from the regretted unhealthiness, inaccessibility, and distance from the old city, a new site was chosen on a large land-locked estuary at the mouth of the Kaladan river, forming a safe harbour." Fytche - Burma Past and Present I Vol. I, pp.87-88 Quoted by A.C. Banerjee - The Eastern Frontier p.350. footnote

2. Cardew - op.cit., p.151.

3. Snodgrass - op.cit., p44.

4. Roberts - op.cit. p.50.

At Rangoon there was a garrison of about 3,000, chiefly native troops and at Pegu were stationed three battalions of sepoy with one European regiment.¹

The renewal of the war in Burma made those troops (the 46th and 57th) which since May had been stationed at Rangpur anticipate their own employment in Burma. The prospect filled them with foreboding.

On 14 October 1825 Lieutenant Colonel Richards of the 46th was informed by Captain Horsborough that he had overheard whispering amongst the sepoy and that in all probability a mutiny was brewing in the regiment.² On the next morning about 37 men of the Grenadier Company of the 46th regiment went to the pay havildar of the regiment and stated that if they were ordered to march they would refuse to do so. The Havildar took then the names and informed Captain Horsborough. The mutineers then went on to the lines and tried to persuade the other sepoy of the regiment to refuse to march. Horsborough immediately came to the sepoy lines, asked the Grenadiers to lay down their arms and ordered the arrest of the ringleaders. Four ringleaders were accordingly arrested and the Captain then left the lines. But the rest of the Grenadier company now came to the quarter guard and asked to be confined with the prisoners. They were ordered by the Captain to return to their lines - orders which were obeyed with extreme reluctance.³

1. Snodgrass - op.cit., p.50.

2. Horsborough to Richards, Rungpore 14 October 1825. Bengal Mily. Cons. 18 November 1825. No.34.

3. Horsborough to Richards 15 October 1825. Bengal Mily. Cons. 18 November 1825. No.34.

Horsborough, reporting this, stated that it was not their wants that had "led the men to this ... so much as the discontent at remaining so long in Assam and a pretended inability to march from recent sickness."¹ The Lieutenant-Colonel on receiving these letters went from Goalpara to Rangpur on 21 October to exercise his personal influence over the sepoy. He ordered a parade and there appealed to the good sense of the sepoy. The regiment responded to his appeal and declared its readiness to march wherever and whenever ordered. But at the same time the sepoy explained that a few amongst them simply could not march because of their bad health. They further declared that they merely wanted their weak physical condition to be known to their officers. The parade was dismissed. The sepoy of the 1st Grenadier company requested the Lieutenant-Colonel to release the prisoners, but this was not granted.

Richards, informing the Adjutant-General of the incident observed, "indeed they did not appear to be able to support the weight of their own muskets." The climate of Assam had played havoc with the constitution of the sepoy and had led to heavy mortality and sickness in the corps and those who remained were "reduced in energy and in personal appearance "were mere shadows of their former selves". As for the fatigue of marching he wrote "in their present state," they did not seem to be "capable of undergoing it."²

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1. Horsborough to Richards. Rungpore 15 October 1825. Bengal Mily. Cons. 18 November 1825. No. 34
 2. Richards to the Adj. Genl. Rungpore 21 October 1825. Bengal Mily. Cons. 18 November 1825. No. 35.

The Adjutant-General, instructed by the Commander-in-Chief, asked the Lieutenant-Colonel to hold a general court-martial.¹ To this court the medical officer of the corps submitted a medical report on the health of the 46th and 57th regiments. The report said that since May 1824 the cases of both death and sickness in these two regiments had greatly increased and the medical officer "was frequently under the necessity of permitting members to proceed to their homes on medical certificates as the only means for the preservation of their lives." He further suggested that as those who were still in the garrison were much reduced in strength and energy," the regular regiments in Assam should be relieved by a strong efficient corps as speedily as possible."² The Court after receiving this advice, and reviewing all the evidence sentenced the four ringleaders to death. But the Lieutenant-Colonel did not execute the order immediately. Instead he referred the matter to the Commander-in-Chief pointing out certain discrepancies in the proceedings of the Court-martial.³ The Commander-in-Chief in his reply expressed his regrets at the outbreaks of the mutiny and his satisfaction at the prompt action taken by the authorities stationed on the spot. But he censured the action of the Lieutenant-Colonel for not carrying out the sentence of the Court-martial.

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1. Adj. Genl. to Richards. Council Bhambar 18 November 1825.
 2. Bengal Mily. Cons. 8 November 1825. No. 36.
 3. Richards to the C.in.C. Rungpore 26 November 1825. Bengal Mily. Cons. 18 November 1825. No.37.

By then a considerable time had already elapsed since the court-martial, the death sentence upon the four prisoners were therefore commuted to transportation for life. Besides this, the 46th which had been scheduled to be relieved¹ was ordered to remain in Assam as a punishment for its disgraceful conduct and the 57th was directed to be relieved in its place. The Governor-General meanwhile had approved the orders of the Commander-in-Chief and had expressed his deepest regret "at a conduct so unsoldier-like and so unaccountable in a regiment on whose exemplary discipline, zeal and entire fidelity the Supreme Government had every right to place the most implicit reliance."²

The Directors hearing about "the existence and suppression of insubordination in the 46th native infantry regiment,³ severely censured Lieutenant-Colonel Richards for not carrying out the order of the Court-martial and "for not punishing the whole Grenadier company and others who had been active in fomenting a spirit or had committed any overt act of insubordination."⁴

There the matter ended. There was no query as to why the excessive sickness in the regiment had not been earlier reported. No comment was passed on the fact that the medical officer had only made his report when asked to do so by the Court martial. No comment was made upon the company commanders

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1. The regiment was in Assam from January 1824.
 2. Mily. Secy. to the Adj.Genl. 28 November 1825. Bengal Mily. Cons. 18 November 1825.. No. 35.
 3. L. from Bengal 30 July 1826. Para 375. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 23.
 4. D. to Bengal 31 April 1828. Para 60. M.D. sent to Bengal Vol. 14.

who had apparently failed to make clear before the unrest the state of their men's health. The regiment was left at Rangpur until 1826.

Meanwhile Sir Archibald had continued his movement and he defeated the whole Burmese army at Pagan on 9 February 1826. A treaty was finally concluded at Yandabo on 24 February 1826. The flank battalions from Arakan had by this time returned to Dinajpur, and then were allowed furlough from six to eight months after which they were ordered to rejoin their regiments.¹

Permission was given for the words 'Ava', 'Arakan' and 'Assam' to be borne on the colours of corps engaged and a medal and six months batta was granted to the troops.²

The territories that were granted to the British by the Burmese were Arakan and Tenasserim. Cachar and Manipur became British protectorates.

The war was enormously expensive for it had cost thirty millions sterling - more than twelve times the charges for the Pindari and Maratha campaigns.³ Moreover the protracted operations, the occasional defeat and tardy success of the Company's troops in Burma had lowered the prestige of the Company in India, so that several attempts were made by subject powers within India to rise against the Company. Among these outbreaks the most serious was at Bharatpur.

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1. G.O.C.C. 11 November 1825. Bengal Mily. Cons. 11 November 1825. No. 80.
 2. G.O.G.G. 20 November 1826. No. 86. Bengal Mily. Cons. 20 November 1826. No. 89.
 3. Roberts - op.cit., p298.

In 1824, Baldeo Singh, the Raja of Bharatpur, in order to secure the succession of his son, Balwant Singh, placed him under the immediate protection of the British Government. He appealed to Ochterlony, the British resident at Delhi who consented to invest Balwant Singh as heir-apparent. Early in 1825 Baldeo Singh died and four weeks later Durjan Sal a nephew of Baldeo Singh seized Balwant Singh and usurped the throne. Ochterlony, failing to receive an assurance from Durjan Sal that he would restore Balwant Singh to the throne, promptly collected all the troops within his reach and prepared to march upon Bharatpur. But he was suddenly stopped by an order from the Governor-General¹. Durjan Sal took his opportunity and claimed possession of Bharatpur as legal heir. "The hope of every adventurer of every malcontent, of every ambitious little chief and of every prince who had been defeated and despoiled, ran high."² To all of them the British Government appeared to be too busy in the Burmese War to maintain order elsewhere.

Sir Charles Metcalfe who had succeeded Ochterlony at Delhi insisted on maintaining the right of Balwant Singh. Amherst being convinced by him "gave orders to the Commander-in-Chief Lord Combermere for military preparations to be pressed forward with all possible activity."³ Forces were assembled under Major-General's Nicolls at Agra and Thomas

1. Oxford p. 586
 2. Fortescue - op.cit., Vol. XI, p. 355
 3. Ibid., Vol. XI, p. 356

Reynall at Mathura - some 16 sepoy regiments¹ together with other European and native troops. These sepoy regiments marched from different stations like Lucknow, Shahjahanpur, Benares, Jaunpur, and other nearby places. On 5 December 1825 Lord Combermere marched against Bharatpur and in January 1826 took the fortress by storm. The troops engaged in the siege and storm were authorised to bear the name 'Bharatpur' on their colours.² Medals were also promised to them.³

The fall of Bharatpur restored tranquility, proving indeed to be the last campaign in which the Bengal army was to be engaged for many years. The Government then turned its attention on to reduction and retrenchment on all sides. The campaigns of 1824-'26 had necessitated additions to the native army and since 1823-'24 there had been an increasing deficit⁴ in the Company's budget account. Six of the twelve newly raised regiments were accordingly disbanded,⁵ and the whole army was reduced to a peace establishment - a full strength

1. G.O.C.C. 17 September 1825 Bengal Mily. Cons. 17 September 1825. No. 70.

2. G.O.G.G. 7 June 1826. Bengal Mily. Cons. 7 June 1826. No. 43.

3. Medals were granted to all survivors by G.O.G.G. 14 April 1851. Bengal Mily. Cons. 14 April 1851. No. 34.

4.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Deficit</u>
1823-'24	- £ 847,091.
1824-'25	- £2,961,147.
1825-'26	- £4,953,918.

P.N. Banerjia - Indian finance in the days of the Company.
Ap.A.

5. G.O.G.G. 9 April 1826. Bengal Mily. Cons. 9 April 1826. No. 52.

of ten non-commissioned officers and 82 privates per company.¹ By December all the 74 single battalion sepoy regiments of the Bengal Presidency had been so reduced.

With the retirement of Amherst in 1828 Bentinck came out as Governor-General of India and as "a man of peace, a man of discipline and a man of economy."² Following the directions of Ellenborough, who warned him that if he would not make the reductions "some one else" would,³ Bentinck introduced stringent measures of economy in Bengal.⁴ Ignoring his extreme unpopularity with the European society⁵ he reduced the batta of the officers and so cut down the yearly expenses of the Company as to secure a balanced budget for the first time in many years.

Though Bentinck thus succeeded in pleasing the Home Authorities he failed to raise the morale of the sepoy army. He gauged the discontent of the sepoys and did his best, by grant of honours,⁶ and of financial rewards for long service to raise their spirits.⁷ But the extensive retrenchments, the policy of utilising regular troops for police and other civil duties,⁸ and the ill example of near mutiny by the

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1. G.O.G.G. 15 May 1826 Bengal Mily. Cons. 15 May 1826, No. 38.
 2. Oxford - p. 587.
 3. Ellenborough's Political Diary Vol. I. p.265.
 4. Philips - The East India ---. p.262.
 5. K.N.Pandey - Lord William Bentinck and the Indian States. 1828-'35. p.20. (Thesis submitted in the London University for Ph.D. 1954)
 6. See Chapter III. pp. 240, 244
 7. See Chapter III. p. 237.
 8. See Chapter III. p. 298.

officers undid his good work. One writer in 1835 under the name of 'S' summarised the 'points in which the condition of the native army had deteriorated: (1) decrease of pay as compared with the increase of expenses, (2) increase of duty, (3) decrease of consideration, (4) want in general kindness, favour, and notice from the governing power."¹

Bentinck returned to England in March 1835 and Metcalfe acted as a Governor-General for the months of 1835-'36 till Auckland was installed in office in April 1836. The period of comparative tranquility of nearly eleven years was in his day again replaced by one of turmoil. This time trouble started in Afghanistan. In 1833 Ranjit Singh had seized Pesh²war from its Afghan ruler. Dost Mahammad, the Amir of Kabul failing to reconquer it had appealed to Britain for help. Metcalfe had declined to help and Auckland following a policy of non-interference, also refused any help to the Amir.² He did send Alexander Burns on a commercial cum diplomatic mission to Kabul, but denied him the power to conclude any political treaties. "Dost Mahammad had no use for purely commercial ones"³ and the Amir turned to Persia and Russia for help.

Auckland then made a treaty (26 June 1838) with Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja, the former Amir of Afghanistan

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1. E.I.U.S.J. February 1835. p.125.
 2. Auckland believed that the Sikh alliance was more important than any Afghan link.
 3. M.E.Yapp - British policy in Central Asia 1830-'43. p.129. (Thesis submitted in the London University for Ph.D.1959)

at that time a British pensionary at Ludhiana. Under the treaty Shah Shuja was to be assisted to the throne of Afghanistan by a British expeditionary force. The 'Army of the Indus' as the force was styled was ordered to assemble at Karnal.¹ A whole brigade moved up from Meerut and another from Agra while several sepoy regiments starting from more distant points approached Ferozepore at as rapid a pace as circumstances of climate would permit. From Karnal the route of the Bengal force lay through the Sikh territories to Ferozepore a spot within four miles of the river Gharra.

The large-scale movements of troops thus represented a considerable upheaval for an army long accustomed to garrison or police duties. There was another feature of the approaching campaign which was half expected to cause trouble - the crossing of the Indus. To Hindu troops the river marked the boundary of holy India as surely as elsewhere the ocean did.

The army had been long inactive. Except for some small affairs in Rajputana no field operations of any importance had taken place since the capture of Bharatpur in 1826. Besides this, "it was doubted whether" the sepoys "would be willing to cross the Indus." Hence, in order to induce them to do so they were informed that they would receive, beyond the Indus, the same allowances as were formerly granted in

1. J.H. Stoqueler - Memoirs and correspondence --- Vol. I. 73.

1824 to troops beyond the Burmah frontiers; that is, in addition to the sum of eight rupees and a half, a further allowance under the name of 'money rations' ... that is, either rations or a payment in money equivalent to their price in the camp market"¹ would be given to them.

The sepoy were not the only ones to receive possible advantage in the Afghan campaign. The prospect of war in Afghanistan, perhaps even of war "against the European cohorts of the Czar in regions beyond the Indus" whetted ambitions and "tempted the commanding officers of distant regiments to put in claims to be transferred to those which were likely to be employed." Unhappily most of the officers who so petitioned for posts sought them with "such irregular and special corps as might be formed for the occasion."² The result was a drawing away from the line regiments of their best officers. Nott had thus to complain that of the three³ fine regiments under him two were "most wretchedly commanded."⁴

With hopes thus raised the Army of the Indus set out from Karnal for Ferozepore, arriving in November 1838. Before their arrival news had come through that Persia had raised the siege of Herat. It was therefore thought possible since only an Afghan enemy had now to be faced, to cut the size of

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1. Ellenborough to Wellington. Calcutta 20 March 1844. History of the Indian Administration of Lord Ellenborough in his correspondence with the Duke of Wellington. Ed. Colchester. pp116-118.
 2. Stoqueler - Memoirs ---. Vol. I, p.73.
 3. The 31st, 42nd and 43rd native regiments were under Nott.
 4. Stoqueler - Memoirs Vol. I, p.80.

the forces which were to cross the Indus. One division was accordingly left to watch the Sutlej while the remainder of the force, selected as a result of the personal observations on tour by Sir Henry Fane proceeded. It was thus a picked force which advanced from Ferozepore.

Some of its constituent units had already had a trying time while marching to the rendezvous. The mandate to prepare for active service had found the 2nd and 43rd at distant Lucknow and Cawnpore, the 53rd at Meerut, the 16th and 48th at Delhi, the 42nd at Bareilly, the 37th and the 28th at Agra and Mynpuri. The 31st had had to be pushed up from Allahabad and the 5th from Benares while the 27th and 35th had marched from Karnal. Painful marches at a most inclement season of late rain and along flooded roads had had to be performed by some of these chosen regiments before they could reach Karnal.¹

On 26 November 1838 the Bengal force reached Ferozepore. Captain Havelock said of it, a force had "never been brought together in any country in a manner more creditable and soldierlike than was the Bengal portion of the army of the Indus. Many of the regiments had harassing marches to perform ..., but all arrived there in the highest order."² On 12 December 1838, the Bengal contingent "drawn out in close column of battalions, stretching over ground of nearly two miles in length,"³ marched from Ferozepore to Bhawalpore.

1. H. Havelock - Narrative of the War ... p.20

2. Ibid., 40.

3. H.E.Fane - Five Years in India. Vol.II, p.3

There it was to meet the Bombay troops and the command was to devolve upon Sir John Keene the Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay army. Before the Bengal troops started from Ferozepore several native officers were invested with the order of British India: "a boon attended with some extra expenses to Government", but one which was "amply repaid by the zeal of the native troops," which had "never been greater than on the service on which they were now employed in a foreign country; and with the prospect of a long absence from their native land."¹

The Bengal troops on their way to Bhawalpur suffered from various difficulties. As they proceeded the desertion of camel drivers and camp followers was reported morning after morning and "scarcely had the army completed six marches, when the loss of private baggage and the unavoidable abandonment of the bedding and camp equipage of the soldiers had amounted to a serious evil."²

Marching day after day and starting before the dawn, first by torch and starlight and then under the powerless December sun the army reached Bhawalpur on 27 December 1838. Advancing again on 1 January 1839, the Bengal force reached Bukkur on 24 January,³ crossed the Indus, and fixed its

1. W. Hough - A Narrative of the March and Operations.....9.

2. Havelock - op.cit., p.98

3. The troops suffered from mismanagement in the Commissariat department. Nott wrote to Sir William Cotton on 18 January 1839, "At Surwal the Commissariat officer purchased Attah at 24 seers the rupee... and offered to retail it to the sepoys at only 17 seers Fire wood was bought at 10 maunds for the rupee and was sold to the men at only 3 maunds and 5 seers."
Stoqueler - Memoirs .Vol.I.p99.

headquarters at Shikarpur, which was reached on 20 February 1839 on their way to the Bolan pass through Rajhan and Dadur. Since the crossing of the Indus the troops had suffered much frontier climate and the effects of a failing commissariat. The camels had died by scores. Water and food had been scarce and in addition to these difficulties, Baluchi plunderers had been active. The dooly¹ bearers had run off to a man though most of them had later been caught and flogged.² The 146 miles from Shikarpur to Dadur had been accomplished by the Bengal columns in 16 painful marches. The Bolan pass was nearly 60 miles in length and it took six days for the Bengal troops to push up through it. Baggage was left behind,³ tents were abandoned for the lack of carriage cattle. Quetta was reached on 26 March 1839. By this time the scarcity of forage and water was appalling. At Quetta the price of Attah (flour) had risen "to two and a half seers (four and three quarter Pounds English) for the rupee. There was a corresponding scarcity of condiments for the native troops and ghee was sold at an exorbitant rate. Neither rice nor any other vegetable

1. Open palanquins for the sick.

2. Fane - op.cit., Vol. II, p. 75.

3. When the Bengal detachment started from Ferozepore on 12 December 1838, J.H. Stoqueler who spent some time with the force at Ferozepore wrote (Memoirs --- pp90-92), "Sir Henry Fane's injunction, in the circular to commanding officers, that the troops should be able to move disencumbered of every article of baggage which could, without compromising the efficiency of the corps, be dispensed with, had been read as a mere matter form and every advantage taken of the qualifying or conditional phrase. Jams, pickles, cheroots (two camel-loads of the best Manillas), potted fish, hermetically-sealed meats, plate, glass, crockery, wax-candles, table-linen, dressing cases, perfumes, windsor-soap, and eau-de-cologne etc. all deemed indispensable to the efficiency of a corps." They little dreamt that these articles would soon be used by the Beloochees.

substitute for flour was to be procured on any terms."¹ To face this crisis the ration of the soldiers was reduced. The native soldiers was allowed only half a seer of flour per day and had thus to "contrive to support existence and perform his arduous duties, upon an allowance of food barely sufficient to preserve him from starvation."² Both the European and native soldiers were reduced to half rations but the Europeans had meat served out to them besides - one pound a day. The Muslim soldiers also had meat but the Hindus a considerable majority in the Bengal native regiments, generally did not eat meat.³ There were neither vegetables, milk nor other kinds of food considered necessary by them and for some time they had no dhal (lentils) either.⁴

Nevertheless, Kandahar was reached in April 1839 and on 8 May Shah Shuja was installed on the throne of Afghanistan without any fighting. Leaving the 37th Bengal sepoy regiment at Kandahar Sir John Keene marched towards Kabul on 27 June with the rest of the troops. These troops in addition to a shortage of food now suffered from the climate, for the temperature varied from 56° in the morning to 102° in the afternoon. Capturing the fortress of Ghazni on 23 July the army reached Kabul on 30th of the same month. Dost Mahammad fled and on 7 August Shah Shuja entered the city.

The first phase of the Afghan War was thus concluded. With Shah Shuja installed, arrangements were made to withdraw

1. Havelock - op.cit., Vol. I, p. 254.

2. Ibid., p. 256

3. Hough - op.cit., pp. 64-65.

4. Ibid., Ap. I. p. 44

a great part of the army to India. The Bombay forces left Kabul on 18 September 1839 but the whole of the Bengal infantry remained in Afghanistan, posted at different places such as Kabul, Ghazni, Jalalabad and Kalat.¹

As the object of the expedition to Afghanistan seemed now accomplished the troops engaged beyond the Bolan pass were rewarded. Permission was granted to inscribe the words 'Afghanistan', 'Ghazni',² and 'Kalat';³ on the colours of the respective regiments and a gratuity of six months' batta was also allowed to these troops.⁴

It soon became apparent, however, that Shah Shuja depended entirely on British support. The feeling of the people was so hostile to Shah Shuja that even after the surrender of Dost ^vMahammad in November 1840, outbursts took place all over the country and "by the autumn of 1841 the country was seething with rebellion and intrigue."⁵ The interference of British officials in the civil administration of the country did nothing to make their infidel presence acceptable, and eventually the army of occupation at Kabul was overwhelmed by the outbursts. On 2 November 1841 Sir Alexander Burns^(e), the British envoy at Kabul was murdered and a tumult broke out in the city. The commissariat fort was

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1. Kalat was taken from Mehrub Khan in November 1839. Lambrick - John Jacob ---. pp. 38, 39, 357.
 2. G.O.G.G 19 November 1839. Bengal Mily. Cons. 19 November 1839. No. 58.
 3. G.O.G.G. 15 February 1840. Bengal Mily. Cons. 15 February 1840. No. 28.
 4. G.O.C.C. 15 February 1840. Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 November 1839. No. 57.
 5. Roberts - op.cit., p. 320.

lost to the mob without any fighting and on December 11, a treaty was concluded with Akbar Khan, son of Dost Mahammad by which the British force was to evacuate Afghanistan. Dost Mahammad was to be set free and Shah Shuja was to be at liberty either to accompany the British or to remain in Afghanistan with a pension.¹

On 6 January 1842, after giving up many of their stores and guns, the British forces including the three Bengal sepoy regiments, (the 5th, 37th and 54th) commenced their retreat to Jalalabad. Scarcely had the troops left their cantonments when the Afghan tribes began to attack them. Gradually the number of the British force "grew less and less before the bullets ... and ... knives of the Afghans aided by the bitter cold and the deep lying snow."² There was no shelter, no firewood, no food. The sepoys, who had no former experience of such hardships were ignorant how they might best provide against snow without either shelter, fire or food.³ They burnt their caps and accoutrement to get a little temporary warmth. Soon discipline in the native regiments collapsed. Throwing down their arms the sepoys rapidly swelled the disorganised rabble of camp followers. "Their hands were frost-bitten; they could not pull a trigger; they were paralysed, panic-stricken; they rushed forward in aimless desperation scarcely knowing what they did or where

1. Roberts - op.cit., p.320.

2. Cardew - op.cit., p.182.

3. Maj.Genl. Eyre - The Kabul Insurrection of 1841-'42.p.55

they went."¹ The Afghans watching all the time from the hills, came down and slaughtered them like sheep. The last despairing stand was made at the pass of Jagdalak, where 12 officers laid down their lives. One man Dr Bryden, half-dead with wounds and exhaustion entered Jalalabad on 13 January 1842. He was long believed to be the sole survivor of the 16,000 men who had set out from Kabul a week before.

The news of this disastrous retreat reached Calcutta and General Pollock was ordered to assume the command in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, efforts had been made in the Panjab to push up reinforcements and by the middle of January 1842 a brigade consisting of the 30th, 53rd, 60th and 64th sepoy regiments with other European troops had been formed under Brigadier Wild. On 15 January the 53rd and the 64th regiments were sent under Lieutenant-Colonel Moseley to take possession of Ali Masjid and Wild himself with the rest of the force moved forward towards Khyber Pass. Though Ali Masjid was taken easily, Moseley was compelled by incessant Afridi counter attacks to evacuate the place and retreat to Jamrud. The loss in Moseley's detachment was heavy, Brigadier Wild in his attempt to get through the Khyber Pass was also beaten back to Jamrud. This second defeat had a fatal effect on the force and it was not until Pollock arrived at Peshawar on 5 April 1842 and assumed the command that any real progress was made in preparing for an advance.

Brigadier Wild's brigade had by that time withdrawn

1. J.W.Kaye - History of the War in Afghanistan,
Vol. II, pp. 366-367

to Peshawar where Pollock found them. About 1,000 men of the four sepoy regiments in Wild's brigade were sick mainly because of "the inclemency of the weather and the exposure to which the sepoys had been subjected during Wild's disastrous advance."¹ In addition to this sickness, Pollock also noticed much bad feeling among the sepoys. The unhappy feeling among the troops was most noticable in the Hindu sepoys. That was because "a number of the unfortunate creatures from Cabool", had made their way to Peshawar and had spread what he described "as exaggerated stories of their sufferings... that although they were Brahmins, food was thrust down their throats by Mussalmans, and they were spit upon." Some men had "also shown mutilated hands and feet, having been frost bitten."² Though each of the commanding officers of the 30th, 53rd, 60th and 64th seemed to consider his own regiment free from any taint, the panic among the troops was "taking a more decided appearance, and that the Hindoos of the 60th, and also of the 53rd," had said they would "not go to Cabul to be made Mussalmans of, and such like speeches."³

It was not the native soldiers only who were near mutinous. The European officers also were equally discontented. They freely expressed their often gloomy opinions at mess table and voiced such opinions as that "it was impossible to force the pass without a loss of more than half your force".

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1. C.R.Low - The Life and Correspondence of Field-Marshal Sir George Pollock. p.225
 2. Ibid., p.227
 3. H.B.Edwards and H. Merivale - Life of Sir Henry Lawrence Vol.I, p.330.

A captain of the 53rd sepoy regiment said "in the event of any advance being again ordered, he would use his utmost endeavours to prevent a sepoy of his company from even entering the pass". An officer of another sepoy regiment in the very presence of his men said of the expected advance "Well never mind ... none of us ever return again"¹.

The internal economy also of the sepoy regiments failed to satisfy Pollock.² He, therefore, tried his utmost to help the men to recover their spirits. He visited the hospitals frequently and by adding a few things³ to their comforts tried to make them realise that he felt an interest in them.⁴

By degrees his personal example began to take effect so that when on 20 August 1842 Pollock marched with his troops from Peshawar much of their discipline had been restored. The force under his command included the 6th, 26th, 30th, 33rd, 35th, 53rd, 60th and the 64th Bengal native infantry regiments with European and other native troops. Of these troops only the 6th was fresh from down country while all the others had already been either at Peshawar or Jalalabad. The Afghans were defeated at Jagdalak and on 16 September, 1842 the British flag was hoisted over the Bala Hissar, the palace citadel of Kabul. Meanwhile, Nott had started from Kandahar in August and destroying the fortification at Ghazni on his way, he joined Pollock at Kabul on 17 September with a force which

1. Low - op.cit., pp.230, 234.

2. Low - op.cit., p.229.

3. Worsted gloves and stockings were supplied to the native soldiers.

4. Low - op.cit., p.225.

in addition to the artillery and cavalry included five Bengal sepoy regiments - the 2nd, 16th, 38th, 42nd and the 43rd.¹ The city of Kabul was sacked and was then evacuated on 12 October. Lord Ellenborough provided a magnificent reception for the returning troops at Ferozepore and a further donation of six months' batta was granted to all troops employed in the second campaign.² Besides this, troops engaged in the actions around Kandahar, Jalalabad, Kalat-i-Ghiljai, Ghazni and Kabul received permission to bear those names upon their colours. Medals were also promised to the troops garrisoned at Jalalabad and Kalat-i-Ghiljai.³

The most successful conclusion of the Afghan campaign, showed that the native soldiers had been brought to a better temper by the "sound discretion and excellent tact of Pollock," so that they had "entered into dreaded passes, and, confiding in their leader, carried victory with them up to the walls of the Afghan Capital."³ Of their bearing when they retired Ellenborough wrote to the Duke of Wellington from Ferozepore on 29 December 1842, "the army [was] in the highest spirits - justly proud of its actions, and proud too of its force as exhibited in this camp."⁴ Again, "the whole army, officers and men, feel that they serve under a Government which [could] appreciate good service and [would] always do justice to them".⁵

1. Cardew - op.cit., p.189.

2. G.O.G.G. 18 December 1842, Bengal Jily. Cons. 18 December 1842, No.64.

3. Kaye - A History of the Sepoy War in India; vol.I, p.275.

4. History of the Indian Administration ...ed. Colchester.p.316

5. Ibid., p.250

Of the other regiments present, who had not been employed in the Afghan campaign the Governor-General wrote "nothing could be better than the spirit which animated them all."¹

In spite of these compliments, the succeeding years pointed out the gradual deterioration in the Bengal sepoy army establishment, "which had been growing since the early years of the century."²

Scarcely had the campaign in Afghanistan ended and scarcely had new recruits been raised at Allahabad, Cawnpore and Etawah to make up the losses of the Afghan campaign³ when the Indian Government found themselves involved in a war in Sind. The war commenced in February 1843. The battle of Miani was fought on 17 February, Hyderabad fell and a month later another victory was won at Daba over the Amir of Khairpur. Thus, war was practically over and Sind was annexed in August 1843. It was not the Bengal army but that of Bombay took part in the Sind War.

After the Sind War, the Indian Government was involved in another war - the last of the wars with the Maratha powers. Sindhia, the Maharaja of Gwalior had been assassinated in September 1843, a minor had acceded and disturbances had immediately started.⁴ In December 1843 a British force was assembled at Agra and Jhansi to make sure that a regent favourable to the British should be installed. In addition to other

1. History of the Indian Administration... ed. Colchester, p.287.

2. Cardew- op.cit., p.202.

3. "General Pollock's army lost about 1500 men...and the loss fell principally on the native regiments." History
Ellenborough, p.315.

4. Roberts - op.cit., pp.330-331.

troops, 12 native regiments were included in this expedition or military demonstration as it was expected to be. On 29 December 1843, the Gwalior army having unexpectedly taken action was defeated by the Company's army at the twin battles of Maharajpore and of Puniar and the Gwalior campaign was terminated.

Before the conclusion of the Gwalior campaign the Government of India realising that the Bombay army was barely sufficient to meet the regular commitments of its own Presidency,¹ had decided, "with a view at once to efficiency and economy to garrison Scinde with Bengal troops only."² The Commander-in-Chief was instructed to make all necessary arrangements for this change over. Four Bengal sepoy regiments (the 4th, 34th, 64th and 69th) with other cavalry and artillery troops who were encamped near the Sind frontier "received orders to hold themselves in readiness to move."³ The order further made it clear that those who were thus called for duty in Sind had been chosen because they "had not⁴ been employed on foreign service and [they were the regiments] whose actual tour it was to proceed to that Province."⁵

The sepoys at once displayed an unwillingness to proceed to Sind by presenting a petition which was received by

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1. Lambrick- Sir Charles Napier and Sind. p.274.
 2. Ellenborough to the Queen. Calcutta, September 19, 1843. History of ---Ellenborough. ed. Colchester, p.94.
 3. G.O.C.C. 15 September 1843. Bengal Mily. Cons. 15 September 1843. No.53.
 4. The 64th which was called to march, was employed in the Afghan War.
 5. G.O.C.C. 15 September 1843. Bengal Mily. Cons. 15 September 1843. No.53.

the Adjutant-General of the army in October 1843. The petition was worded in inflammatory language.¹ It stated that the regiment (the number of which was not mentioned) had served in Kabul and now, after only staying seven months at Ludhiana it was being ordered to proceed to Roree Bukkur, which was neither proper nor usual. The petitioners demanded that "there were other regiments who should go" before them. Besides this, the petitioners also ventilated their dissatisfaction with the Colonel, Adjutant Flyter, Subadar Durga Prasad and a Havildar Seetaram. The petition further threatened these officers that if the order of march was enforced they would "know the consequences." The accusation was made that the Havildar had been promoted improperly by superceding many old candidates and that since the Colonel had been appointed the regiment had not received one month's pay complete. Subadar Durga Prasad had undue influence upon the Colonel, while since "the appointment of Adjutant Flyter the petitioners have not had any peace of comfort." After requesting the Government to investigate all these grievances the petitioners asked for the transfer of these European and native officers and expressed their desire to be discharged from the Company's service. An immediate enquiry was held and it was established that the petition was written and posted by the 64th regiment, stationed at Ludhiana. It was also proved that nightly meetings were being held in the sepoy lines of the regiment. No enquiry was made, however, about the validity of the complaints of the petitioners.

1. Bengal Mily. Cons. 23 February 1844. No. 392.

The 64th was marched on to the parade ground but in spite of all inducements, "the identity of delinquents was studiously concealed."¹ A sepoy, who was suspected to be one of the leaders of the mischief was discharged by Major-General Hunter but still the attitude of the regiment did not change.²

The Commander-in-Chief in a determined effort to "mark his sense of the misconduct", ordered the regiment to march to Barrackpore "preparatory to the adoption of ulterior measures of the most stringent nature."³ To prove to the native officers that they would be "held responsible for the maintenance of discipline and good order amongst the men in their lines," all promotion and furlough in the native ranks of the 64th was suspended. Further no native soldier of the regiment was allowed to obtain his discharge from the service.⁴

The 64th meanwhile, on 6 February 1844, had started its march from Ludhiana and reached Ambala on 15 February. Major-General Fast, Commander of the Sirhind Division in his "concern for the good of the service and in the emergency that had arisen out of the refusal of some other⁵ native regiments to proceed to Sind," sounded the feelings of the native officers and the sepoys of the 64th regiment. Convinced that the whole regiment was ready to proceed to Sind unconditionally the Major-General begged the Commander-in-Chief to revoke his

1. Bengal Mily. Cons. 4 April 1844. No. 45.

2. Hunter to Adj. Genl. Ludhiana 7 January 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons. 23 February 1844. No. 392.

3. Adj. Genl. to Hunter, Simla 19 January 1844. No. 98. Bengal Mily. Cons. 4 April 1844. No. 45.

4. Mily. Secy. to Adj. Camp Kathagaon 14 February 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons. 23 February 1844. No. 392.

5. The 34th Regiment refused to march by this time.

previous order and to permit the 64th to march back to Sukkur.¹

The Commander-in-Chief agreed to permit the 64th to go to Sukkur and thereby gave them an opportunity "of blotting out the stain" which attached to them.² The Major-General was asked to remember that in case of the slightest demur exhibited by the regiment he was to take it direct to Benares and thence to Barrackpore.³

The 64th started from Ambala for Mumdotte on 29 February marching, it was said, with perfect discipline, and then embarked for Sind on 17 March 1844.⁴ This heartening information prompted the Commander-in-Chief to inform Moseley that the conduct of the 64th in proceeding unhesitatingly and unconditionally towards Sukkur was "so creditable to the corps and so indicative of an earnest desire to retrieve its former high character as to induce the Commander-in-Chief strongly to recommend to Government to pass to the several grades, in addition to the full or marching batta always allowed to regiments serving in Scinde, still higher advantages in regard to pay, together with the benefits of the regulated family pension" to the heirs of those who might die from "disease contracted in that province."⁵ Moseley replied that, "the generosity

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1. Fast to Adj.Genl. Amballa. 18 February 1844.No.143. Board Collection, 94,623. pp.107-111.
 2. Adj.Genl.to Fast, Kutabminar 21 February 1844.No.416. Bengal Mily.Cons. 8 March 1844, No.96.
 3. Adj.Genl.to Fast, Kutabminar 21 February 1844. No.416. Bengal Mily.Cons. 8 March 1844. No.96.
 4. Moseley to Adj.Genl., On the river Sutledge near Mumdotte 17 March 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons. 29 March 1844. No.132.
 5. Adj.Genl. to Moseley Chilkana 13 March 1844 No.581. Bengal Mily. Cons. 4 April 1844. No.39.

displayed by His Excellency" had been "most fully and most warmly appreciated by all ranks under my command."¹ He further stated that the men had stood fast to their colours and had paid no attention to the provocation of the sepoy of the 34th when they had met during the march. These instigators, so Moseley wrote, had tried their best to spread a mutinous spirit but the 64th, "in the midst of all these base and black designs", had maintained a steadfast and true adherence to the English Government.²

The Commander-in-Chief on 19 March wrote to the Governor-General that "the steadiness with which the 64th regiment had resisted the importunities with which it had been assailed by the disaffected corps" deserved the highest commendation. He therefore urged that the "money ration and family pension which were originally allowed to the army of the Indus and which up to the 10th October 1843, were enjoyed by every native soldier of the Bengal Army whoever served in Scinde" might be granted to the 64th "as a fitting reward for the praiseworthy conduct of the corps on the present occasion and the excellent example of obedience to authority" which it had exhibited to the whole Bengal army.³

The Governor-General on receiving this letter expressed his highest approbation of the conduct of the 64th regiment.

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1. Moseley to Adj. Genl., On the river Sutledge near Mundote 17 March 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons., 29 March 1844. No. 132.
 2. Moseley to Adj. Genl., on the river Sutledge near Mundote 17 March 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons. 29 March 1844. No. 132.
 3. Adj. Genl., to Mily. Secy., Amballa 19 March 1844 No. 276. Bengal Mily. Cons. 29 March 1844. No. 132.

But at the same time he pointed out that the 64th had not been engaged in Sind before and that the extra allowance had not been enjoyed there by the Bombay troops since 1 July 1843, as by the Bengal soldiers since 14 October 1843. Consequently the Governor-General did not agree to the proposals of the Commander-in-Chief.¹ He also pointed that these advantages could not be granted to the 64th only - all the other regiments who were proceeding to Sind would be justified in demanding them.

It is to be noted that on receiving this negative reply on the question of extra allowances, the Commander-in-Chief did not take any step to inform either Moseley or the soldiers of the 64th that they could not be granted.

In April the 64th reached Sukkur where the 69th already in a mutinous state, was still stationed. It was reported to Sir Charles Napier, the Governor of Sind, that the 69th had come to blows with each other. Though the 64th remained steady, Major-General Simpson wrote on 29 April that the regiment (the 64th) ought to be discharged and hazarded the guess that it was "rather a lull than a calm with the Bengal troops."²

In May 1844 the 64th marched from Sukkur and early in June reached Shikarpur. A few days later, on 18 June Major General Hunter arrived there on a visit of inspection. He was "led to believe that a perfect understanding on the subject of

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1. Mily. Secy., to Adj. Genl., Fort William 29 March 1844, No. 739. Bengal Mily. Cons. 1844; No. 133.
 2. Adj. Genl. to Napier, Simla 5 June 1844. No. 1252. Bengal For. Secret Cons. 23 November 1844 No. 8.

pay and contentment prevailed in the corps."¹ But on that very evening at about 7 o'clock the Major-General was surprised to hear that the 64th had refused to accept their pay for April "which included nine days of Scinde allowances." He immediately went to the parade ground. Without showing any sign of dissatisfaction one company of the regiment took their pay. Thereupon Moseley proposed that as all the companies had agreed to take their pay the officers might be allowed to disburse the remainder. At first Hunter refused to allow this, but afterwards he agreed and the officers started to pay their respective companies. Immediately there was a roar among the men and as Hunter himself described it "in an instant the whole were off to their lines making use of most abusive language and declaring they had been deceived."² Hunter went among them and tried to restore order but to no avail. The men did not want to fall in and continuing to utter most abusive words, began throwing stones and bricks at their officers. The Major-General realising that it would not be wise to excite the men any more that night left the parade ground with the other European officers.

Next morning another parade was ordered and Hunter himself started paying the men. The whole regiment, except for ten men who were ordered to be put in prison, took their pay. Then, when the day seemed won, and the regiment had been

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1. Hunter to Adj. Genl. Shikarpore 21 June 1844. Bengal For. Sec. Cons. 13 July 1844. No. 146.
 2. Hunter to Adj. Genl. Shikarpore 21 June 1844. Bengal For. Sec. Cons. 13 July 1844 No. 146.

ordered to take their arms and fall into line, the regiment again mutinied. Hunter with all the other officers tried to bring his men to a sense of their duty but failed. The mutineers informed him that they had been deceived by Lieutenant-Colonel Moseley and Captain Burt who had promised to pay the sepoy's General Pollock's batta,¹ of 12 rupees per month for each man. Instead of that amount the sepoy's had been paid at the rate of eight rupees eight annas. As they had agreed to march to Sind only on that assurance of extra money, the sepoy's declared that if that sum was not granted to them they preferred to be discharged and to return to their own country.

Hunter being puzzled at this information assured the mutineers that he had no power to discharge them but that he would soon relieve them by the 69th. As he could neither grant extra pay nor discharge them, the men remained the whole day and night of 19 June on the parade ground "in their full dress, walking about by their piled arms."²

Next morning Hunter with Captain Shortreed³ again went to the parade and found that the men were ready to obey every order and seemed to be sorry for their conduct. Perhaps, as Hunter said "hunger and fatigue might have played a part in bringing about this change." A parade was held at about 10 o'clock that same morning and at this parade Hunter asked

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1. Pay and allowance received by the sepoy's in General Pollock's force while serving in Afghanistan.
 2. Hunter to G.G. Shikarpore 22 June 1844. Bengal For. Sec. Cons. 13 July 1844 No.136.
 3. A.D.C. to Hunter.

one man from each company of the regiment to come forward and to state his grievance. The Major-General himself took down the evidence given by these sepoys. From that evidence, and from his conversations with the officers he realised that the men had been misled into believing that they were to get extra pay.¹ He was also convinced that Moseley and Burt had actually promised the men the extra pay. So, considering "the excitement and turbulent state" of the 64th, Hunter removed Moseley from his command and granted him leave of absence. Further, he suggested to the Commander-in-Chief and the Governor-General that the 64th should be replaced by the 69th.² Napier, the Governor of Sind, was also informed of the happenings at Shikarpur.

On 25 June 1844, Hunter marched the mutinous regiment from Shikarpur to Sukkur. Being convinced that the regiment was feeling contrite and submissive for its past conduct he thought it proper "to give the soldiers one more chance of saving themselves" and asked the native officers to produce on the next day the leaders of the outbreak, threatening that in case of non-compliance with the order the native officers would "by force be deprived of their arms." Reporting this measure to the Governor-General as well as to the Commander-in-Chief and the Governor of Sind, Hunter concluded his report by pointing out that there were a number of infamous characters

1. Bengal For. Sec. Cons. 17 August 1844. No. 102.

2. Hunter to G.G. Shikarpore 22 June 1844. Bengal For. Sec. Cons. 13 July 1844, No. 136.

in the regiment - enough to lead to destruction any native regiment - and further commented that the sepoy did not understand mutiny in anything like the same light our idea of the matter[was].¹

Sir Charles approved all Hunter's measures and requested the Governor-General to bring Moseley to a General court-martial.² He also asked Hunter to put Burt under arrest and to order Moseley to remain at Sukkur.³

The Commander-in-Chief, however, censured Hunter for removing Moseley from the command of his regiment and said that "a measure of such severity towards an officer of high rank and long standing ought not to have been resorted to without the most conclusive proof."⁴

By the time these letters reached Sukkur Hunter had paraded the mutinous regiment and addressed it himself, asking the men to give up the ringleaders and so to save the regiment from disbandment, assuring them that their grievances had been taken down and were being sent to the Commander-in-Chief and the Governor-General. Immediately after this address, 39 ringleaders were pointed out who were put under arrest by Hunter. The whole regiment (except these 39 prisoners) were pardoned and the parade was dismissed.⁵ Hunter then issued a circular

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1. Hunter to G.G.Sukkur 25 June 1844. Bengal For. Sec. Cons., 13 July 1844. No.155.
 2. Napier to G.G.Karachi 27 June 1844 No.98 Bengal For. Sec. Cons., 13 July 1844 No.152.
 3. Napier to Hunter Karachi 27 June 1844 No.637 Bengal For. Sec.Cons. 13 July 1844. No.154.
 4. Bengal For. Sec. Cons., 17 August 1844. No.98.
 5. Hunter to G.G.Sukkur 27 June 1844. Bengal For. Sec. Cons., 17 August 1844. No.97.

to the European officers of the 64th, informing them that the regiment was to be marched on 28 June to the lines occupied by the 69th where they would take a share in all duties. Besides this, the officers were asked to give the strictest attention to the performance of their duties and were told that "the mere getting over a duty", was not sufficient, "diligence, zeal, and firmness without severity" - were necessary and "the most vigilant care that not in the most trifling degree ^[were] ~~an~~ the men to be allowed to remain in ignorance of the genuine purport of any order respecting themselves Had this been always done in the 64th the present unhappy occurrence," the Major-General observed "never would have taken place." The lack of unity among the officers was deplored, and Hunter concluding the order, commented that it had been their want of unanimity which had made it "impossible for them either to command the respect, or hold that power over soldiers which a strictly united body of officers always could wield with so much effect."¹

On the receipt of all the reports and letters of Hunter Sir Charles Napier asked him to try the 39 ringleaders by a general court-martial.² He did not wish, however, to disband the whole regiment, for, as he explained in a letter to the Governor-General, already within a short period two native regiments had been disbanded. Another disbandment would make

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1. Division Order by Hunter, Sukkur 27 June 1844 Bengal For. Sec. Cons., 17 August 1844 No. 98.
 2. Napier to Hunter Karachi 1 July 1844 Bengal For. Sec. Cons. 17 August 1844 No. 99.

that great punishment too common to the native regiments.¹ Moreover, if they knew they were to be disbanded, there would be a danger of the mutinous regiment not obeying the orders "to march from Shikarpore where they were masters and march to Sukkur where they knew they would be prisoners; and exposed to severe punishment."² By another letter Sir Charles informed the Governor-General that he had ordered Hunter to deprive the 64th of its colours since "no regiment had a right to bear colours after a mutiny till either a course of good conduct or some brilliant action in battle," had given the regiment the right to reclaim their honour.³ The Commander-in-Chief⁴ and the Governor-General⁵ agreed with Napier's order to punish the 39 prisoners tried by court-martial. But the Commander-in-Chief did not support the order to take away the colours, for as he pointed out, according to the regulations which prevailed in the army a native soldier was required to swear under the colours and to take an oath of allegiance that he would not abandon or forsake the colours of his regiment. Hence, to deprive a regiment of its colours seemed to the Commander-in-Chief virtually to cut the bond by which the sepoy considered himself bound to the state.

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1. Napier to G.G. Karachi 30 June 1844 No.99 Bengal For. Sec. Cons., 17 August 1844 No.101.
 2. Napier to G.G. Karachi 3 July 1844 Bengal For. Sec. Cons., 17 August 1844 No.104.
 3. Napier to G.G. Guzree hills 12 July 1844 No.102. Bengal For. Sec. Cons., 17 August 1844 No.107.
 4. Adj. - Genl. to the Milly. Secy., Simla 12 August 1844 No.783 Bengal For. Sec. Cons. 11 May 1844 No.33.
 5. G.G. to Napier, Fort William 27 August 1844. No.577 Bengal For. Sec. Cons. 27 August 1844 No.33.

But before these letters reached Napier, news had come that the colours of the 64th regiment had been taken away and that the action had produced "a good effect."¹

The Supreme Government then pointed out to Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, the necessity of bringing Moseley to trial. He had deceived the regiment, by "perverting the meaning of the Adjutant-General's letter of 13 July." Nothing could "justify the misconduct of the regiment but if the allegation against this officer" were true, then the trial of the officer would "demonstrate the impartiality and equal justice of the whole proceedings."²

The court-martial was ordered to be held on 22 July 1844. Before the first session of the court took place Hunter sent a report to the Adjutant-General giving his observation on the whole question of the mutiny of the 64th regiment at Shikarpur. According to the report the 64th had proceeded to Mumdote in a discontented mood and that mood had prevailed during the whole march. Further, the regiment had often expressed its dislike of the Sind posting and once at Mudki it had been in open mutiny - "some of the soldiers having seized their colours and insisted on going to Ferojepore instead of Mumdote." These incidents had never been brought to the notice of the Government. They "were passed over by the officers from a wish to keep up the name of the regiment." The Major-General also

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1. Napier to the Mily. Secy. Karachi 31 August 1844 Bengal For. Sec. Cons. 23 November 1844 No.5.
 2. G.G. to the C.in C. Fort William 27 August 1844 No.577 Bengal For. Sec. Cons. 27 August 1844 No.33.

believed that the 64th had always had the idea that "it was to receive more pay than others ... and Lieutenant-Colonel Moseley had never made the Commander-in-Chief acquainted with the real state of his regiment." Moseley was further accused by Hunter of being "of an imperious and abusive nature." It was only to be wondered at, Hunter wrote, that the sepoy had not been "driven to extremities before." Moseley either by way of pleasantry or in ridicule had often called the men of his regiment "the black goralog which displeased the sepoy very much." Hunter described the feelings of the native soldiers by quoting the expressions used during the loss of all discipline at Shikarpur against Moseley, "one must have out that lying tongue and that lying right hand must be cut off." Hunter had never known sepoy to act and speak in the way they did at Shikarpur. Moseley had also hurt the feelings of the native officers of the regiment by promoting a naik instead of appointing a havildar to the post of drill havildar.¹

The court-martial duly passed judgment on the 39 prisoners sentencing six of them to be immediately executed, seven to imprisonment for life with hard labour, ten to imprisonment for 14 years, seven others to imprisonment for ten years, five for seven years, three for five years. One sepoy was acquitted.² The Governor-General confirmed the sentence. While expressing great approbation of Hunter's handling of the mutiny, the

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1. Hunter to Adj. Genl. Sukkur 28 June 1844. Bengal For. Sec. Cons., 23 November 1844 No. 6.
 2. C-in-C to G.G. Simla 21 August 1844. Bengal For. Sec. Progs. 21 September 1844.

Governor-General expressed the hope that the punishment of the ringleaders would "have the effect of impressing upon an army so distinguished for its valor that obedience to the orders of its Commanders, [which was] the first of all military duties, without which the other admirable qualities" it possessed could be of little value.¹

Hunter also demanded that another 71 men of the 64th should be dismissed. These men, old sepoy of another regiment, had all been in jail serving sentences passed by another court-martial, and their recruitment into the 64th had been a mischievous blunder. As Hunter wrote "how could they have been admitted as recruits into the 64th I should not give an opinion further than had the Havildar Major (improperly so styled) been fit for his place they never could have been entertained without him and the commanding officer's knowledge of their history....."

Hunter also accused Captain Burt, in the harshest terms, of neglect of his duty. He had seldom appeared on parade, and even after the mutiny of the 64th, he had left his companies to be paraded by the native officers. The Government could well judge his neglect and mismanagement by referring to the roll of the men in his companies. "Could it be imagined," Hunter enquired, after all that had happened "that two sepoy should still be in those companies known to be dismissed by sentence of courts-martial from other regiments" and that Captain Burt had so little pride in the regiment, he had

¹. G.G. to C. Fort William 1 September 1844. No. 593.
Bengal For. Sec. Progs. 21 September 1844.

lately been commanding, "as not to have made himself acquainted with the cause of their former dismissal."¹ The Adjutant-General reported the contents of this letter to the Governor-General but though 71 men were dismissed no other step was taken.

Lieutenant-Colonel Moseley, who had already been removed to the 2nd European regiment was tried however, by court-martial and was cashiered.² The colours of the 64th were soon after returned to the regiment by order of the Governor-General.³

While the 64th regiment thus kept the attention of the Government engaged for nearly a year other native regiments were refusing to march to Sind. The 34th regiment had marched out from Meerut and reached Ferozepore early in February 1844. On 9 February Major Wheeler, the commanding officer of the regiment informed Major-General Vincent, Commander at Ferozepore that his men had refused to march to Sukkur, unless they receive the additional pay granted on former occasions to native troops employed in Sind.⁴ The men of the 34th seemed to have received the news of the withdrawal of the allowances

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1. Hunter to Adj.Genl.Sukkur, 9 September 1844. Bengal For. Sec.Cons. 23 November 1844. No.7.
 2. Adj.-Genl. to G.G.Simla 1 September 1844. No.593. Bengal For. Sec. Progs. 21 September 1844.
 3. Under secretary to the Govt. of India to the Govt. of Sind. Ft.William 19 September 1844. For. Sec. Progs. 21 September 1844.
 4. Vincent to Capt. Shortreed Ferojepore 9 February 1844 No.56 Bengal Mily. Cons. 1 March 1844 No.288.

from a detachment of the 38th Light ¹ infantry which had lately arrived from Sind. The Commander-in-Chief, reporting this to the Government remarked it would hardly be expected that troops would proceed "contentedly to an entirely new country (to them at least) beyond the frontier, where every necessary of life [was] far more expensive than in the provinces" when they had learnt that the advantages had all been curtailed. Sir Hugh, as ready to obstruct the policy of the Government as ever, added his comment that the policy "of diminishing the advantages of pay and pension of the troops serving in Scinde" and of "placing the soldiery on a worse footing than formerly" was most inexpedient. He therefore recommended that the old allowances should be continued under some new designation. ²

Meanwhile all the persuasion and appeals made by Wheeler to the 34th proved of no avail. Major-General Dick Commander of the Meerut Division, who on 9 February had been only a few miles away from Ferozepur hurried to Ferozepore. He paraded the regiment on the morning of 14 February and tried to exercise his personal influence. But this effort also proved futile. The regiment while refusing to march to Sind expressed "their willingness to follow their officers, not

1. Light infantry - "A company of active strong men, carefully selected from the rest of the regiment.....The object of the light infantry movements whether in battalion or in company, is to protect the advance and retreat, and to cover and assist the formation of larger bodies."

J.H.Stoqueler - Military Encyclopaedia p.157

2. Adj.Genl. to Mily.Secy. Camp Peertellao 17 February 1844 No.157. Bengal Mily Cons. 1 March 1844. No.268.

dismayed by any sickness or death," but declared that they could not exist in a country "such as they conceive Scinde to be without the increase to their pay."¹ Dick reporting to the Commander-in-Chief, stated that this attitude was not confined to the 34th but was widespread among the other native troops ordered for Sind.

On hearing of these incidents at Ferozepore, the Governor-General authorised the Commander-in-Chief to exercise all the power "which could be exercised by the Government for the repression of mutiny even to the extent of disbanding a regiment."²

The Commander-in-Chief in the meantime had instructed Dick to try again to influence the sepoy of the 34th and to explain to the troops, with the help of the best qualified linguist available, the punishment which awaited them for persistent refusal to obey orders. If the sepoy should be found willing to obey the orders in an orderly and cheerful manner in keeping with the tradition of the 34th then His Excellency would be ready to forget "their present misconduct and to submit any respectful and well founded representation of disadvantages to which troops in Scinde" would be exposed "to the favourable consideration of the Government of India."³ Should the order to proceed to Sind be disobeyed Dick was to march the 34th to Meerut (where it was raised) prior to its

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1. Dick to Adj. Genl., Ferojepore 14 February 1844 Bengal Mily. Cons. 1 March 1844. No. 289.
 2. ~~C.G.~~ to C. in C. to Dick. 18 Febraury 1844. Board Collection 94, 623. pp. 65-67.
 3. C. in C. to Dick 18 February 1844. Board Collection 94, 623 pp. 90-91.

complete disbandment with dishonour. To this instruction Dick replied that it would be impossible to march the 34th back to Meerut if the intentions of the Government became known to the sepoys, for it was even rumoured that the men of a European regiment on the Frontier had been "heard to declare that they would not act against the sepoys who were properly asserting their rights and no more."¹ On hearing this the Commander-in-Chief retracted his previous order and merely asked that the 34th regiment be marched back to Meerut, But at the same time he severely censured Dick for entertaining a doubt as to his ability to coerce the regiment. His obvious course should have been to bring other European regiments "whose loyalty could not be questioned"² from Ludhiana. While the Commander-in-Chief was reproving doubt in Major-General Dick, he himself was voicing doubts to the Governor-General about the wisdom of disbanding the 34th, saying that the evil could not "in any degree be remedied by the adoption of this measure." Sind, he argued, might be included in the Company's province but yet it was considered "a foreign country by the native troops and increased advantages having been held out, and given as an inducement, to serve in that quarter, the men" were impressed with the conviction that they were entitled to them. "However erroneously" they looked "upon the attempt to withhold them as almost a breach of faith toward them on the

1. Dick to Adj. Genl. Ferojepore 22 February 1844. No. 70
Bengal Mily. Cons. 8 March 1844. No. 99.

2. Adj. Genl. to Dick. Camp Delhi 25 February 1844. No. 448.
Bengal Mily. Cons., 8 March 1844 No. 99.

part of the Government" which they "had a right to resist."¹

It was now the Governor-General's turn to silence doubt. He reminded Sir Hugh Gough that the extra allowance of money rations first granted to the troops beyond the Indus (18 December 1838) had been withdrawn on 31 December 1839. Again granted to the troops on 1 January, 1842, it had again been withdrawn from 1 July 1843 by an order of 30 May, 1843. That allowance had thus been extinguished. He pointed out that the regiments ordered to Sind had enjoyed the allowances granted to troops in the field, while others in the province enjoyed only cantonment rates. He therefore issued peremptory orders to disband the 34th and made plain his displeasure that "the promptitude of decision and of action essentially required under the circumstances at Ferojepore" had been unfortunately absent in the conduct of Major-General Dick and the officers.²

On 2 March 1844 the 34th regiment started its march from Ferozepore towards Meerut. During his march the Commander-in-Chief asked Wheeler to offer it another opportunity to follow the regiment.³ But on 16 March Wheeler reported that "he had no hope of the regiment's returning to the sense of their duty."⁴ He also stated that he had reasons to believe

1. Adj.-Genl. to Mily. Secy. Camp Shahderah 26 February 1844. No.187. Bengal Mily. Cons., 8 March 1844 No.99.

2. Mily.Secy. to Adj.Genl., Fort William 5 March 1844 No.152. Bengal Mily. Cons., 8 March 1844 No.100.

3. Adj.Genl. to Wheeler. Delhi 9 March 1844. Bengal Mily.Cons., 4 April 1844 No.49.

4. Bengal Mily. Cons., 18 April 1844. No.109.

that the 34th had entered into an agreement with other mutinous regiments to stand firm and refuse to march to Sind unless the extra pay were granted to them and a pension were sanctioned to the heirs of those who might die in Sind.¹

It was also reported to the Commander-in-Chief that on its way to Meerut the 34th having met the 64th regiment had tried to dissuade their colleagues of the 64th from proceeding. But the 64th did not waver and resolutely marched to its destination. On 17 March Wheeler reported to the Commander-in-Chief that the regiment possessed detailed information about the curtailing of the allowances received by the troops in Sind from detachment of sepoy returning from Sind. This information had so completely shaken their sense of honour, obedience and faith that he much feared it would never be retrieved.²

On 22 March 1844 the 34th was camped at Sirdanah, on march from Meerut. Wheeler gave the sepoy a last chance, asking them to identify and surrender the instigators of this spirit of insubordination. None of the sepoy came forward and Wheeler now became convinced that "the greater part if not the whole of the native commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the regiment" were in sympathy with the men.³

The 34th arrived at Meerut on 23 March. Three days later all the other regiments stationed at Meerut were ordered

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1. Bengal Mily. Cons., 18 April 1844. No.109.
 2. Bengal Mily. Cons., 18 April 1844. No.109.
 3. Wheeler to Adj. Genl., Sirdanah 22 March 1844.
Bengal Mily.Cons., 4 April 1844. No.49.

to form three sides of a square and then the 34th regiment was marched from its camp to the centre of the square. Then a translation of the general order of the Commander-in-Chief was read out. This, after referring to the bad spirit which from the first had possessed all ranks, and the failure of every effort of the officers to recall the regiment to a sense of its duty, ordered that "the 34th regiment be struck out of the army list and the native commissioned and non-commissioned officers, drummers and privates discharged ^{from} the service as totally unworthy of the confidence of the Government or the name of soldiers."¹ The 34th was then deprived of its arms, accoutrements, and the uniform "on which they had brought such disgrace." The men were paid up their arrears and were ordered to march round the square. Having completed the circuit they were placed under the charge of a troop of the 10th Light² cavalry which conducted them about half a mile beyond the boundary of the cantonments and there left them. Two sick men of the dismissed regiment were allowed to stay in the station hospital, the rest dispersed quietly.³

But the disbanding of the 34th did not prevent the spread of the contagion, and the Government soon found itself dealing with two more mutinous sepoy regiments, the 69th and

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1. Wodehouse to Adj. Genl. Meerut 26 March 1844 No. 140. Bengal Mily. Cons. 12 April 1844. No. 90.
 2. Light Cavalry - mounted soldiers which were lightly armed and accoutred." Stoqueler - Military Encyclopaedia p. 157
 3. European officers under the rank of a major of the disbanded regiment were ordered to join several regiments of native infantry in the Sirhind and Meerut Divisions whose officers were absent on staff or civil duties.

the 4th.

These two regiments had been marching up to Ferozepore during February, from Shahjahanpur and Bareilly respectively. Major-General Dick, to prevent their making contact with the mutinous 34th had ordered the two regiments to halt at some intermediate point on their march. But at no point were there sufficient supplies available to permit a halt of any duration. The 69th arrived therefore on 24 February, the 4th on 1 March, some weeks before the disbanding of the 34th.

Boats were ready for the passage down the Sutlej and on the arrival of the 69th the attempt was made to get them to embark at once. But the regiment refused to proceed to Sukkur, unless they were allowed extra batta and rations, the men declaring that these were essential to their maintenance in Sind.¹

Every effort was made by the commanding officer of the regiment to bring the men back to order but they positively refused to proceed. Next day Lieutenant-Colonel Norton told Dick that the 3rd and the 4th companies of the 69th had loaded their hackeries and marched towards the boats, and he expressed the hope, that the want of combination amongst the disaffected might bring a favourable result. Accordingly, the whole regiment was pardoned on the morning of 25 February and the men "who were willing to march trusting to the liberal consideration of Government," were ordered to fall out. On this occasion

1. Norton to Asst. Adj. Genl. Ferojepore 24 February 1844.
No.36. Bengal Mily. Cons., 8 March 1844. No.109.

467¹ men declared their readiness to march.²

Having achieved so much Norton appealed to Major-General Dick for further instructions.

His hesitation, when reported to the Governor-General, drew down an angry reproof. He should have embarked with the regimental colours and the 467 men, "that measure would in all probability have induced the remainder of the regiment to follow" and could have led to the future union of the whole regiment. Ellenborough was in fact so irritated by the mis-handling of matters at Ferozepore that he ordered the transfer of the divisional commander to the Presidency Division, declaring that "it would not be expedient to continue Major-General Dick in the command of Meerut Division," since he had "shown himself to be unequal to the difficulties in which [he had] lately been placed." Major-General Grey was appointed to the Meerut Division³ in his place.

Before this letter could reach Meerut Dick had committed a further blunder. He had paraded the 69th on 19 March 1844 and had read out to the men, through the regimental interpreter, a promise that if the men proceeded to Sukkur he would solicit the Commander-in-Chief to recommend to the Government that increased pay should be granted to them as well as

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1. Subadars - 52, Naiks - 51, Drummers - 16 and Sepoys - 348.
 2. Norton to Asst. Adj. Genl., Ferojepore 25 February 1844. No.37. Bengal Mily. Cons. 8 March 1844 No.109.
 3. Mily. Secy. to Adj. Genl. Fort William 8 March 1844. No. 175 Bengal Mily. Cons., 8 March 1844 No.108.

pensions to the families of any who might die in Sind.¹ He added the threat that if they refused they would "inevitably experience the punishment which awaited all ranks of the 34th regiment."² When Dick had left the parade, Norton had formed the regiment into squares, and after explaining to the men the seriousness of any refusal to march to Sukkur, had told them that he would advocate their cause with Government and "use every influence" to gain for the men all for which they had asked."³

That night a few more sepoy came to Norton and expressed their willingness to march to Sukkur. Though next morning these sepoy were abused and beaten by those who were still turbulent, and the disturbance was with difficulty quelled by the officers,⁴ the mutinous spirit was obviously declining. By the morning of 21 March Norton could report that complete peace and order prevailed among the regiment. Some 167 men

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1. Dick by the order of 8 March 1844 had already been ordered to be removed from the Meerut Division. Hence, no step was taken for the unauthorised promise. But the Governor-General in a secret and confidential letter dated 1 April 1844, to the Commander-in-Chief pointed out the inexpediencies at all times of holding out the expectation of extraordinary rewards for the execution of ordinary duty. It was also mentioned that Dick by his promise of recommendation of increased allowance to the troops had placed both the Government and the Commander-in-Chief in a false position. He should have remembered that the Government would act on its own deliberate judgment of right or expediency and cannot place itself implicitly in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief.
 2. Dick to Adj. Genl. Ferojepore, 19 March 1844. No.45. Bengal Mily.Cons. 4 April 1844. No.41.
 3. Bengal Mily Cons., 4 April 1844. No.45.
 4. Norton to Asst. Adj. Genl. Ferojepore 20 March 1844 No.46. Bengal Mily.Cons., 4 April 1844 No.41.

were now willing to march to Sind.¹

Meanwhile a general order had been issued. After declaring that the 34th had been ordered to be disbanded the Commander-in-Chief told the refractory troops at Ferozepore that if they did not "forthwith submit themselves to authority and proceed to Sukkur," they too would be disbanded.² The order was read to the troops on 23 March 1844 and except for 179 sepoys the whole regiment expressed their readiness to proceed to Sukkur unconditionally.³ Next morning the regiment was paraded again and this time, but for 90 sepoys, the whole 69th expressed its willingness to proceed. Norton hoping that the Commander-in-Chief would support his action immediately paid up and discharged the 90 men.⁴ The 69th regiment then embarked for Sukkur.

Meanwhile, the 4th regiment had reached Ferozepore on 1 March 1844. Dick, realising the state of general discontent among the troops stationed at Ferozepore, asked Major Caley not to "compromise the men of his regiment by sounding the state of their feelings on the subject of progress to Scinde."⁵ But Caley, convinced of his influence and personal hold over the men, ordered the officers immediately to unload and

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1. Norton to Asst. Adj. Genl. Ferojepore 21 March 1844 No.47. Bengal Mily. Cons., 4 April 1844, No.41.
 2. G.O.C.C. 20 March 1844 No.638 Bengal Mily. Cons. 12 April 1844, No.90.
 3. Norton to Fast Ferojepore 23 March 1844 No.49. Bengal Mily. Cons., 12 April 1844, No.93.
 4. Norton to Fast. Ferojepore 24 March 1844 No.51. Bengal Mily. Cons., 12 April 1844 No.93.
 5. Dick to Caley Ferojepore 29 February 1844. Bengal Mily.Cons. 22 March 1844 No.280.

discharge the hackeries and to make arrangements for proceeding to Sind.¹ Lieutenant Young, on his inspection round on the night of 1 March found that the hackeries were still to be unloaded. He asked the pay havildar for an explanation and was told that "the hackeries were unloaded but as it threatened to rain they were loaded again."² Young, ordering them to be unloaded again, retired to bed. But little later, being informed that his company refused to unload the hackeries, Young returned to the lines and ordered his men to turn out. The men did not stir from their tents. Young then lost his temper and, taking a bayonet, drove the men out of the tents and drew them up in lines. Then he ordered four files from the left to unload the nearest hackery. Davedeen Singh one of the sepoy, thereupon asked "How could four files unload a hackery when it took 120 men to do it?" At this Young struck him in the face with the bayonet. Trouble immediately started and the men came towards Young "all at once in a threatening manner." Young kept them off with the bayonet until the Sergeant-major had placed four sentries over the bell of arms. Then Young went to report to Caley. On coming back the Lieutenant found that the whole regiment was in arms and in a state of open mutiny.³ By this time Caley had appeared in the lines with Captain Goldney, Commander of the 9th company. Goldney asked one man to give him his musket and took it, but "the man

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1. Dick to Adj. Genl. Ferojepore 4 March 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons., 22 March 1844 Bo. 280
 2. Young before the court of enquiry Ferojepore 2 March 1844 No. 2. Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 March 1844 No. 280.
 3. Young before court of enquiry Ferojepore 2 March 1844. No. 2 Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 March 1844. No. 280.

wrested it back," Goldney drew his sword. Caley realised the mistake he had committed in issuing the order to unload and promptly cancelled it. The regiment then returned to its former state of tranquility.¹

Next day Caley ordered a court of enquiry to be conducted by Captain-major Milton. Evidence from both the native soldiers and the European officers was recom~~ended~~^rended. The sepoy Davedeen Singh and Ram Singh accused Young of striking them with his bayonet. Goldney also was charged with striking one sepoy and Captain Bechar was accused of having fired a pistol towards the sepoy.² Young admitted having struck Davedeen Singh and Ram Singh and medical certificates were produced before the court, testifying that both Davedeen Singh and Ram Singh "had a slight puncture of the skin on right cheek."³ Goldney denied that he had used his sword, saying he had heard "Captain Oldfield to say "no" and Major Caley calling "that's not the way, no violence'". In the event the court held only Young guilty and he was placed under arrest.

The Commander-in-Chief being informed of the whole incident, found that non-compliance with the Major-General's orders had been the primary cause of this disturbance.⁴ But as Caley had been led away by his firm belief in his regiment

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1. Davedeen Singh and Ram Singh before court of enquiry Ferozepore 2 March 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons., 22 March 1844 No. 280
 2. Davedeen Singh and Ram Singh before court of enquiry Ferojepore 2 March 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 March 1844. No. 280.
 3. Asst. Surgeon before court of enquiry Ferojepore 2 March 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 March 1844 No. 280.
 4. Adj. Genl. to Dick. Saharanpore, 9 March 1844 No. 556.

and as he had already expressed regret,¹ the Commander-in-Chief did not censure him. Nor were Goldney and Bechar found blameworthy. Young, however, was severely censured and was ordered to be released with an admonition to have greater restraint on his temper in future. Further he was removed from the command of the company until the commanding officer would be satisfied that he could "safely be entrusted with the command."²

Although the 4th regiment returned to order it still persisted in refusing to march to Sukkur. On 20 March, 1844, Caley at a regimental parade asked the men who were willing to march to Sukkur to step forward. Only a few men stepped out of the ranks and the parade was dismissed. That same night a few other sepoys came to Caley and expressed their readiness to obey the order to march. Caley realised that there were other sepoys too who were willing to proceed but were being held back by fear of their comrades. The Major therefore requested the Commander-in-Chief to follow a policy of rigorous coercion.³

Accordingly the Commander-in-Chief sent stringent orders⁴ which were read on 23 March 1844. Perhaps the 4th regiment realised that with the submission of the 69th it was fighting a losing battle, for on 24 March, with the exception of one naik and 190 sepoys the regiment "expressed contrition

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1. Caley to Asst. Genl. Ferojepore 4 March 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons., 22 March 1844. No.280.
 2. Adj. Genl. to Dick Saharanpore 9 March 1844 No.555. Bengal Mily. Cons., 22 March 1844 No.281.
 3. Caley to Asst. Adj. Genl. Ferojepore 20 March 1844 No.79. Bengal Mily.Cons., 4 April 1844. No.41.
 4. See p. 403.

for their past misconduct and their readiness to march to Sukkur."¹ As those who had refused were generally men of turbulent character, Caley in his desire to get rid of them "told them that they would be discharged."²

The Commander-in-Chief however, ordered the despatch of the Judge-Advocate General to Ferozepore to hold a court-martial on both the 4th and 69th sepoy regiments. But before this officer could reach Ferozepore, the 69th regiment had already marched for Sukkur, the 4th had received orders to move on 26 March, while the discharged sepoy of both the 4th and the 69th were ready to start for their homes. The actions and promises of the commanding officers, Norton and Caley, as the Judge-Advocate claimed, had precluded any trial of these men. "The act of Lieutenant-Colonel Norton [had] completely tied our hands and the act of Major Caley [had] left us no discretion and no choice of measures."³

The Commander-in-Chief on receipt of these censorious comments issued a general order on 3 March 1844. This drew the attention of all officers to the rules governing discharge, which laid down that only in time of peace and when the deficiency in a corps did not exceed ten men per company, was a soldier, with three years' service entitled to his discharge. The order then pointed out that the officers of both the 4th

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1. Caley to Adj. Genl. Ferojepore 24 March 1844. No.84. Bengal Mily.Cons., 4 April 1844. No.50.
 2. Caley to Adj.Genl., Ferojepore 24 March 1844. No.84. Bengal Mily.Cons., 4 April 1844. No.50.
 3. Judge-Advocate General to Fast. Ferojepore 28 March 1844. Bengal Mily.Cons., 12 April 1844. No.93.

and 69th regiments "in contravention of these rules and of the well known practice of the service" had assumed to themselves a power which properly could only be exercised by the Government. Vincent, the commanding officer at Ferozepore, was also censured for having approved these actions of Caley and Norton.¹

The Home authorities had throughout been kept informed by the Indian Government of the mutinous behaviour of the native soldiers.² In one of their letters the Calcutta Government explained in detail the reason for granting and withdrawing the Sind allowance over which the mutinous regiments had raised such a clamour. "Money rations, that is, rations" or an equivalent amount of money "given to the troops in addition to pay and full batta" had first been granted in Sind in 1838³ and in 1839⁴ they had been withdrawn. Then from 1 June 1842 when the insurrection at Kabul had rendered the state of Sind "similar to that in which these allowances had been first granted", the money rations were regranted to the troops serving in Sind. The troops which served in Sind under Napier also enjoyed these allowances. But in May 1843⁵ it appeared to the Governor-General that all military operations at Sind would be

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1. G.O.C.C. 30 March 1844. Bengal Mily. Cons. 12 April 1844. No. 94.
 2. In addition to the 4th, 34th, 64th and 69th sepoy regiments, 6th regiment Bengal native cavalry, (where the majority of the recruits were Muslims) 7th regiment Madras native cavalry and 47th Madras sepoy regiment mutinied in 1844.
 3. G.O.G.G. 18 December 1838. Bengal Mily. Cons. 18 December 1838. No. 111.
 4. G.O.G.G. 31 December 1839, Bengal Mily. Cons. 31 December 1839. No. 143.
 5. G.O.G.G. 30 May 1843. Bengal Mily. Cons. 30 May 1843. No. 168.

concluded before 1 July 1843 and consequently he had ordered the cessation of these allowances from that date. The reduction had taken place in the allowances while the Bombay army still had its detachment in Sind. That detachment, informed of the retrenchment, had submitted to it. But by some oversight or accident the order had not been communicated to the Bengal troops till 14 October by which date some of the Bengal sepoy regiments had already been ordered to march to Sukkur. These regiments had not understood that while they lost the boon of money rations, they continued to receive field allowance, that is, full batta in all the cantonments in Sind.¹

The Director's reply to this letter throws further light on the origin of the money allowance and the causes for its long retention. They pointed out that the habit of granting money rations derived from practice prevailing in Madras. In 1824, during the Burmese War, a body of Madras sepoys had been sent to Chittagong and had been paid at the rates prevailing for foreign service. The Bengal Government, on 27 September 1824 had therefore laid down that the foreign service which entitled sepoys to free rations, should be defined as service outside their Presidency. A general order of 25 November 1824 had accordingly been issued granting "in consequence of the dearness of provisions and the nature of the operations about to be undertaken along the eastern frontier, money rations to the native troops actually serving beyond the Brahmaputra and

1. For, Sec. despatch to Secy. of State from Bengal Fort William 14 March 1844 No.5.

in Assam." At the close of the war, the Bengal Government had resolved that the regular native regiments retained for service in Arakan should continue in receipt of money rations. Since then the troops had always enjoyed this allowance in Arakan. The Madras sepoy employed in the Tenasserim province, after its annexation to the British territories and those who were employed at Penang, Singapore and Malacca, also enjoyed this advantage.

The native troops employed in the Afghan war, on the ground that they were employed beyond the natural boundaries of Hindustan, also had enjoyed this privilege. It was also argued that the nature of the service, and the distance of the field compelled the sepoy to leave their families behind and to provide for their maintenance by leaving large portions of their pay to be issued on family certificates. On these various grounds the measure adopted by the Bengal Government had been approved by the Home Government.

After the conclusion of the Afghan War Sind had been garrisoned by Bombay troops and at that point the Supreme Government had decided to withdraw money rations. But no report of the change had been made to the Home Government. In June 1842 at the time of the outbreak at Kabul the money rations had been regranted to the native troops serving in Sind, again without notice to London.

After this recital of the history of money rations the Home authorities went on to ask the Indian Government to "advert to the precedents established in Arakan and at the

stations on the East coast of the Bay of Bengal," and declared they should "be prepared to sanction such a regulation for the future grant of money rations to the troops serving beyond the boundaries of Hindustan," as might be consistent with the peculiar nature of the service. So it would be for the Governor-General in Council said the Home Government "to consider whether it be not advisable to revise the order ... and to grant money rations in Sind under all circumstances." After thus throwing the onus of deciding the matter upon the authorities in India, the Directors concluded by demanding that all changes whatever, affecting the accustomed privileges and allowances of the native troops should be reported to the Home authorities before their publication.¹

There was a similar exchange of letters between the Indian and Home authorities about where responsibility for outbreaks over the Sind allowances should lie. The Government of India's view was that these deplorable occurrences had mainly arisen "either from a want on the part of the officers of that influence over the sepoy" which was found to be "the constant result of a temper of kindness and of judgment, or from the failure on the part of the officers to exert the influence they possessed."²

The Home authorities' reply showed no disposition to accept this analysis of mutinies so foreign, as they put it,

1. Court to Bengal 31 May 1844. Board Collection 94,623. pp.499-507.

2. For. Sec. Despatch to Secy. of State from Bengal. Fort William 22 April 1844. No.27.

"to that zealous devotion to the duties of the profession and to the exigencies of the public service" which characterised the conduct of the native troops. They drew attention to the promise made by the Commander-in-Chief to the 64th that he would recommend to Government that higher pay and allowances should be granted to them. No one could reasonably have doubted, they declared, "but that the troops would consider such a promise by the Commander-in-Chief as tantamount to a grant by the Government. Even the Lieutenant-Colonel (Moseley) stated almost in set terms "that he considered the communication as an announcement of a grant not only promised but actually realised."

They expressed a doubt whether the Commander-in-Chief's request for extra allowances should not have been heeded: "Considering the great powers confided to the Commander-in-Chief ... and the critical position in which he was placed at a distance of 1000 miles from the seat of Government, with a large body of mutinous troops to be brought into subjection," the Home authorities "should have been disposed to have acquiesced if the Supreme Government had thought it consistent with its duty to comply with his request." They argued that, in any case, once his plea had been disallowed "it was of first rate importance that measures should have been taken to correct this erroneous impression under which the 64th regiment had embarked and under which their commanding officer appeared to have acted." They commented upon the unusual feature in the mutiny of the 64th that there had been violence

towards European officers. Those officers should certainly have exerted their influence - had they had any. But the officers were not altogether to blame, "partly from imperfect information as to the allowances to be received in Scinde, partly from a belief that there had been some mistake which rested with Government to correct." The Commander-in-Chief had not been fully aware of all the circumstances - witness his letter of 13 March 1844 - small wonder then that "the officers in command of the troops in Scinde were like himself unaware of the advantages the troops would gain by serving in that province." The Home Government would not blame them "if they should have failed to explain them to their men. It was most regrettable that in so important a matter as the pecuniary claims of native troops serving in a province which they had been accustomed to consider as a foreign country there should have been an entire absence of that publicity of announcement ... necessary for the satisfaction of the troops and the information of their officers." The Home authorities further censured the Supreme Government for not informing them of the different arrangements made in the allowances of the troops throughout the operations in Afghanistan and Sind. Approving the decision of the Indian Government to remove Major General Dick to the Presidency Division the London authorities concluded the despatch by expressing their satisfaction that "disloyalty to the Government or a desire to avoid an obnoxious duty" had not been the occasion of the

While the Indian Government was busy with the mutinies among its native soldiers and with throwing the blame on its army officers the Press in India was freely expressing its opinion on these incidents. A few quotations will show that the view taken of this question by the Press was uniform as to the justice of the sepoys' claim, and the folly of the Indian Government.

The Delhi Gazette, condemning the conduct of the Government, remarked that the men had throughout declared their willingness to follow their officers anywhere, claiming only that without extra money they would not be able to maintain themselves in Sind. The sepoys were not blind to the fact that the nominal annexation of a foreign country did not at once remove the inconveniences and evils for which the extra money had been granted. The editor concluded however with the comment that "the chances of discomfort, sickness and even death would not have weighed for a moment against this going forward, had good faith been kept with the army."² The Bengal Hurkaru wrote that though no excuse could be offered for mutiny much could be said in defence of men who were ordered to perform a service which had never entered into their calculation when they were enlisted. When they were told Sind belonged to the British and they could not therefore be considered on foreign

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1. For. Sec. Despatch to Bengal. London 19 February 1845.
For. Sec. Cons. 18 April 1845. No.109.
 2. The Delhi Gazette 12 March 1844.

service when there they replied that Bokhara might belong to us in a few years and then they should have to go there without batta?¹ The Athenaeum quoted the Agra Ukhbar which said that the Government must remember that this was not a mutiny in spirit but a mere matter of striking a proper bargain. The extra allowance for a foreign service was "a thing which the sepoy on leaving the provinces [had] always been accustomed to look forward to" - and rightly so. The paper cautioned the Government that if they disregarded this warning and tampered with the pay of the soldiers they should send for more European regiments in time and disband the native army.²

A week later the Friend of India wrote in similar vein it was impossible "to deny that the men had reason and equity on their side however objectionable might be the mode in which they had forced their claims on the notice of Government."³ The Bombay Times pointed out that during the Afghan wars the patience of the sepoy had been pushed to the very limits of endurance but yet had not failed them. Now a system seemed "to have been devised for the very purpose of destroying the character of an army." If the Company was not in a position to pay their troops" on such a scale as to secure their service let them contract the boundaries of their empire and limit the strength of their army."⁴ Several letters were also published

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1. The Bengal Hurkaru 12th March 1844.
 2. Athenaeum 16 March 1844.
 3. Friend of India 24 March 1844.
 4. Bombay Times 26 March 1844.

in the Athenaeum. One of the writers observed "if the necessities of the state" were so urgent "as to render it expedient to reduce the field batta of the Sipahis, it would be no unseemly parsimony to extend the reduction on to the officers."¹

Another letter argued that the Government should have remembered that the sepoys, being mainly Hindus from Oudh, would naturally consider Sind, a Mahomedan country, a foreign country. Sepoys coming to Sind would seldom or never hear of or from their families - because none of their friends would ever come to such a dread climate in the way they came to all other countries. Moreover Sind was a great distance from Oudh and though if furlough were granted they would certainly avail themselves of it, yet by doing so they would suffer great privation and fatigue. Even worse was the effect of the climate upon the sepoys. One who had not seen them with Sind boils could scarcely form a conception what they had suffered from them, from the fever which followed and the prostration of strength unknown in Hindustan. Equally in one who had been there, never would "the sufferings the troops underwent last year from want of common attention on the part of their own Government be obliterated from their minds."²

The Naval and Military Gazette wrote "when a mutiny" occurred in the Bengal troops there had "been some mismanagement in those who" governed the Indian army - "whether in the officers" who were in command "or in the Government who issued orders."³

1. Athenaeum 20 February 1844.

2. Athenaeum 30 March 1844.

3. Quoted in Bengal Hurkaru 8 January 1845.

By the middle of 1844 peace and order had returned to the lines of the Bengal sepoy army and soon after the sepoys received another opportunity to engage themselves in active warfare, and so to forget their grievances. Since the death of Ranjit Singh in June 1839 the state of the Panjab had been one of chronic revolution, till in 1845 Dhulip Singh a young son of Ranjit Singh became the ruler. From those revolutions and accompanying assassinations the constant gainer had been the Khalsa army, for from every claimant to the throne the Sikh troops had extracted additions to their numbers and to their rewards. The army, by 1845 had become a state within the state, with its own organisation and its own arms. Under such circumstances the regent and council of the boy Maharaja were not disinclined, as Roberts has made clear, to divert the attention of the over-powerful army from internal affairs and "to allow the Khalsa to test its strength against the Company". Either the Khalsa "would spend its superabundant energies in a career of conquest and the sovereignty of Hindustan would pass to the Sikhs, or it would be shattered in the conflict."¹ On 3 December 1845 the Sikhs began to cross the Sutlej.

The British forces were quickly put in motion to resist the Sikh invasion. Under the designation of the 'Army of the Sutlej', the troops were grouped under the command of Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, accompanied in the field by the Governor-General Sir Henry Hardinge.² This 'Army of the

1. Roberts - op.cit., p.334.

2. Cardew - op.cit., p.306.

Sutlej', consisting of 18 sepoy regiments with certain other European and native troops, assembled at Ambala, where some of the sepoy regiments were already stationed. Others came in from stations scattered far and wide, from Ferozepore, Ludhiana, Benares, Delhi, Mynpuri, Etawah, Agra and Moradabad.¹

The first battle was fought at Mudki on 18 December. There followed Ferozeshah, on 22 December, Aliwal on 28 January 1846 and the final victory at Sobraon on 10 February. The war had lasted only 54 days and during that time there had been four pitched battles - "the fiercest and most desperately contested that British troops in India had ever been called upon to fight."² The losses on the British side had been very severe. The British troops were exhausted by fatigue, want of food and water. Besides, nearly 700 native soldiers had been killed, 1697 wounded and there were 379 sepoys missing.³

The conduct of the sepoy regiments in these heavy battles was being criticised by John Jacob. "The wretched state of discipline in the army of Bengal very nearly caused the loss of the first and second battles, in fact the Europeans had to do everything and suffered heavily."⁴ But on both occasions they had been exhausted by fatigue, by long fasting and want of water.⁵ Sir Henry Hardinge in a letter to Ripon

1. Bengal Military statements 1845.

2. Roberts - op.cit., p.338.

3. Cardew - op.cit., p.189.

4. Lambrick - John ---, p.123.

5. "The sepoys had been exhausted by the long march, and they had not the powers of endurance of the British soldier, they suffered especially from lack of food and from the difficulty of cooking it." R.S.Rait - The Life and Campaigns of Hugh Viscount Gough Field-Marshal, vol.II, p.19.

wrote there could "be no doubt that the following reason [might] have operated prejudicially upon the native corps. The troops having been collected from various points, and constantly engaged in marching, had only been brigaded on paper..... The troops therefore were not in the state of organisation and formation so essential to discipline and field movements. The brigadiers and their staff were unknown to the men, and the men to the brigadiers, while at Mudki the confusion of the attack, combined with the facts above noticed, had created a feeling that the army was not well in hand.¹ Sir Hugh said the services "of the native troops engaged" could not be "disregarded or unrecognised... neither at Moodkee nor at Ferozeshah were they equal to the occasion, but this was undoubtedly owing to the frightful exhaustion of the sepoy who had not the same stamina and physical endurance as the British soldier."² In any case, the sepoy fully retrieved their reputation when fighting under more favourable conditions at Sobraon.³ Lord Hardinge, Sir Hugh and Major-General Littler, who were with the 'Army of the Sutlej' praised the native soldiers for their loyalty, patience and perseverance. In a despatch of 2 December 1845 the Governor-General wrote from Ambala to the Secret committee of the East India Company that he had "no cause to doubt the loyalty of our admirable native army", though he had every reason to believe that endeavours

1. Ibid., p.7.

2. Gough and Innes - The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars. p.130.

3. Ibid., p.130.

had been "systematically made, on a very extensive scale, to tamper with them; that promises of promotion and reward [had been] lavishly made and that their religious prejudices" had been forcibly appealed to.¹ Littler, commander of the Infantry division, pointed out that despite such temptation not a single desertion took place. He also explained that though the sepoys "patience and perseverance in marching through the day, exposed to the sun and want of water" had no doubt weakened their energies, it had not damped their order, for they had "evinced great and firmness and resolution in advancing to the attack, until borne down by the most furious and irresistible fire from all arms that man could be exposed to."² Again on 30 December 1845 Hardinge wrote from Ferozepore "the troops were engaged in cooking their meals, when Major Broadfoot received information that the whole Sikh army was in full march, with the intention to surprise the camp. The troops immediately stood to their arms and advanced."³ In the House of Commons Sir Robert Peel spoke about the native army "constant efforts were made by the Government and Panjaub to corrupt our native troops.....The pay of an infantry soldier of the Panjaub [was] about twenty-five shillings a month; while the pay of a sepoy in Her Majesty's service [was] only about fourteen or fifteen shillings a month. Constant exertions were made, by direct and indirect means, aided by community of language and of religion, to shake the fidelity of the native troops; but

1. The War in India. p.5.

2. Ibid., p.53.

3. Ibid., p.20.

... they were made without success. The loyalty of the sepoy with scarcely a single exception" had been untainted.¹

In appreciation of their service the Governor-General granted to every soldier engaged in the campaign a medal "to be worn with their uniforms, on which the word 'Ferozeshahr' would be inscribed as denoting that they had served in this important campaign."²

The news of the termination of the war was received with the greatest enthusiasm in England. Hardinge, Gough and the 'Army of the Sutlej' were thanked by both Houses of Parliament. Both the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief were raised to the Peerage. The troops which had taken part in the battles, were allowed to inscribe the words 'Moodkee' 'Ferozeshahr' 'Aliwal' and 'Sobraon' on their colours. Medals were granted for personal bravery. Further, the corps engaged in those four battles were given a gratuity of six months' batta "as a testimony of the gratitude of the Government and of the admiration with which" it had regarded their conduct in the field.³ In addition to this gratuity, soldiers "encountering readily and enduring with fortitude peculiar hardships arising from climate, from privation or from disease..." were entitled another six months' batta.⁴ Thus the troops received altogether a gratuity of 12 months' batta.

1. The War in India p.125.

2. G.O.G.G. 30 December 1845, Bengal Mily. Cons. 30 December 1845, No. 69.

3. G.O.G.G. 12 December 1846. Bengal Mily. Cons. 12 December 1846 No. 78.

4. G.O.G.G. 22 February 1847. Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 February 1847 No. 35.

At an early stage of the War it had become apparent to the authorities that the maintenances of a large force on the Sutlej and the provision of the necessary garrisons in the different parts of the Bengal Presidency must produce a great strain upon the existing strength of the sepoy army establishment. Hence in January 1846, several new corps had been raised. Ten levies, of a thousand men each, were ordered to be raised and trained as a reserve and to act as feeders to the regiments in the field. Besides this, in order to provide for garrison duties and for the preservation of order while so large a portion of the army was in the field, 18 battalions of 475 men each, were ordered to be formed, drafts of 165 native officers and men taken from each of the existing native regiments not in the field.¹ But before all these troops had actually been raised or formed the war was concluded. Consequently, the new levies and battalions referred to above, were ordered to be disbanded and the strength of each infantry was limited to 800 privates.²

Even after the establishment of peace, the political condition of the Panjab remained critical. Early in 1848 Lord Dalhousie succeeded Lord Hardinge as Governor-General. Scarcely had he taken up the reins of government when another clash with the Sikh troops occurred. In April 1848 Dewan Mulraj resigned from the post of Governor of Multan. Two British officers who had been sent to instal his Sikh successor, were

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1. G.O.G.G. 22 January 1846. Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 January 1846 No. 46.
 2. G.O.G.G. 22 March 1846. Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 March 1846 No. 54

murdered. Though a young Lieutenant Herbert Edwards^e attacked Mulraj with all the available local levies, he could not take the fortress or prevent the spread of the revolt.¹ In October 1848 the Sikh garrison at Peshawar mutinied and soon the whole of the northern Panjab was in the hands of the rebel Sikhs.²

In consequence of all these outbreaks a British force was assembled at Ferozepore. This 'Army of the Panjab' with other troops included 18 sepoy regiments which were placed under Major-Generals Whish, Gilbert and Campbell.³ Some of the native regiments were at Ferozepore, others were required to march from places like Lahore, Ambala, Hoshiarpur, the Jullundar Doab, Kangra, Meerut, Delhi, Moradabad, Cawnpore and even from Barrackpore.⁴

The campaign was opened on 22 November by an attack on Sher Singh at Ramnagar and on 13 January 1849 the battle of Chilianwala was fought. With the battle of Gujarat on 22 February, the campaign ended.

Thus ended the second Sikh War. The 'Army of the Panjab' was soon dispersed. The regiments were sent back to their cantonments while some others were kept in the Panjab. A medal was issued to commemorate the battles of 'Multan', 'Chilianwala' and 'Gujrat' and the same names were authorised to be

1. Oxford - p.618.

2. Roberts - op.cit., p.340.

3. G.O.G.G. 12 June 1848. Bengal Mily. Cons. 12 June 1848. No.64.

4. Bengal Mily.Statement. 1847.

borne on the colours of corps engaged in those campaigns.¹
Batta for six months was also granted to the troops employed
 in this campaign² though it was twelve months before it was
 paid.³

After its annexation, the Panjab, like Sind, was considered a regular British province and the sepoy's stationed there were deprived of the extra allowances they had received during the Panjab campaigns. Once again the native soldiers rose in mutiny against the change in the financial position.

On 9 June 1849 the military Auditor-General at Calcutta passed an order withdrawing the extra allowances paid to the sepoy's in all the cantonments in the Panjab. The order said that this new rule was to be enforced from 1 April 1849.⁴ The instruction reached Wazirabad in July 1849 and it met with immediate opposition from the sepoy regiments stationed at Rawalpindi. Brigadier Sir Colin Campbell, was informed on the 24th that the 13th⁵ and 22nd⁶ regiments at Rawalpindi had refused to accept their pay at the revised rate.

On enquiry it was proved that while three companies (the 2nd, 3rd and 6th) of the 22nd regiment had been allowed

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1. G.O.G.G. 14 July 1849. Bengal Mily. Cons. 14 July 1849.
No. 78.
 2. G.O.G.G. 14 July 1849 Bengal Mily. Cons. 14 July 1849.
No. 78.
 3. G.O.G.G. 20 March 1850 Bengal Mily. Cons. 20 March 1850.
No. 67
 4. Mily. Aud. Genl. to Field Paymaster in Panjab. Calcutta 9
June 1849 No. 2. Bengal Mily Cons. 20 October 1849 No. 29.
 5. Mitchell to Campbell Rawalpindi 24 July 1849. Bengal Mily.
Cons. 20 October 1849 No. 29.
 6. Nesbitt to Campbell Rawalpindi 24 July 1849. Bengal Mily.
Cons., 1849 No. 29.

Sind field allowance, the remaining seven had not received it. Consequently, these seven companies of the 22nd regiment and the whole 13th regiment refused to receive their pay. It was also found that the pay abstraction (for June 1849) for all the companies of the 22nd had been despatched to the Paymaster at Wazirabad on 2 July. The order of the military auditor-general about the withdrawal of extra allowance had reached the Paymaster on 5 July. On 9 July, while informing the company officers of all the regiments stationed in Panjab cantonments of the new situation the Paymaster of the army at Wazirabad pointed out that the 22nd was granted "the Sind field batta for May only."

But the officers of three companies (the 2nd, 3rd and 6th) of the 22nd "had committed the error of drawing the Scinde field batta for June." When they saw the letter of the Paymaster," they prepared and sent fresh abstracts (for June) on 16 July in lieu of those containing the erroneous drawing, but took advantage of the circumstances to include the batta for May. . . . The remaining seven companies not having committed the mistake of drawing Scinde Field batta for June 1849, did not find it necessary to send in fresh abstracts for that month but in accordance with the letter drew the batta for May in the abstract for July, on 1 August 1849.¹ Accordingly, three companies received the allowances for May while ~~the~~ the remaining seven companies of the same regiment and

1. Nesbitt to Campbell - Rawalpindi 5 September 1849. Bengal. Mily. Cons. 20 October 1849. No.29.

all those of the 13th had as yet received only the basic pay of eight rupees and eight annas.

On receipt of this account the Adjutant-General observed that it was "the duty of the Adjutant of a regiment to examine the pay abstracts of companies before submitting them for the Commanding Officer's counter signature, previous to their transmission to the pay office, and if the circumstances of the 2nd, 3rd and 6th companies having drawn in their amended abstracts field Scinde allowance for May while the remaining companies of the regiment had not drawn that allowance, was not brought to the Commanding Officer's notice or if brought to notice and still permitted, the proceeding --- was very injudicious on the part of the Adjutant and Commanding Officer..."¹

The Governor-General and Sir Charles Napier, the Commander-in-Chief after consulting with each other blamed the pay master and the officers at Rawalpindi and observed, rightly enough that confusion pervaded the whole of it. The Government finally decided that however unsatisfactory and objectionable it might be "to allow the mutinous men to escape punishment it would be better rather to pay that allowance to the remainder of the two regiments than to retrench the payment "which had been made to three companies of one of them."²

But before this letter reached Rawalpindi, Campbell had

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1. Adj. Genl. to Campbell. Lahore 11 September 1849. Bengal Mily. Cons. 20 October 1849. No. 29.
 2. Mily. Secy. to Adj. Genl. Simla 19 September 1849 No. 234 Bengal Mily. Cons. 20 October 1849. No. 29.

tided over the difficulty. On 26 September he wrote to Napier that on "the day before your prescription for bringing them to their senses was despatched from Simla," both the 13th and the seven companies of the 22nd had agreed to take their pay at the reduced rate and it had been "given to them accordingly."¹ The extra money which had already been granted to the three companies of the 22nd were however, allowed to the 13th and the remaining seven companies of the 22nd with their pay for September.

As the editorial of the Mofussilite shows the sympathy of the Press in India was with the sepoy. The paper remarked that it was "not at all surprised at the conduct of the sepoy ... Had notice been given to the sepoy that 'since the Panjaub had been annexed, all extra allowances would be stopped,' the sepoy would have been prepared for the measure ... The folly of the Government in a little matter [had] led to the disaffection of probably good men and excellent soldiers..."²

The Home Authorities were informed of the circumstances³ and the Government of India perhaps was relieved to think that the danger was over. But before long the dissatisfaction among the native soldiers manifested itself again at Wazirabad. On 4 December 1849, Lieutenant-Colonel Moody, the Commanding officer of the 32nd regiment informed Major-General Hearsey

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1. Campbell to Napier Rawalpindi 26 September 1849 Bengal Mily. Cons. 20 October 1849. No. 29.
 2. The Mofussilite 2 August 1849.
 3. L. from Bengal 14 October 1849. M.L. received from Bengal Vol. 56

the Brigadier at Wazirabad that his men were grumbling and murmuring in the lines. The men were saying that the pay and allowances now ordered for troops serving in the Panjab would "not fill their bellies."¹ Though Moody was of the opinion that until the men actually refused their pay no overt measure was necessary, Harsey ordered him to parade the regiment, to read the Articles of War and to explain to them those Articles "bearing upon refusal to receive pay."² Harsey himself recognised that the situation was an unhappy one, ~~reading from~~ ~~treatment~~, for there were with the 32nd at Wazirabad two other regiments which still were receiving the additional Sind batta." This anomalous and invidious position had arisen as the result of an order issued by the Military Auditor-General, granting Sind batta to such regiments as might choose "to keep up their own courage in constant readiness for service". Since the 53rd and 60th had chosen to adopt that cause they were still receiving the Sind batta, and were to receive it until January 1850. As Harsey said, whatever the reasons for the situation, it must "appear hard to the sepoy of the 32nd regiment that as serving at the same station they should get inferior allowance."³

The Commander-in-Chief knowing about the incident decided to take stern measures. Approving what Harsey had done, Sir Charles informed the Brigadier that "if any open and

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1. Harsey to Burroughs, Wuzeerabad, 5 December 1849. No.676. Bengal Mily. Cons. 28 December 1849. No.50.
 2. Harsey to Burroughs, Wuzeerabad 5 December 1849. No.676. Bengal Mily. Cons. 28 December 1849. No.50.
 3. Harsey to Burroughs, Wuzeerabad, 5 December 1849. No.676. Bengal Mily. Cons. 28 December 1849. No.50.

decided display of ill feeling" was exhibited it should be put down at once. The troops should be reminded that if the price of Attah (flour) or rice should exceed 15 seers per rupee and the prices of other articles of food should also rise correspondingly they would get compensation money. So the troops had no just grounds for complaint. Hearsey was therefore ordered to issue the pay to the regiment at the usual time and in the prescribed manner. If any man of any grade refused to receive his pay he should "be immediately tried by a District court-martial on a charge of mutiny." The Court, in turn should be made aware that mutiny was punishable with imprisonment with hard labour.¹

Accordingly on 14 December 1849, the pay of the 32nd was ordered to be disbursed at the revised rate and in the usual way. Four men including a havildar named Ranjeet Singh² refused to receive their pay. They were immediately put under arrest and Hearsey addressed the sepoy in their own language, mentioning their fidelity and bravery and his warm feelings towards them. It had good effect. The men took their pay and went to their lines. The four convicted soldiers were tried by court-martial and as Sir Charles wished, were sentenced to 14 years imprisonment with hard labour. They were ordered to be handed over to the civil authorities of the station, and the court, following the order of Napier, requested them that the punishment might be carried out within the cantonment of

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1. Adj. Genl. to Gilbert. Lahore 8 December 1849. No. 114. Bengal Mily. Cons. 28 December 1849. No. 50.
 2. He was in Company's service from 1809. India Gazette 4 February 1850.

Wazirabad where the culprits could be seen "in irons and at work by their former comrades."¹ This sentence, however, did not satisfy Napier, who ordered a revision of the sentence. The mutineers were then sentenced to death - a sentence which Sir Charles commuted to transportation of life. In his general order Napier described how "in eternal exile" they would "expiate their crimes. For ever separated from their country and their relations, in a strange land beyond the seas," they would "linger out their miserable lives."²

Although no other mutinous incident was staged in 1849, the flame of discontent remained hidden in the hearts of the sepoys only to flare out again in February 1850. In October 1849 the 66th regiment was ordered to march from Lucknow to Govindgarh, for garrison duties. The regiment reached Govindgarh by the end of January 1850.

In the evening of 31 January 1850 Major Troup the commanding officer of the 66th regiment learnt from Lieutenant Ross that his company were murmuring in their lines about the reduced rate of pay and allowance in the Panjab. Troup immediately paraded the regiment. On parade, as Troup reported, the men were "remarkably steady."³ At 10 o'clock that night four men from each company of the 66th were brought by their European officers to see the Major. When they were asked to state their grievances through one of their representatives, Troup was told that they had "come far away from home" and

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1. Adj. Genl. to Gibbert. Lahore 8 December 1849. No. 114. Bengal Mily. Cons. 28 December 1849. No. 50.
 2. G.O.C.C. 25 January 1850. Bengal Mily. Cons. 25 January 1850. No. 34.
 3. Troup to Burroughs. Govindgarh. 1 February 1850. 5½ P.M. Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 March 1850. No. 55.

were doing as much duty as the corps who were garrisoned there before them and yet they were receiving less pay. If they were not allowed enough pay to maintain themselves, how could they perform the duties.¹ The men were all very respectful, but seemed determined. Troup tried to make them realise that they were enrolled "on seven rupees a month and for this pay they took an oath to serve the Government wherever they might be ordered, whether within or without the Company's territories." He further explained that the Government under peculiar circumstances and for a particular period had granted extra money to certain regiments. But during a time of peace to claim such privileges was ridiculous. The men were further told that the Major had no power either to allow or disallow any money to the regiment. On these arguments the men remarked that the Major was everybody to them. They also pointed out that all the enemies of the Company had not been conquered yet. If the Company should want to employ the native soldiers against its enemies like Golab Singh, then it would be better to hold out some hopes before the sepoys.

The Major, expressing his hope that they would win medals, if any war with Golab Singh took place dismissed them.

Next morning the regiment was paraded and the order of the Commander-in-Chief that the 66th would not be allowed Sind field batta at Govindgarh was read to them. Then the men were dismissed. But one hour later, Lieutenant Carter of the 7th

1. Troup before Court of Enquiry Govindghur 3 February 1850, Bengal Mily. Cons., 22 March 1850. No.56.

company reported to Troup that his men had refused to take their accoutrements off and had told Carter that they would like to be discharged. After asking them to send four men in the morning to place their request before the Major, Carter succeeded in making them take off their accoutrements and go back to their lines.

Troup immediately sent an express letter to Major-General Gilbert, Commander of the Panjab Division. Next morning he sent an order to the European officers of the 66th that they were no longer required to bring their men to the Major if the men "had nothing to state - but their grievances about the pay." In the meantime, the 1st regiment of native cavalry had reached Govindgarh and Troup informed its commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Bradford about the state of the garrison. Carter came to see the Major in the morning and reported that his company "had changed their minds and no longer wished to cut their names at the present time; but they would wait to see if their bellies could be filled." A few moments later Ross reported to Troup that the Grenadier company without permission had taken their arms and had refused to surrender them without seeing the Major. Troup requesting Bradford to keep a squadron of his cavalry (with loaded carbines) ready to act if required decided to remove the 66th from duties inside the fort. He went to meet his regiment, paraded it, and then addressed them in such language as he thought "suitable to the occasion." Then he asked the sentry over the arms rack to point out the man who had first come to take his arms. After some hesitation the

sentry pointed out sepoy Mirza Khyroola Beg of the grenadier company. This sepoy was immediately arrested. On further insistence the Jamadar Ganga Singh also was pointed out as one who had known what was happening but had not informed the European officers about it. The Major placed the Jamadar too under arrest. While this arrest of the Jamadar and the sepoy was being made three companies (the 7th, 8th and 9th) of the regiment tried to release the prisoners. Meanwhile the cavalry squadron had reached the fort. But Lieutenant Barker, in charge of the gate guard duty, not having any orders, refused to allow the squadron to enter the fort. The men of the 66th who were on gate guard duty took the opportunity to close the main gate shouting that they would not admit the cavalry. Captain Macdonald of the 66th now went near the main gate and after striking two or three soldiers with his sword forced them to give way. The gate was opened and the squadron trotted into the fort. Troup now ordered the regiment to pile arms, an order which was obeyed after a little hesitation. The 66th was marched unarmed out of the fort and the command of the fort was made over to Bradford.¹

General Gilbert reached Govidgarh, on 3 February and a court of enquiry was held next day. The European officers and the native soldiers were examined. It was found that the general order of the Commander-in-Chief had reached Lucknow on 7 November and that the 66th had commenced its march on 12

1. Bradford to Deputy Asst. Adj. Genl. Amritsar 3 February 1850. No.26. Bengal. Mily. Cons. 22 March 1850. No.55

November 1849. Before it left Lucknow, a printed copy of the general order had been sent to the regiment to be written into the order book. That part of the order rescinding the Sind batta had also been explained by the Regimental Sergeant - major to the orderly havildars of companies for the information of their men. Troup added that he had not himself explained the matter at a regimental parade because the general order had not directed commanding officers to take such action. "In the Lucknow brigade" he said "it was customary when it was considered necessary to explain any General Order to the troops on parade for that purpose." On this occasion no such order was issued." Troup further defended himself by saying "if I had felt the necessity of further explanation or had not been strongly impressed that the subject of this order was well known to the regiment I would not have been guided by the custom."¹

Another point brought out at the enquiry was the 66th on its way from Lucknow to Govindgarh had often met "the native officers and men going on furlough from almost every regiment then serving in the Panjab. These men were questioned by the 66th about the price of provision in the Panjab and the answer almost invariably after detailing their price was "and the extra pay to the troops serving there" had been withdrawn."²

The opinion of the Court of enquiry was that Major

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1. Troup before Court of enquiry Govindghur 4 February 1850 Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 March 1850. No. 56.
 2. Troup to Burroughs Amritsar 3 March 1850. Bengal Mily Cons. 3 April 1850. No. 71.

Troup, before marching from Govindgarh, should have read the general order to the regiment himself. Troup, for his part blamed the native officers of the 66th - attributing "the whole of this disgraceful affair to the gross neglect of duty and utter faithlessness of native commissioned and non-commissioned officers."¹ The Court sent 95 soldiers for trial.¹

Gilbert meanwhile had ordered an immediate general court-martial. He had explained his action to the Commander-in-Chief as follows: "prompt punishment, in such cases, being most conducive to the upholding of discipline induced me to follow this course instead of first submitting the proceedings of the Enquiry for His Excellency's consideration."²

The 95 men were tried in two batches at Govindgarh and sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour. Three sepoy and one Jamadar were sentenced to 14 years, 28 sepoy to 10 years and 8 sepoy to 7 years. Six others were acquitted and 47 were immediately dismissed. Two Subadars also were tried and dismissed from the service.³

The men who were sentenced to imprisonment, were ordered "to be immediately ironed and then to be marched past the front of their own regiment, the 66th on parade, on their way to the Amritsar jail."⁴ Further, Gilbert ordered the court to forward copies to the civil authorities so that the

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1. Troup to Burroughs Amritsar 3 March 1850. Bengal Mily.Cons. 3 April 1850. No.69.
 2. Gilbert to Adj.Genl.Govindghur 9 February 1850. No.270. Bengal Mily.Cons. 22 March 1850. No.55.
 3. Gilbert to Adj. Genl. Govindghur 15 February 1850. No.294. Bengal Mily Cons. 22 March 1850. No.55
 4. Gilbert to Adj. Genl. Govindghur 15 February 1850. No.294. Bengal Mily.Cons. No.55.

misconduct and punishment of the offenders might be made generally known in the districts to which they belonged because such a measure would have the best effect in checking the disgraceful conduct of which they had been guilty.¹ The 66th was ordered to be marched to Ambala, to be paid there at the usual cantonment rates (seven rupees) and then to be disbanded. The 47 sepoy who were sentenced to be dismissed from the service by the court martial were granted two annas per day each as their subsistence money and were ordered to be taken to Ludhiana for their dismissal.²

The 66th marched from Govindgarh to Ambala, and on 21 March 1850 was there paraded. The order of disbandment was read to them. Major General Hill, Commander of the Sirhind Division, enquired of the men whether they were fully paid and "the reply from the whole body in the most respectful manner was that they were." Immediately after Hill marched them through the cantonment "in presence of the troops paraded on this occasion" and left them on the Saharanpur road.³

On 27 February 1850, a general order to the European officers of native regiments was issued. Pointing out that an interpreter had been appointed to every regiment for the purpose of translating orders to the native corps Napier censured Troup for not himself explaining to the sepoy through his

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1. Gilbert to Adj. Genl. Govindghur 15 February 1850. No.294. Bengal Mily.Cons. 22 March 1850. No.55
 2. Bengal Mily.Cons. 15 March 1850. No.129.
 3. Hill to the Adj. Genl. Amballa-22 March 1850. No.309. Bengal Mily. Cons. 10 April 1850. No.72.

regimental interpreter "one of the most important and critical orders that ever was issued by a Governor-General and which the Commander-in-Chief had especially directed to be carefully explained by commanding officers to their regiments."¹ Such laxity of discipline, Napier added was enough to destroy the best army in the world.

The order expressed the hope that the young officers of the native regiments would realise "the necessity of endeavouring to associate as much as possible with the native officers" and would "make them their comrades in every sense of the word." The European officers could then only expect to acquire a thorough knowledge of the feelings of their men. It was not through sergeant-majors or orderly havildars that a sepoy was "to learn the justice, the generosity and the care for his welfare which was exercised by his Government directly from the European officers."

In conclusion the order reminded the European officers of the native army that "in future every order issued by the Commander-in-Chief was to be read by the Commanding officers personally or through their interpreters to their regiments under their respective command and again read and explained by every European officer on his private parade to the company under his command."²

The Home Authorities approved the decision of the

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1. G.O.C.C. 27 February 1850. Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 March 1850. No. 45.
 2. G.O.C.C. 27 February 1850. Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 March 1850. No. 45.

Governor-General and remarked that Troup's explanation could not "exonerate him from the blame which was attached to his direct disobedience of the instruction."¹

Troup and Barker both were tried by court-martial as Napier wished. They were severely censured but at the same time were reappointed to a new regiment.

Recruits for this new regiment, the Nusseri battalion, were drawn from Nepal, and Napier hoped that the use of a new type of recruits would prevent any further spread of mutinous feelings in the Bengal army, since, as he said, it would show the sepoys that the Government was not dependent on the native troops of the line alone or on the classes from which they were now exclusively recruited for its power.²

The Press in India, hitherto ready to point out the genuine grievances of the sepoys who mutinied, on this occasion had censured the 66th and the whole native army, most severely. The Mofussilite wrote the sepoy had been "so petted, belauded and indulged" that he was "quite spoilt --- he should be kept well under and taught to think less of himself than he does at present."³ The Bengal Hurkaru observed that though the mutineers of the 66th had "exceeded anything within our own experience in India", they had only been "sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment or even less severe

1. D. to Bengal ~~Bengal~~ 27 November 1850. No.129. M.D.
sent to Bengal Vol. 36.

2. Adj. Genl. to Mily. Secy. Lahore 27 February 1850. No.295.
Bengal Mily. Cons. 22 March 1850. No.58.

3. The Mofussilite 8 February 1850.

punishment." "This extraordinary mildness" the editor was at a loss to account for." Some summary scene should have been enacted as speedily as possible - a scene which would have made a lasting example impression or whatever of a mind the Bengal sepoy¹ might have." While expressing these opinions the Press also pointed out to the Indian Government that the native soldiers served only for their pay and unless the monthly pay which they received enabled them, under any circumstances, to keep up the family remittances they would speedily become discontented and eventually would be sullen, sulky, insolent and mutinous.² When that was the case, the Government should have considered that the price of grain in the Panjab in 1850 was almost as high as when they first crossed the Sutlej. The operations of the Sikh war had put a stop to all agricultural labours and had ruined the standing crops of a great part of the country and accordingly "the bazaars of grain throughout the Panjab [were] mainly supplied from our provinces - even from Rohilcund and equally distant parts."³

The Delhi Gazette asked how often did "the Government of this country want the same lesson to be read to it?" Experience did "not appear to guide its counsels in the least The foolish alterations continually made in their pay whenever this river or that had to be crossed," had been enough to turn "the heads of any soldier in the world -

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1. The Bengal Hurkaru 28 February 1850.
 2. The Mofussilite 8 February 1850.
 3. Ibid., 15 February 1850.

soldiers even whose patriotism could be appealed to." ¹ The remedy of all these evils regarding pay was, as a correspondent wrote in the Mofussilite, to lay down a clear account of what pay would be drawn under all circumstances, an account which ought to be explained to each recruit on being sworn in, and from which no deviation should ever be allowed. ² The Government was also urged not to recruit its native infantry soldiers almost entirely from one district but to find substitute for the Oudh men from the Gurkhas, the Muslims to the North and west of Peshawar, the Sikhs and the Eurasians. ³ ⁴ It was also pointed out that it had been more good fortune that the 66th had not been able to seize the fort of Govindgarh with its treasures and stores. ⁵ "Had it once closed the gates on its officers the mere circumstances would have rendered them desperate and the first flag of revolt in the Panjaub... would in that case have been hoisted by our own troops. They would then have been joined by the discontented spirits of the Panjaub." ⁶

1. Delhi Gazette 28 February 1850.

2. The Mofussilite 26 February 1850.

3. "There is no employment for the half-caste children of European soldiers except becoming drummers in the native regiments." P.P. 1831-32, XIII; (735-v), H. C. pp. 24, 11, 17.

4. The Mofussilite 26 February 1850.

5. "Besides the political importance of the fort, the fort contained ten lakhs of treasure, innumerable quantities of arms and ammunitions of war which had lately been taken, from the enemy and also a months' supply for 1800 men." Troup before court of enquiry, Govindghur, 4 February 1850. Bengal Mily. Cons., 22 March 1850. No. 56.

6. Athenaeum 9 March 1850.

With the disbandment of the 66th order was restored. The sepoys submitted to the service conditions imposed by the Government and the mutinous disposition was not shown for some time to come. The tranquility that now settled upon the sepoy lines was reflected in the period itself for, apart from certain skirmishes with Afghan marauders on the north-western frontier, there was no other warfare in the plains of India.

But India was not destined yet to enjoy tranquility for more than a year. Trouble again broke out in Burma where the local Governors had been harassing the English traders. In 1851 these traders asked for help from the Indian Government, and in 1852 the Governor-General ordered the despatch of an expeditionary force to Burma.

The 38th sepoy regiment was one of the corps chosen for this service. Lieutenant-Colonel Burney, the commanding officer, was asked on 12 February to ascertain whether his men were willing to volunteer for Rangoon.¹ At this time three companies of the 38th were at Midnapore on detached duty, a majority of the others (650) were on guard duty at Fort William, and the rest were at Barrackpore. On receiving the letter Burney ordered the pay havildars of the companies who were at Barrackpore to proceed to Fort William to ascertain the feelings of the men on duty there. These pay havildars went to Fort William and on returning they reported "that if the

1. Banks to Burney Fort William 12 February 1852. Bengal Mily. Cons. 13 August 1852. No. 59.

Colonel and the officers went they were not unwilling to go".¹ Two days later, on 14 February Burney was removed from the command of the regiment, having been posted to another corps.

Major Knyvett who succeeded to the command of the regiment, assembled the whole of the native officers on duty in the Fort and explained the wishes of Government and the advantages to be derived from volunteering. The native officers expressed their willingness to go but declined to answer for their men.²

On 27 February Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton, Commander of the Presidency division was informed that the Governor-General was desirous of sending the 38th by sea to Rangoon. But in the event of its not volunteering to go by sea, it would be ordered to march to Arakan to relieve the 67th which would then be sent to Burma.³

The publication of this letter was delayed till the whole regiment had returned from the Fort and detached duty.

On 6 March Burney resumed to command of the regiment. He at once issued a regimental order for the companies to attend at his quarters on 8 March "with side arms, in order for each individual to affix his signature in presence of the officer of his company" to a role of those willing to go to

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1. Burney before Ct. of Enq. Barrackpore 18 March 1852. Bengal Mily. Cons. 13 August 1852. No. 60.
 2. Knyvett before the court of enquiry 18 March 1852. Bengal Mily. Cons. 13 August 1852. No. 60.
 3. Banks to Hamilton 27 February 1852. No. 511. Bengal Mily. Cons. 1852. No. 60.

Rangoon and "Dissentients" would have their names placed in another column and would be required to give their reasons.¹

On 8 March when the order was to be carried out Captain Nepean found that his company had not fallen in on parade and that the men evinced a "great disinclination" to do so. With much difficulty and after half an hour of persuasion the company fell in and marched off. Nepean then left his company under the Subadar and went to see whether another company under his command was ready. On returning to the parade ground Nepean found the men of the first company still near the quarter guard. The Subadar reported that they had acted in this way at the instigation of four² sepoy. Even after Nepean's arrival the sepoy still refused to go to the Major's quarters to sign the roll. Finding that the men would not obey his orders Nepean went to Burney.³

The misconduct of Nepean's company was reported to Brigadier Warren, Commanding at Barrackpore. Next morning the regiment was paraded by Warren and the letter from Government was read and explained to the men. The regiment when asked about their volunteering for Rangoon, expressed their unwillingness to proceed by sea and stated "they were ready to move in any direction by land."⁴

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1. Bengal Mily Cons. 13 August 1852. No.60. Ap.M.
 2. Kalka Singh, Gurdial Singh, Peerkhan and Ramsuran Pathak.
 3. Nepean before Court of enquiry Barrackpore 18 March 1852 Bengal Mily.Cons. 13 August 1852. No.60.
 4. Warren to Ross Barrackpore 9 March 1852. No.87. Bengal Mily.Cons. 27 March 1852. No.329.

With this expression of unwillingness on the part of the 38th all attempts to induce the regiment to volunteer should have ceased. But some of the native officers continued to try to induce the men to go on board ship. These attempts were so frequently repeated that the men became both annoyed and afraid. They thought that they would by force be put on board because, as the current rumour had it, "the Lieutenant-Colonel had "promised to the Government the service of the regiment" and he thought "that the regiment was under his thumb."¹ The men were so worried that on 17 March, after parade had been dismissed all the companies fell in again and set off to see their company commanders to complain of the annoyance to which they were subjected. When they were marching to the officers' Quarters, Lieutenant Castle, the Adjutant of the regiment saw them and ordered them to go back to their lines. The order appeared to have been obeyed unhesitatingly. But the men when near the bells of arms, called for the Adjutant, who went to them. After a short explanation from him that the whole business was about to be investigated "the men went quietly to their lines."²

On 18 March 1852 a court of enquiry was held at Barrackpore. It was proved that Burney had first elicited the opinion of a few sepoy on his own initiative. As no opposition was expressed he had assumed that the whole corps would consent to

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1. Deputy Judge Adv. Genl. to Asst. Adj. Genl. Hoshiarpore
3 April 1852. No. 22
 2. Castle before court of enquiry Barrackpore 18 March 1852.
Bengal Mily. Cons. 13 August 1852. No. 60.

proceed to Rangoon. It was also established that the sepoy had been threatened by Burney that if they did not volunteer they would be sent to Arakan as a mark of his displeasure. He said to the 38th that he was the same man who had put¹ 26 men in irons and that he would serve all "the rascals in the same way." This angered the men, particularly as there was some accompanying threat to deprive them of their invalid pensions. This threat to the sepoy on parade on 12 March, observed the court of enquiry, was very objectionable. Equally injudicious was the regimental order of Burney. The signing of the rolls one by one seemed "to have raised fears in the minds of the men and to have been the chief cause of the discontent in the regiment." Burney, in his deposition before the court explained the reasons for his conduct. "With apprehension of disappointment" he had considered himself in a false position and in order that no blame might be imputed [to him] for want of caution in ascertaining the correct state of feeling among the men of the regiment" he had deemed it wise to issue the Regimental order.² The court did not agree.

The conduct of Knyvett also was censured by the court. Burney and Knyvett did not get along well together. For that reason Knyvett passing over Burney, his Commanding officer, had reported the conduct of his company direct to Warren.

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1. "In 1840 the 38th had manifested an insubordinate spirit to avoid going to Candahar but prompt and decisive measure adopted by me in bringing to trial 26 men saved the regiment." Bengal Mily. Cons. 13 August 1852. No. 60. Ap.M.
 2. Bengal Mily Cons. 13 August 1852. No. 60. Ap.M.

Knyvett was also censured for having replaced the havildar-major (drill havildar) who was a Brahmin by a Rajput - a move which had excited further discontent.

Burney requested the Court to discharge 400¹ men from the 38th, these being the men who were most disaffected and who had influenced the other men of the regiment in its recent insubordinate conduct. But the names of only eight of these men appeared in the report of the Court, which did not see any reason why the summary removal from the service of all these 400 men recommended by Lieutenant-Colonel Burney should take place.²

Hamilton, when forwarding the proceedings of the court to the Adjutant-General added his opinion that "the whole business was injudicious and ended as it ought to have been anticipated it would by placing the Government in a false position. As a regiment it was not expected that they would volunteer for ship board." Such mass voluntary had never yet taken place, but the Government had always succeeded in obtaining individual volunteers, when called for and would continue to do so.³

The Commander-in-Chief for his part expressed his regret that everything should have been so strangely mismanaged in the 38th by its superior officers, and ordered the

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1. They were all Hindus of inferior caste as mentioned by Burney in his statement before this court.
 2. Bengal Mily. Cons. 13 August 1852. No. 60.
 3. Hamilton to Adj. Genl. Barrackpore 24 March 1852. No. 48. Bengal Mily. Cons. 13 August 1852. No. 60.

dismissal of the eight sepoy^s.¹

Meanwhile, the Governor-General in a minute of 20 March, had declared that although the Government might feel dissapointed that the 38th had not volunteered as on a former² occasion, still the Government had no right to complain. The men were not enlisted for service by sea and they had been "guilty of no insubordination in declining to embark." As for the rumour that the regiment would refuse even to march to Arakan, that appeared to have been exaggerated. "In order to avoid all possible risk of a manifestation of mistaken discontent in the corps," the Governor-General thereupon ordered the 38th to march for Dacca to relieve the sickly 74th regiment stationed there.³

The Home Authorities, on learning about the unhappy incident of 1852, censured Burney and approved the measures taken by the Commander-in-Chief and the Governor-General. They did not leave the matter there, however, for they suggested that such a change⁴ in the terms of future enlistments might be made as might "eventually relieve you from similar embarassments."⁵

As usual this Barrackpore incident of 1852 drew the attention of the Press in India. Several letters and articles

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1. Memorandum of the C. in C. Kangra 3 April 1852. Bengal Mily. Cons. 13 August 1852. No. 60.
 2. "In 1829 nearly half of the regiment volunteered to accompany Burney to Ava." Bengal Mily. Cons. 13 August 1852. Ap. M.
 3. Bengal Mily. Cons. 27 March 1852. No. 330.
 4. Soon after Lord Dalhousie issued an order that all sepoy recruits should be enlisted for general service.
 5. D. to Bengal 20 October 1852. No. 128. M. D. sent to Bengal. Vol. 40.

were published. A few censured the 38th and abused them as "contemptible and litigious scoundrels,"¹ and wondering why the whole corps was not disbanded, blamed the military authorities - the Commander-in-Chief who was at Kangra, the Adjutant-General, who was at Simla and the Judge-Advocate General who was in Sind for their want of firmness and decision. The writer of a letter published in the Delhi Gazette under the name 'centurion' objected to the practice of asking sepoy's if they would do this or that. The British were the lords of the country and it was their duty to show these so-called soldiers that mere wearing of a red coat and cross belts would not make them soldiers.²

But except for these few adverse opinions the Press in India in general censured the Government for its bad policy and management. The Telegraph and Courier wrote that the 38th could not be blamed for any breach of military discipline.³ The Athenaeum observed that the affair had been mismanaged and pointed out to the Government that the Bengal sepoy's were not enrolled for service beyond the sea.⁴ One correspondent of the Delhi Gazette was of the opinion that in almost every instance of mutiny of the native regiments the Government was to be blamed and that it would "most assuredly turn itself out of the country at no very distant period by its own repeated acts of gross mismanagement and of bad faith to its native

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1. Morning Chronicle quoted by the Englishman and Military Chronicle 11 March 1852.
 2. The Delhi Gazette 12 May 1852.
 3. The Telegraph and Courier 23 March 1852.
 4. Athenaeum 23 March 1852.

troops.¹

Summarising the history of the Bengal native infantry regiments from 1796 onwards it can be pointed out that with the gradual growth of the Company's empire the size and importance of the sepoy army had also increased. After 1824, however, the number of the regiments remained fixed (74 regiments) and though the strength of individual regiments often increased or decreased to suit the circumstances the increases did not keep pace with the growth in territory. While the sepoys became more self-consciously aware of their importance they thus found themselves employed for long periods on boring or even unmilitary duties, and that at ever increasing distances from their home. A gradual deterioration of discipline followed. If the sepoy regiments continued to distinguish themselves in action against the Company's enemies, they also increasingly made themselves notorious for mutinous conduct.

All these mutinous outbreaks in the Bengal army from 1824 to 1852 showed the sepoys were gradually growing discontented with their service conditions. Besides this, these incidents further pointed out that mismanagement prevailed in the

1. The Delhi Gazette 27 March 1852.

military department and with Henry Lawrence it can rightly be said "after a hundred years' experience of Indian warfare the East India Company was still nearer the A B C than the Z of a sound, practical military administration."¹ If peace and order did reign in the lines from 1852 to 1857 the quiet was deceptive. It was but a lull preceding the storm which rolled down the plains of India in all its fury in 1857.

L. Lawrence - op.cit., p.157.

CHAPTER VCONCLUSION

In 1849 the editor of the Mofussilite, in a review of the state of the Bengal native infantry, wrote "they undoubtedly possess many of the best qualities of soldiers, they are for the most part fond of and devoted to the services; they are patient, cheerful and obedient. And on glorious campaigns in Sind, on the Sutledge and most recently in the Panjab have shown that they are disposed to perform readily all military duties." Such praise might have led the reader to believe that all was well with the sepoy army, had not the editor gone on to admit that "of late years, our sepoys have, however, deteriorated," and concluded that though "the fault lies in part with the Government, the chief cause is in the present system."¹

What that system was, and how it had developed, has already been stated, and the evidence of that deterioration, revealed in sepoy outbreaks, has already been given in earlier chapters. It remains to analyse the effect of the administrative policies of the Company upon the Bengal army, and to estimate the importance of the various causes of the disturbances which have been recorded.

1. The Mofussilite, 26 June 1849.

In the earliest years, until 1796, the conditions of the Company's service were so novel, and so constantly changing, the loose, free-lance traditions of the Mughal and Maratha military systems so strong, the example set by the officers and men of the Company's European forces so dubious, that the occurrence of unrest in the sepoy forces might seem to require little explanation. In those years the transition from hired Indian levy into disciplined army was still proceeding, for that reason our discussion will relate only to the period which began in 1796, to the years that is when the army had received its regular regimented organisation, had come under a series of elaborate codes and regulations, and had been placed completely in European hands.

The first question which requires an answer is why the sepoys ever chose to mutiny : why, if they had serious grievances, they chose to air them in that drastic way? It has been seen that the ordinary crime rate of the sepoy battalions was very low, in marked contrast to that of the Europeans in the Company's service, whose drunken disorders began to attract many earnest reforms in this period. Doubtless the tedium of years of sepoy life, the irritations of the hot weather, or the discomforts of the monsoon in undrained cantonment lines, the worries of long separation from family and village, and a multiplicity of other petty causes at times built up such a pitch of exasperation that the sepoys

only needed one more grievance to explode. But the penalties for mutiny were known, the flow of Persianised Hindustani at the monthly reading of the Articles of War did not pass over every head and some old sepoy or native commissioned officer was probably to be found in almost any regiment who could recall Munroe's or Paget's drastic treatment of mutineers. Had there been some less drastic means of making known and securing redress of grievances it would surely have been taken. That suggests that there was a serious breakdown of communications between the sepoy and higher authority.

The proper channel through which to make grievances known ought to have been the non-commissioned and commissioned native officers. But the jamadars and subadars of the native infantry were in a very curious position. It was only with difficulty that they could make their status as officers felt among the sepoys or with the European officers of their regiments. They had emerged, by long service, from the sepoy's ranks, but yet had to share their lives and manner of life, and like the sepoy obey the orders of the youngest subaltern. They were surrounded by men recruited from their own or neighbouring villages, with whom there were thus strong ties of caste, village, perhaps even kinship. They were elderly men, with years of hard service behind them, and no prospects of early promotion, or of titles and rewards to spur them on, men therefore inclined to swim with rather than against the

tide.¹ Occasionally, as in the 1824 mutiny of the 47th, they were themselves implicated in mutiny: (on that occasion they and the native ^{non-}commissioned officers of the regiment shared the grievance of the sepoy, having been told that they must make their own arrangements for transport. The court of enquiry denounced them for having indirectly encouraged that mutiny,² and they were discharged "as a salutary example to the Native officers of the army in general." ^{But more often they merely stood aside,} Hence the punitive orders issued to the 64th in 1844, designed to make the native officers realise that they would be "held responsible for the maintenance of discipline and good order among the men in their lines,"³ and Hunter's later threats that unless they produced the ringleaders in the mutiny, they would "by force be deprived of their arms."⁴ Again, in 1850, when the 66th refused to march to the Panjab, the native officers failed to exert their authority to prevent the disturbance, and failed equally to keep their European officers informed of what was happening. Eventually Jamadar Ganga Singh was arrested for passive complicity in the mutiny. Two subadars, one jamadar of the regiment were punished for what Colonel Troup denounced as "the gross neglect of duty and utter faithlessness of native commissioned and non-commissioned

1. Malcolm commented that the native officers acted "like men who, while desirous of not forfeiting what they possessed, were without adequate motives to make them perform with spirit a difficult and dangerous duty. The political history of India Vol.2. p.234.

2. Genl. observation of the court of enquiry, para. 330
 Barrackpore 2 January 1825. Bengal Mily. Cons. 6 January 1825

3. See Chapter IV. p.384.

4. See Chapter IV. p.390.

officers." Communications thus sometimes broke down because the native officers identified themselves with their men, actively or passively, and hushed up grievances so as to avoid trouble.

They also broke down for the very opposite reason, that the native officers had come to be seen by the men as part of the officers group, indifferent or hostile to their interests. For many years, as was seen in Chapter II, the European officers had added largely to their pay by a series of irregular expedients - bazaar allowances, off-reckoning funds, if not such frauds as underpayments to the sepoys, or false muster-rolls. In all such operations the aid, or at least the silence of the native officers, pay havildars etc., had been an essential part, to be rewarded by improper promotion, or undue authority. Something of that tradition seems to have lingered on. The enquiry into the mutiny of the 47th revealed that the Subadar-Major by his undue influence with successive colonels had secured the improper promotion of two of his relatives, - and that the sepoys had attempted to burn down his hut, and had demanded that he be put to death. The 64th likewise complained of the undue influence of Subadar Durga Prasad with the Colonel, and of the improper promotion of Havildar Seetaram, and also stated that they had not had one month's pay complete. When the sepoys had so little trust in their native officers, it might well have seemed that only a demonstration would make their

grievances known.

Had the European officers of the Bengal native infantry themselves been in closer touch with their men the weakness of the native officer link would not have been so much a stumbling stone. But it is clear that direct contact between officers and sepoy was not present very often. Enquiry committee after enquiry committee pointed to the need for a closer and friendlier relationship between European officers and the men. Lt. Col. Cartwright was censured for his short-tempered manner and "lack in the art of gaining esteem;" Captain Horsborough in 1825 should have been censured for his complete ignorance of the sickness among his men. In 1844, Colonel Moseley was found to have taunted and ridiculed his men, and Lt. Young was removed for the violence of his temper. We have seen how inadequate cadet training was and how increasingly young officers came out from England with a fixed idea of the inferiority of Indians. Such harsh treatment as listed above followed from such attitudes.

Discontent among officers with their service conditions, the flight of the better men to lucrative posts outside their regiments, the interposing of a mass of regulations between the authority of the officer and the sepoy, also led to slackness in duties. Very often those who remained with the regiments had suffered as much from the slowness of promotion and the absence of any spur to ambition as had their native

officers. Lt. Col. Moseley had entered the Company's service in 1805, had waited twenty years for his captaincy, and had only become a Lt. Col. in 1836 - and if his experience was shared by many others who had to put in fifteen or twenty years before reaching the rank of captain, so probably others lost their temper while waiting for promotion, and certainly lost their zeal. Captain Burt, it was noted, seldom appeared on parade, and was ignorant of the fact that his new recruits were all old sepoys on the run. The medical officer of the 46th at Rangpur had submitted no report on the health of the regiment, until required to do so by the court-martial, Colonel Troupe in 1849 left it to his sergeant-major to inform the 66th of the most important fact that the Panjab batta had been withdrawn. No wonder that General Hunter thought it necessary in 1844 to remind the officers that "the mere getting over a duty," was inadequate and that in 1850 the Mofussilite should have thought it necessary to stress "how imperatively requisite it is for the European to mingle with and know the men."²

But it was impossible so to mingle with the men if officers had not learnt their language - and the evidence

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1. Napier's General Order of 27 February 1850 particularly stressed the need for young officers to associate with the native officers and make them their comrades and to keep in direct contact with the men of their regiment.
 2. The Mofussilite 15 October 1850.

suggests that very often they had not done so. It was still in 1852 the general practice to attach an interpreter to every native regiment,¹ and the reports of the courts of enquiry suggest that many officers still relied upon the interpreter, or upon the native officers to make good their own linguistic deficiencies. (Those officers who passed their language examinations only too often were lost to the regiments by appointment to the political or civil service).

In some cases a very high proportion of the officers with the regiments were comparative new comers, who had had no opportunity to learn to know their men. Captain Mcnaughton, a member of the Barrackpur general court martial noted that at the time of when the 47th mutinied there was but one of its old officers present.² Similarly when unrest developed in the 4th, 34th, 64th and 69th in 1844, it was found that the great majority of the officers attached to those regiments had been posted to them since 1840. In an army, where

1. M.C. 8 August 1796. Grace Bengal regulations 1799. p.320. Carroll's Bengal Code 1817. Sec.XLI.

2. E.I.U.S.J. June 1835, p. 533

personal influences counted for a great deal,¹ the lack of a well-established relationship between officers and men was a great drawback.

Another common feature of the regiments in which mutinies occurred was the absence of a considerable proportion of such officers as had been posted to them. One particularly striking coincidence, if it was coincidence, was that the colonel commanding was in no case present with his regiment when it mutinied. In 1825, Colonel Shuldham of the 46th was holding a staff appointment; in 1844 Colonel Cunliffe of the 4th was on furlough, Colonel Cooper of the 34th was commandant at Barrackpore, Colonel Tapp of the 64th seems to have been on sick leave and Colonel Durant of the 69th on leave. In 1849-50 Colonel Latter of the 66th was absent on furlough, while in 1852 Colonel Wymer, A.D.C. to the Queen, was on staff duty. Three of the seven regiments mentioned above had fewer than the sanctioned number of officers on their strength - the 46th had only nineteen of the authorised

1. Such personal influence has always been important in the Indian army. Sir Claude Auchinleck observed "Those who have served for many years with Indian troops, as I have done, have always recognised that the loyalty of our men was really to the officers of the regiment or unit... the men's allegiance for all practical purposes was focused on the regiment, and particularly on the regimental officers, on whom they depended for their welfare, advancement and their future prospects. In these officers their faith and trust were almost childlike, as events have proved time and time again. It is true to say that in almost every case of serious discontent or indiscipline, and there have been remarkably few of them which has occurred in the past fifty years, the cause could be traced to indifferent officers and bad man-management."
John Con^Yell - Auchinleck pp. 947-948.

twenty-three, and all of them had a high proportion of such officers as had been posted to them absent from the regiment. When the mutinies occurred - the 66th, indeed had nearly one-third of its officers away, including the commanding officer.¹ As a result such officers as Captain Burt or Captain Nepean had to try and cope with two companies, with one of which they must obviously have had little acquaintance. No wonder then that the sepoys, with strange company commanders or none at all, with the commanding officer, the father of the regiment, in every instance absent, and with native officers who either would not or could not speak for them, rose in mutiny to express their grievances.

Mutiny, it has been argued, was resorted to because no other way seemed open of securing the attention of authority - authority which had become steadily less personal and more remote. Not all of the grievances were in themselves of such great importance as to seem to require drastic action, mutiny was a sign of maladministration, of bad man-management. There were, however, a number of issues round which discontent frequently focussed, and which were likely to lead to violence.

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1. In 1825, 6 of the 19 officers of the 46th were absent.
 - In 1844, 8 of the 22 officers of the 4th were absent.
 - In 1844, 9 of the 23 officers of the 34th were absent.
 - In 1844, 8 of the 22 officers of the 64th were absent.
 - In 1844, 6 of the 23 officers of the 69th were absent.
 - In 1850, 8 of the 23 officers of the 66th were absent.
 - In 1852, 11 of the 22 officers of the 38th were absent.

As might have been expected with a mercenary army, questions of pay and allowances were often at the back of outbursts - and the sepoys on such matters were constantly given the worst sort of lead by their officers. The sepoy outbreak at Buxar followed directly upon the successful mutiny of the European troops there, and at a later date the series of memorials, and the formation of committees of protest by the officers of the Bengal native infantry, culminating in the attempted boycott of Bentinck when the officers' batta was cut, were a constant incitement to the sepoys to seek a remedy by similar methods. Unfortunately for the sepoys the active protest which secured partial remedies for the officers more often ended in punishment for them, even when the press showed itself sympathetic to their case.

Many observers pointed out that the sepoy served only for his pay - Badenach's comment that patriotism was entirely unknown and that its place was occupied for the sepoy by love of money was typical of many. It is striking then to note that the basic pay of the Bengal sepoy, which had been seven rupees a month in 1796 remained seven rupees until the end of our period. The question at once poses itself, was this reward, 84 rupees a year, still as great in comparative terms at the end of the period as it obviously had been at the beginning, or was the increase in the number of mutinous outbreaks in the 40's and 50's a sign that the sepoy was finding his pay less and less adequate?

An analysis of the price of rice over the sixty years from 1796 onward would indicate that the cost of living did register an upward trend. The price of rice per maund had been twelve annas in 1790, it rose to one rupee four annas in 1804-05, and though it fell again to fifteen annas in 1813 and even to eight annas in 1815 it rose steadily thereafter to one rupee two annas in 1828-29, one rupee seven annas in 1832 and one rupee six annas in 1852. The average wage rates of a labourer or ploughman, in so far as they can be ascertained, kept pace with the rise in the cost of the basic food stuffs: a ploughman who had earned twenty two rupees a year in 1790-1800, received twenty-nine rupees in 1813 and thirty three rupees in 1830-31. It is true that in time of war the Government did adopt measures to stabilise the price of food grains for the sepoy.¹ But they were exceptional measures - and in any case took no account of the rising expenses of the sepoy's family. (To some degree the families in the villages, where they were engaged in agriculture, may have benefited from rising prices, of course). This gradual rise in the cost of living must have affected the sepoys in many ways, for not only were they nominally expected to feed themselves, but they had also to provide their own clothes, hire their own transport, build their own huts, and the rising

1. In 1847, when Hardinge reported that the sepoys were suffering from the high price of grain, the Court allowed compensation to be paid whenever grain rose to more than three rupees eight annas a maund - that is to nearly five times the cost of rice in 1796, when the pay scales had been fixed.

G.O.G.G. 17 December 1847.

grain prices were an element in the cost of all these.

One other point needs to be considered - the prices that have been quoted above were those prevailing in the settled provinces of Lower India. But more and more troops of the Bengal native infantry found themselves posted to up country stations, where peace was of recent introduction, and agriculture was less prosperous. The 34th spent three years in Bundelkhand and another in the Jungle Mahals, the 64th was at Ludhiana in 1843 and thereafter was ordered to Sind - these were peace time postings, but to areas where war and disturbance, and the natural poverty of semi-desert, still unirrigated areas with poor communications made rations expensive. When the 47th was ordered to Burma, the troops already in action were suffering heavily, not from enemy action, but from "the want of the simplest articles of diet." During the Afghan campaign, in 1839, atta was sold in the camp bazars at more than two rupees a maund. In 1845, at the time of the Sind mutinies the Delhi Gazette¹ made it clear that it thought the sepoy's claim for extra pay to cover the dearness of provisions in Sind was reasonable, and in 1850 the Mofussilite condemned the army authorities for not

1. The Delhi Gazette pointed out that the sepoy's being far from their homes and paying at a high rate for all the necessaries of life "as Attah was 17½ seers a rupee, fuel four maunds* dal 13 seers, ghee 2 seers etc.", rightly felt that they would not be able to send as much as usual to their families.

Delhi Gazette 13 February 1850. quoted by Athenaeum
28 February 1850.

* 40 seers = a maund, 1 seer = about 2 pounds.

recognising that the high cost of grain in the Panjab had made the sepoy's pay inadequate, if they were both to feed themselves and maintain their family remittances. The price of grain in the Panjab was "almost as high as when they first crossed the Sutlej". The operations of the Sikh war had put a stop to all agricultural labourers and had ruined the standing crops of a great part of the country and accordingly "the bazaars of grain throughout the Panjab [were] mainly supplied from Rohilakhand and other equally distant parts."¹ If seven rupees was no longer by 1852, very handsome pay in the old provinces of the Company, it was certainly too low in the vast new conquests made since the 1830's.

The extension of the Company's territory also imposed upon the sepoy's ever larger marches at each new posting. These were not merely tedious, indeed worse than tedious in absurd uniforms and weighted down with clumsy equipment, but very expensive. The cost of carriage, as has been seen, fell upon the sepoy, not upon the army authorities. The 47th between 1807 and 1811 had four changes of station. In 1814 it was called upon to march 500 miles from Barrackpore to Benares, in 1816 to march 300 miles to Dinapore and again in 1818 to march a further 500 miles to Agra. The 66th in the seven years before it mutinied had moved 650 miles from Cawnpore to Barrackpore, another 350 miles into Arakan, a year later

1. The Mofussilite 8 February 1850.

over 700 miles back to Dinapore, and thereafter 400 miles to Lucknow and 500 miles to Govindgarh. The hard marching, with great expense for carriage cattle, with which the regiments were faced as the Delhi territories, the Panjab and Sind were added to the Company's possessions became a very potent source of distress and irritation, even when wretched commissariat arrangements had not broken down under the stress of war, as they had in 1824. When it is remembered that each change of cantonment also involved the sepoy in some expense for new hutting it seems remarkable that there were not more mutinies on the lines of that staged by the 47th.¹

The extension of the Company's territories had other consequences also. One was that it became more difficult for the sepoys to secure or take leave, and that casual meeting with men from the village which had helped to maintain contact with families at home became less and less likely. The revival of opposition to sea voyages in the 1820's may have been caused in part by the experience of those troops sent to Java who had been promised an early return to India when the fighting was over, but found themselves in a prolonged and unwilling exile. Certainly one reason for the dislike of Sind service was that it cut men off from their homes, twelve hundred miles or more away in Oudh. That point

1. The petition which began the disturbances in the 64th had made much of the fact that the regiment had only been seven months in Ludhiana, after serving in Afghanistan, and yet was being asked to move to Sind.

was clearly made in 1844 by a writer to the Athenaeum.¹

The other, more important, point was that every new conquest while it added to the expense of the sepoy curtailed his opportunity of earning extra allowances. No question so roused the feelings of the European officers of the Company as the reduction in their batta, and no question provoked so many mutinies among the sepoy. It is true that after 1837 the marching batta of the Bengal native infantry was somewhat increased to bring it into line with the allowances granted to sepoy of the Madras and Bombay armies, but the loss of the allowance for service beyond the boundaries of the Bengal Presidency which followed from the incorporation of Sind and the Panjab as regular parts of that Presidency far outweighed any benefits conferred.² It was, indeed, difficult to dispute the logic of the sepoy of the 34th, 4th and 69th that if extra allowances had been needed by the troops serving before them in Sind, they, too, had themselves and their families to support. No condition had been altered - except the legal one of Sind's incorporation in the Bengal Presidency - why then should they be deprived by a stroke of the pen of benefits previously held to be necessary? To disallow batta was a breach of faith. Indeed, so strong was

1. Chapter IV. p.

2. By a curious anomaly the allowance for service in Arakan and Lower Burma was continued after the conclusion of the first Burmese war.

their argument that even the army administrators supported them in their demand for the reintroduction of the withdrawn facilities. The Commander-in-Chief with evident sympathy, wrote to the Governor-General¹ that Sind was "considered a foreign country by the native troops and increased advantages [were] given as an inducement to serve in that quarter; the men [were] impressed with the conviction that they [were] entitled to such and however erroneously they [looked] upon the attempt, to withhold them [was] almost a breach of faith towards them on the part of the Government which they [had] a right to resist."²

However, the very same issue, the withdrawal of allowances, was permitted to precipitate yet another crisis less than six years later. As if experience gained both by the Government and native regiments during the outbursts of 1844 was of no avail and yet another explosive situation was created in 1849 by the adoption of almost parallel measures. After the successful conclusion of the Sikh wars, the Government declared the newly annexed Panjab to be a province of the Bengal Presidency and promptly withdrew the foreign service allowances enjoyed by the troops serving in that area.

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1. Though the mutinous regiments did not raise the issue, Ellenborough believed that "fear of the Scinde fever" was responsible for much of the unrest, and the Commander-in-Chief obviously shared his view - witness his plea that the scheme of family pensions payable to the heirs of those dying of disease contracted in Sind should be continued, even though Sind was no longer on a war footing.
 2. Adj.Genl. to Mily. Secy. Shahdera 28 February 1844. No.187 Bengal Mily. Cons. 8 March 1844. No.99

The sepoy, who argued that posted as they were far from home in a very costly country, it would be difficult for them to subsist on their reduced pay, at once protested. They exclaimed "etna tallab se pait naheen burraga"¹ and asked if the soldiers were not fed, "how could they bear arms?"² Once again the injustice as well as the unwisdom of such curtailment of allowances was recognised by the Commander-in-Chief, by the Home Authorities and by many sections of the press. Once again, however the remedy adopted was force and punishment.

The remedy was inappropriate, the more so as it was very clear that the authorities by their clumsy handling of the Sind and Panjab disturbances had much aggravated a difficult situation. A measure of economy of doubtful expediency having been decided upon there had followed an extraordinary series of blunders at every level. Orders had been inadequately explained, promises had been loosely made, or made without due authority, displays of conciliatoryness had alternated with ill-judged attempts at firmness. Even the highest authorities, the ^{Commander} ~~C~~-in-^{Chief} ~~C~~, the Indian Government and the Home Government had been uncertain about how the pay scales had been arrived at, and were at odds with one another.

The other permanent cause of disturbance was the caste feeling of the sepoy, and in particular the sepoy's

1. "This amount of pay will not fill our bellies."

2. Adj. Genl. to Maj. Genl. ~~Stibbert~~. Lahore 8 December 1849.

No. 114. Bengal Mily. Comd. 28 December. 1849 No. 50

dislike of serving outside India and of sea voyages. After some initial success in securing volunteers, achieved by taking great care over detail and exercising a patient conciliatoryness, the fear of loss of caste re-emerged in 1824. The court of enquiry upon the mutiny of the 47th made it clear that one reason why the efforts of ^{Lt.} Col. Cartwright failed was that the sepoy suspected that when the miserable bullocks he provided failed they would be compelled to continue by sea - a suspicion only strengthened by the threats of their Muslim Subadar-Major about the sea-voyage. In 1842 Pollock had much difficulty in inducing his sepoy to advance upon Kabul, the men of the 60th and 53rd saying that they would "not go to Cabul to be made Mussalmans of." In 1844 a writer to the Athenaeum pointed out that service in Sind a ^{Muslim area} ~~Mussalman~~ was necessarily objectionable to Hindu sepoy. The outburst in 1852, when the attempt was made to ship an entire regiment by sea to Rangoon, ought then to have been foreseen. The 38th had done "much good service in the Mysore and Candahar campaigns", yet still the men refused to proceed by sea, despite the very great persuasions and pressure of their officers. As Subadar-Major Meer Munsoor Ally told the Barrackpore court of enquiry, "the men positively set their faces against volunteering in spite of being offered the chance of enlisting as a marine battalion and thereby earning more money."¹ The weight and reality of the men's

1. Bengal Mily. Cons. 13 August 1852. No.60.

religious scruples were made very obvious - and in 1852 the authorities showed that they recognised this by the mildness of their punishment of the 38th. Yet in 1857, when those same scruples were again offended, there was, initially at least, a great readiness either to pooh-pooh or dismiss them, or to attempt to overcome them by force.

A most striking feature of the sixty years that have been reviewed is the absence of serious unrest in the Bengal native infantry before 1824, and the increasingly serious and frequent outbreaks after that year. By 1824 many of the grievances of the European officers had been redressed. After 1824 the grievances of the sepoys, non-commissioned and commissioned native officers became more serious and received but scant attention.

The most important sources of discontent were financial. While the cost of living was rising, basic pay scales remained virtually unaltered, and the small additions for long service secured with such difficulty by Bentinck were swallowed up by the loss of batta. Before 1824 the army had been expanding rapidly, had constantly been in action, and had spent much of its time on foreign service. Prospects of promotion were therefore good, there was official prize money to be hoped for and much opportunity for unofficial looting. The Mughal and Maratha tradition of the army living off the countryside as it advanced was not forgotten, and

sepoys could hope to secure their food and firewood from the villages and so live more or less free of expense. But in the later years when the stability of the civil administration and the extent of the Company's territorial possessions had increased, the sepoys were deprived of these advantages. At the same time the opportunities for promotion were diminishing - whence the large number of fit younger men who chose to leave after they had served out their fifteen years. For the European officer there were opportunities outside the regiment, in the political or civil lines, or in service with irregular corps. For the sepoy there were no such spur for ambition, though Malcolm in 1826 had urged that the sepoy "should be taught to look to meritorious services in the army as the road to employment under the civil administration of his native province."¹ Even such honours as Bentinck did secure as outlets for ambition and zeal too often went to those whose main vent was found in the number of years they had quietly served.

If the financial advantages of military service under the Company were diminishing, so were the imponderable advantages of prestige and social consideration. The hardening of the attitude of European officers towards their men has been sufficiently stressed already. But there was a similar change of attitude in officials outside the ranks of the army. The administration of the Company was steadily losing its military

1. Malcolm. op.cit., Vol.2, p.243.

flavour - the revenue official, judge or civil engineer were coming into their own. These men were unwilling to accord to the sepoy the special privileges which he had once enjoyed: the refusal by magistrates automatically to give priority to the suit of a sepoy was a symptom of a wider change, visible also in the impatience expressed in the press at the religious scruples or even the pride of the native infantry.

In his own community, too, the sepoy or subadar was no longer so important a figure. New classes in Indian society were achieving importance, western educated men for whom the government was finding increasing scope in its administration. As has been seen the comparisons did not fail to be drawn between the pay and prospects of a subadar and those of a tahsildar or munsif. Moreover the army as a whole had lost some of the glamour born of almost unbroken success. The campaigns in Burma in 1824, in Afghanistan in 1839 and in the Panjab war against the Sikhs had been very hard fought, the outcome often uncertain, and occasionally disastrous. The institution of subadar majorships, the meagre awards of the Order of Merit or Order of British India did not adequately compensate for lost glory. Service in the Bengal native infantry was neither as financially rewarding, nor as satisfying socially in the thirties, forties and fifties as it had been in the first half of our period.

The Indian Government refused, however, to admit the deterioration - or if mutiny and constant press discussion

of what was wrong made them admit that something was amiss, refused to take any effective steps to redress grievances and restore hope. Schemes for training cadets were dropped, though admonitions about considerate treatment of the sepoy went out in plenty. The number of officers with their regiments was allowed steadily to decline. The effective pay of the sepoy was not even made to match the general rise in prices, honorary awards were granted with a grudging hand. The lesson of mutiny after mutiny went unlearnt, the information from courts of enquiry went unutilised until in 1857 the whole rigid, clumsy out-dated machine of the Bengal native army, after nearly destroying those who directed it, destroyed itself.

APPENDIX A

Review Roll of recruits entertained for the 1st battalion
1st regiment native infantry, by - - in the district of
Buxar, in the months of April and May, 1800.

Barrackpore, 31st May 1800

<u>No.</u>	<u>Names</u>	<u>Remarks</u>	
-	Heera Loll	- entertained 15th April	} Approved by me - this 31st May 1800. A.B. Lt.-Col. Commanding 1st regiment.
	Gonga Sing	- " 20th "	
	Sheik Ramjhan	- " 25th "	
	Fyzoolah Khan	- " 30th "	
	Munsa Ram	- " 1st May	
<u>6</u>	Beny Sing	- " 29th April	} Rejected as unfit for the service. A.B.Lt. Colonel Com- manding 1st regiment.
	Heera Sing	- " 29th "	
	Rundeer Sing	- " 1st May	
<u>9</u>	Doondee Khan	- " 16th April	} C.D. Recruiting Officer.
		deserted 8th May	
	Saidut Ally	_____	
	Burjoo Sing	- entertained 20th April died 25th May	

The above table is taken from N.C. 8 August 1796. Carroll's
Bengal Code 1817. Sec. XVII.

APPENDIX B

Declaration on oath by recruits at their enrolment.

"I, A. B. inhabitant of ----- village, ---
 Pergunnah, --- Subah, son of ---, do swear that
 I will never forsake or abandon my colours; that
 I will march wherever I am directed, whether within
 or beyond the Company's territory, that I will
 implicitly obey all the orders of my Commanders, and
 in everything behave myself as becomes a good
 soldier and a faithful servant of the Company; and
 failing in any part of my duty, as such I will
 submit to the penalties described in the Articles
 of War which have been read to me." ¹

1. M^y. C. 8 August 1796, Grace Bengal Regulation 1799, p.10, Carroll's Bengal Code 1817, Sec.XLI, Standing Orders in Bengal regiment 1852, p.104.

A P P E N D I X C

Table of officer strengths in the Bengal sepoy army at various dates.

Year	Number of regts. in the army and of officers per regiment.	Total officers strength (sanctioned)	Actual strength (appointed).	Civilian staff duties.	On furlough	With the regiments.
1805	- 23x46 (double battalion regiment)	- 1058	- 803	- 132	- 49	- 622
1810	- 27x46 (" ")	- 1242	- 1094	- 164	- 57	- 873
1815	- 27x46 (" ")	- 1242	- 1036	- 228	- 65	- 743
1820	- 30x46 (" ")	- 1380	- 948	- 384	- 70	- 494
1825	- 68x23 (single battalion regiment)	- 1564	- 1237	- 379	- 93	- 765
1830	- 74x23 (" ")	- 1702	- 1400	- 547	- 185	- 668
1835	- 74x23 (" ")	- 1702	- 1416	- 344	- 154	- 918
1840	- 74x23 (" ")	- 1702	- 1346	- 391	- 132	- 823
1845	- 74x24 (" ")	- 1776	- 1694	- 455	- 170	- 1069
1850	- 74x24 (" ")	- 1776	- 1487	- 484	- 169	- 834
1852	- 74x24 (" ")	- 1776	- 1741	- 549	- 172	- 1020

APPENDIX D.Statistical returns of prices and wage rates in
Bengal Presidency, (1790-1852).

In converting English into Indian prices, the following established rules have been followed:

Previous to 1828-29 the sicca rupee was converted to the current rupee by the addition of $16\frac{9}{16}$ batta and the current was reckoned at two shillings. Hence, one sicca rupee was equivalent to 2 shillings $\frac{4}{16}$ pence. From 1836-37, when the Company^{rupee} was ordered to be taken as current, it was laid down that 16 Company rupees were equal to 15 sicca rupees, the sicca rupee being valued at two shillings. The Indian maund was to the Cwt. as 36 to 49¹, i.e. 82 lbs.

A. Price Schedule.1. Rice (Coarse) ²

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Price per cwt.</u>			<u>Remarks.</u>	<u>Conversion.</u>		
	<u>£.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>		<u>Price in Sicca rupee per maund.</u>		
					<u>R.</u>	<u>A.</u>	<u>P.</u>
1792.	- 0	- 5	- 0	- Famine year	1	- 10	- 0
1813	-	3	- $\frac{3}{4}$.. average price	15	- 0	0
1832	-From	3	-11	- average price	1	-	7
	to	3	- $9\frac{1}{8}$				
1852	-From	3	- 9	- average price	1	-	6
	to	3	- $8\frac{1}{8}$				

1. P.P. 1852-53, (362), XXI, H.L.p.1.
2. P.P. 1852-53, (362), XXI, H.L. p.1.

2. Rice (Medium).

<u>Year</u>	<u>Price in sicca per maund</u>					
	R	-	A	-	P	
1790-1800	-	0	-	12	- 0	} ■ 1
1804- 05	-	1	-	4	- 0	
1815-16	-	0	-	8	- 0	
1828-29	-	From 1	-	0	- 0	} ■ 2
		to 1	-	4	- 0	

To summarise the combined price variation tables for coarse and medium quality rice per maund in sicca rupees:

<u>1790 - 1800</u>	-	<u>1804-05</u>	-	<u>1813</u>	-	<u>1815-16</u>
R. A. P.		R. A. P.		R. A. P.		R. A. P.
0-12 -0	-	1- 4- 0	-	0-15- 0	-	0- 8- 0
<u>1828-29</u>	-	<u>1832</u>	-	<u>1852</u>		
R. A. P.		R. A. P.		R. A. P.		
1- 2- 0	-	1- 7- 0	-	1- 6- 0		

B. Wage rates:

Before 1852, as was reported in the House of Lords there were "no periodical reports of the wages of rural labour or of the wages of day labourers, but the subjoined particulars" were "furnished as a partial return to the present requisition."³ The following figures had been collected from

-
1. W. Hamilton - A geographical, statistical and historical description of Hindustan and the adjoining countries.
Vol.II, pp.35, 39 and 40.
 2. Bengal Commercial report 1828-29. p.14.
 3. P.P. 1852-53, (362), XXI, H.L. p.2.

W.J. Bayley, Judge-Magistrate of Burdwar and from the Proceedings of the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium at Calcutta.

1. Ploughman.

Region. Wages per annum in Sicca rupee.¹

	1790-91		1813	1830 - 31	
	With food and raiment	Without food and raiment	Without food and raiment	With food and raiment	Without food and raiment
	R. A. P.	R. A. P.	R. A. P.	R. A. P.	R. A. P.
Dinajpur	4- 0- 0			12- 0- 0	24- 0- 0
Backergunje	9- 0- 0	18- 0- 0		18- 0- 0	36- 0- 0
24 Parganas	12- 0- 0	25-12- 0	29- 0- 0		35- 8- 0 to 41- 8- 0
Murshidabad.	12- 0- 0			12- 0- 0 to 24- 0- 0	

The above figures averaged yield the following wage rates,

Year

1790-91	}	Rs. 9 - 4 - 0 (With food and raiment)
		Rs. 21 - 12 - 0 (Without food and raiment).
1813	—	Rs. 29 - 0 - 0 (" " " ").
1830-31	}	Rs. 16 - 0 - 0 (With food and raiment)
		Rs. 32 - 14 - 0 (Without food and raiment).

1. P.P. 1852-53, XXI, (362), H.L. p.3.

2. Coolie (Labourer).

Region	Wages, per annum in Sicca rupee. ¹														
	1790- 91						1803-04			1830 - 31					
	With food and raiment			Without food and raiment			Without food and raiment			With food and raiment			Without food and raiment		
	R.	A.	P.	R.	A.	P.	R.	A.	P.	R.	A.	P.	R.	A.	P.
Dinajpur				22	8	0							45	0	0
Backergunje	9	0	0	18	0	0				18	0	0	36	0	0
24 Parganas				24	0	0	30	0	0				45	0	0
Murshidabad	14	0	0							22	0	0	45	0	0

The average wage for a coolie per annum was :-

Year

1790-91	}	Rs. 11 - 8 - 0	With food and raiment.
		Rs. 21 - 0 - 0	Without food and raiment.
1803-04	—	Rs. 30 - 0 - 0	" " " "
1830-31	}	Rs. 20 - 0 - 0	With food and raiment.
		Rs. 42 - ¹² 0 - 0	Without food and raiment.

1. H.P. 1852-53, XXI, (362), H.L. p.3.

The average wage rates without food per annum for a ploughman and a labourer were:-

	1790-91	1803 - 04	1813	1830-31
Ploughman	Rs.22 - 0-0	Rs.29-0-0	Rs.33-0-0	
Labourer	Rs.22.- 0-0	Rs.30-0-0	Rs.43-0-0	

Analysis.

By correlating the above table with the variation of price of rice in Bengal over the period under the review it could be observed that:

	1790-1800	1804-05	1813	1815-16	1828-29	1832	1852
	R. A. P	R. A. P	R. A. P	R. A. P	R. A. P	R. A. P.	R. A. P
Price of rice per maund.	0-12-	1- 4- 0	0-15- 0	0- 8- 0	1- 2-0	1-7-0	1-6- 0
Labourer's wage.	22- 0- 0	30- 0- 0				43-0-0	
Ploughman's wage.	22- 0- 0		29- 0- 0			33-0-0	

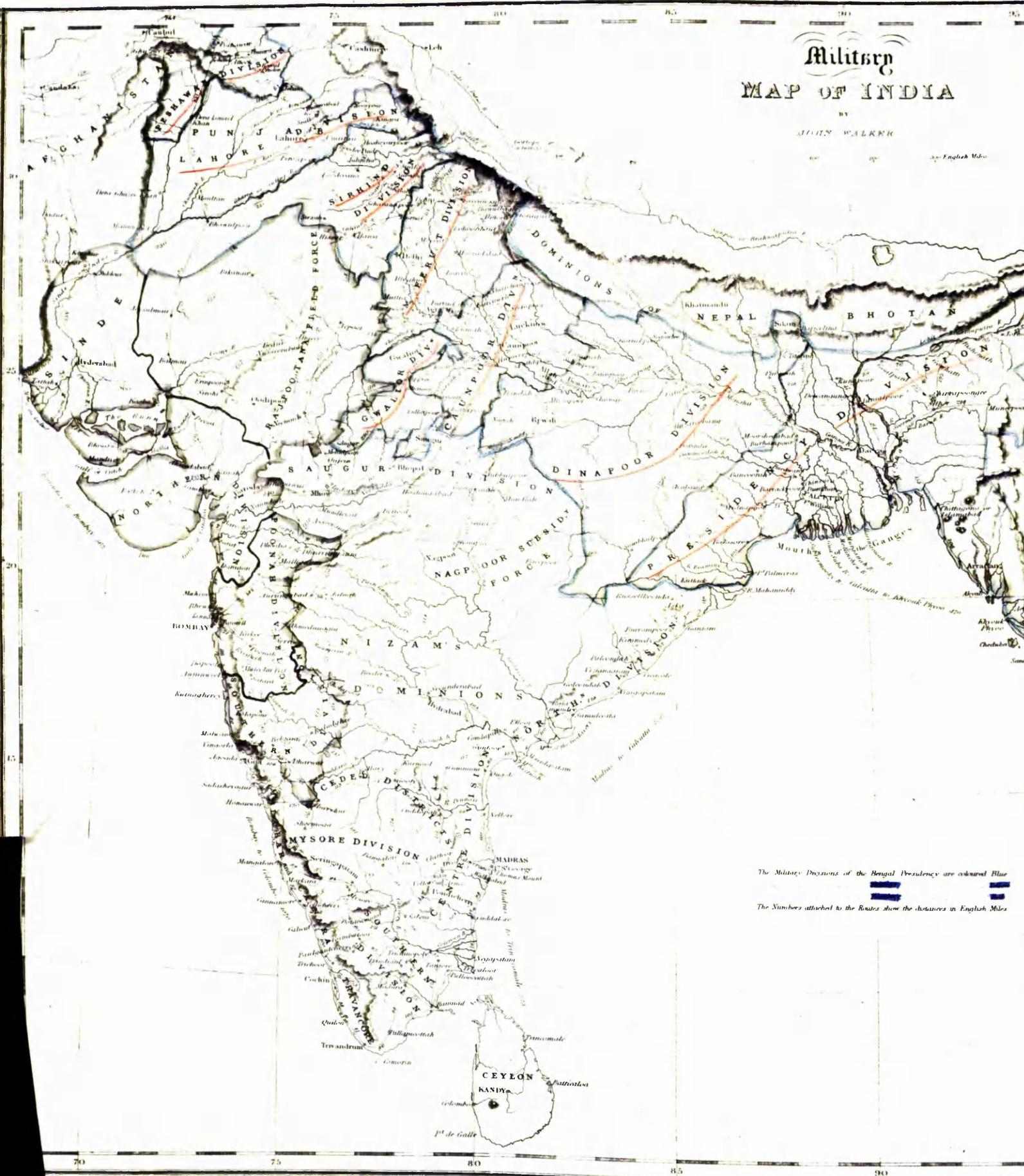
The few figures obtained show a fair measure of agreement, with the cost of living, varying in proportion to the price of rice. The cost of living of a common man, with the needs of a sepoy, thus rose over the years in Bengal, nearly doubling between 1796 and 1852. But whereas the wages

prices, the basic pay of the sepoy remained at Rs. 7 throughout the period.

Military MAP OF INDIA

BY
JOHN WALKER

Scale in English Miles



The Military Divisions of the Bengal Presidency are coloured Blue

The Numbers attached to the Routes show the distances in English Miles

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