CHAPTER V

CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILS.
The Sixth Schedule envisages a District Council for each Autonomous district and one or more Regional Councils in an Autonomous district which is inhabited by different tribes. The District or the Regional Council as the case may be is declared to be a body corporate with perpetual succession, common seal and the right to sue and be sued.

The District and the Regional Councils partake the characteristics of local authorities in that they are elected by the people of the very localities over which they exercise their powers and functions. They are autonomous to a degree greater than that usually enjoyed by the local bodies elsewhere but they are not altogether free from the control of the Central and Provincial governments.

ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS:

The District and the Regional Councils have their administrative areas defined as Autonomous districts and Autonomous regions respectively. The Autonomous districts correspond to the erstwhile revenue districts in respect of all but the North Cachar Hills and the Mikir Hills which were revenue sub-divisions. There is nothing sacrosanct about the administrative areas of the Autonomous districts. The Sixth Schedule empowers the Governor to increase or diminish the area of an Autonomous district, to unite two or more Autonomous districts or parts thereof into one, to create an Autonomous district, and to define the boundaries of an Autonomous district. The only restriction on the exercise of this power lies in the requirement that the Governor shall consi-
nder the report of a commission appointed by him for the purpose. He is, however, not bound by the recommendation of the Commission.¹

Neither in size nor in population structure is there any uniformity among the administrative areas of the Autonomous districts. The North Cachar Hills District with an area 4890 sq. km. and a population of about 76,000 is the smallest. The administrative area of the Mizo District is the biggest, being 21,100 sq. km. It is over four times that of the North Cachar Hills District. However, the Mizo District is as sparsely populated as the North Cachar Hills District in that the density of population in both districts is 16 per sq. km. The administrative area of the Garo Hills District is larger than that of the North Cachar Hills District but smaller than that of the Mikir Hills District. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills has a total area of 14,400 sq. km. This was the position of the administrative areas of the Autonomous districts in 1952 when the number of District Councils set up was five. In 1955 the Pawi-Lakher region of the Mizo District was constituted into a separate administrative area and a Regional Council was set up. In 1972 the Mizo District Council was abolished and the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was made a District Council. In 1968 a separate District Council was instituted in the Jowai Sub-division of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District. This had naturally reduced the administrative area of the erstwhile Khasi

¹. It is noteworthy that the original draft of the Sixth Schedule provided that for purposes of defining and demarcating the administrative areas of Autonomous districts, the Governor should act on the report of a Commission appointed by him in certain respects and on a resolution adopted by a District Council in certain other respects. In the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Ambedkar moved an amendment by which the requirement to act on the consent of a District Council was given up. The Constituent Assembly accepted the amendment.
and Jaintia Hills District Council. Following an Act of Parliament passed in 1972, five new District Councils were constituted in the tribal areas of Manipur.

The wide disparity in the administrative areas of the Autonomous districts raises a theoretical question whether it is not desirable to have the local units as nearly uniform in size and population as possible. Plato and Aristotle were the first political scientists to speculate on the ideal size of the city which was the only basis of political organisation known to them. Plato says that a city could grow so long as it does not sacrifice the principle of unity. In the Laws, Plato is more explicit. He lays down that an ideal city should consist of 5040 citizens, not more and not less. Aristotle defines an ideal city as one in which each citizen knows every other by sight. But the growth of the cities in the world since Plato and Aristotle has hardly ever been confined to the conditions laid down by them.

Local communities in general have never been built upon philosophical speculations. The forces of history, the peculiar needs and aspirations of the people and a host of other factors, general and particular have influenced the size and character of local institutions all over the world. As a result, there is not only a wide variety of local bodies, even the areas of particular local units vary from country to country and from one region to another within the same country. Whether it is the English parish, county or borough, or the commune in France and other European countries, the Hungarian county or the Russian raion, the Australian shire or the American city or county, the village Panchayat
or the District Board in India - in none of these local units there is uniformity either in size or population.\(^2\)

This is not to suggest, however, that the growth of local authorities be left entirely to the exigencies of time and circumstances. There are certain basic principles which ought to be borne in mind while determining the size of the local institutions.

First, there is the need to relate the size to function. But the difficulty most commonly faced here is that different functions call for different areas. What is an adequate area, for example, for street cleaning or for paving of roads may not be adequate for purposes of protected water supply. The question, therefore, arises: should there be a special area for each special function and a special authority to deal with it? Or should there be a general purpose authority embracing a number of functions at a time? Multiplicity of special authorities will bring in problems of control and coordination. It will also mean the dominance of the bureaucrat and the technocrat even in affairs

\(^2\) While the average area of the French Commune is 5645 acres, there are communes much smaller in extent and some with as small an area as 10 acres. The jurisdiction of a French commune may include a great and flourishing city like Nice or be confined to a petty hamlet with a hundred or so inhabitants. The administrative countries in England have their areas varying from 83 sq. miles to 2600 sq. miles and their populations ranging from 26,000 to one million. The population of the largest parish (27,000) is more numerous than that of the smallest county (21,000). In U.S.A. the average area of a county is 960 sq. miles. But two-thirds of the counties have their areas between 300 to 900 sq. miles. On the other hand, there are many counties whose administrative areas reach 4000 sq. miles. The average population of a county in America is 39,000. But more than half of the counties have a population ranging from 10,000 to 30,000 while a few small rural counties have only a few hundred inhabitants. In Australia (New South Wales) the areas of the Shires varied from 48 sq. miles to 5883 sq. miles (1928). The French department **h\(\text{h}\)ad a uniform area throughout France. For details, see Harris, G.M., 'Comparative Local Government' Ch. 2, pp. 29-41.
purely local. The principal advantage with a general purpose local authority is that it enlists the support and cooperation of the local people and ensures their participation in civic life and activity more fully and effectively. Further, it is in a position to review the relative importance of the various services to be rendered, fix priorities and act in a manner which secures the common good. Thus a general purpose authority should be preferred to numerous special authorities. It's area should not be so large as to be unwieldy but large enough to enable it to discharge a number of functions efficiently and economically. In other words, a local authority may grow in size so long as the principle of neighbourhood - its principal interest and action spring is not unduly sacrificed.

Second, an adequate area should necessarily imply an adequate population. Population in a purely numerical sense is again of little significance. The people should have a community of interest as may be evident from certain common aims and aspirations.

Third, fiscal adequacy is of fundamental importance in determining the area of a local authority. The very idea of a local service is that the people who are benefitted by it should also pay for it. In other words, a local authority should have a sufficient tax base to raise the revenues required to meet the cost of its administration and the services it offers. No local authority can expect to depend entirely on central subsidy.

Finally, there are factors like geography, and topography, transport and communication, economic life and industrial development,
historic tradition and current aspirations which ought to be taken into consideration while determining the administrative areas of local bodies. The relative importance of these several factors must necessarily depend upon the circumstances of each case.

The Autonomous districts of North East India have been carved out of the erstwhile Excluded and Partially Excluded areas inhabited by distinct Hill tribes. The major tribes are fairly numerous and will be seen inhabiting the Hills named after them. Unlike their counterparts in the other parts of the country, these tribes have roots in their own culture and social customs and are ever jealous to preserve them. It is against this background that the scheme of Autonomous districts and District Councils was drawn up. Each Autonomous district so created is compact, homogeneous with sufficient population and area.
CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL:

Each District Council shall elect a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman. ³ The Chairman and in the absence of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman shall preside over the meetings of the District Council. The District Councils of the North Cachar Hills and the Mikir Hills shall have the District or Sub-divisional officer as the case might be, to act as ex-officio Chairman for six years after the first constitution of the District Council concerned. ⁴

The explanation for such exception being made in regard to the Mikir and the North Cachar Hills is to be found in the report of the Bardoloi Sub-Committee which recommended such a course of action and the Drafting Committee as well as the Constituent Assembly accepted it. Making a review of the political experience in the various Hill Areas, the Bardoloi Sub-Committee observed: "While there is no doubt that the Naga, Lushai, Khasi and Garo will be able to manage a large measure of local autonomy, the North Cachar tribes and the Mikir may yet want a period of supervision and guidance." ⁵ In the opinion of the Sub-Committee, the Mikir and the North Cachar tribes were socially and educationally more backward than most other tribes and as such they needed the guidance of experienced District officers for some time to come. But one fails to understand that when the District Councils of these tribes, like all other District Councils, could elect their own chief Executive Member

³. As per Rules framed under paragraph 2 and sub-paragraphs (6) and (7) of the Sixth Schedule.
⁴. Ibid., Proviso to Sub-paragraph (7) of paragraph 2.
who performed more onerous duties than the Chairman, why should they not elect the Chairman as well. Moreover, the exception made in regard to the election of the Chairman does not apply to the election of the Deputy Chairman. Thus when the Deputy Chairman and the Chief Executive Member could both be elected and suitable candidates could be found for the purpose would it not be possible for the District Councils of the Mikir and North Cachar Hills to elect suitable candidates for the office of the Chairman?

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELECTION TO CHAIRMANSHIP AND DEPUTY CHAIRMANSHIP:

Any member of the District Council may be elected as Chairman or Deputy Chairman. Nominated members may also be elected.

PROCEDURE OF ELECTION:

Every time a new District Council is constituted or whenever the office of the Chairman falls vacant, the Governor shall fix a date for the holding of the election. The Deputy Commissioner or the Secretary of the District Council, as the case may be shall issue a notice to every member of the District Council informing him of the date of meeting for election of the Chairman. Nominations shall be received till noon of the day preceding the date of election. Nomination papers should be delivered to the Deputy Commissioner or the Secretary in person by the candidate and his secondor or proposer.

The Deputy Commissioner or any officer authorised by him in his behalf shall preside over the first meeting of the District Council
to elect the Chairman. He shall announce the names of the candidates duly nominated. If only one candidate is nominated, he shall declare the candidate elected. If two or more candidates enter into contest, members of the District Council shall proceed to vote by secret ballot. Contesting candidates must take an oath in the prescribed form. If the candidates obtain an equal number of votes, the election will be decided by drawing lots.

A simple majority vote of members ensures the election of a candidate to Chairmanship. Where more than two candidates contest, a candidate may in fact be elected by a minority vote. Chairmanship of the District Council is an office of dignity and independence. The Chairman must command the confidence of the Council. It would be better, therefore, if the Chairman were elected by a special majority.

The person who may be elected Chairman shall enter office immediately.

The procedure for the election of the Deputy Chairman shall be the same as that of the Chairman except that the meeting called upon to elect the Deputy Chairman shall be presided over by the Chairman who also fixes the date of such election.

Like the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman shall also enter office immediately on election.

TERM OF OFFICE:

The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman shall remain in office so long as they command the confidence of the District Council or till the expiry of the term of the latter.
The District Council may remove the Chairman at any time without assigning any reason. The Government, however, has no power to remove the Chairman. A resolution to remove the Chairman must first obtain the leave of the District Council. No such leave will be granted unless the resolution is supported by one-fourth of the members present. Thereafter, if the resolution is passed by a majority of the members present and voting it shall have the effect of removing the Chairman. A quorum of six, or one-third of membership, whichever is greater is required before any such resolution be adopted by the Council.

The procedure is the same for the removal of the Deputy Chairman.

Instead of a simple majority, it would be better that a two-thirds majority be prescribed for adopting a resolution for purposes of removing the Chairman. Or else Chairmanship of the District Councils is likely to be plagued by frequent motions of no confidence. So far, however, for all the District Councils taken together there were just two motions of no confidence moved against the Chairman and both were defeated. But it is also a fact that in almost all cases so far, Chairmanship has been a unanimous choice. Such a happy state of affairs may not continue for all time. The possibility of more frequent motions of no confidence against the Chairman can not be ruled out. Hence a special majority should be prescribed for the removal of the Chairman.

6. Normally the Government reserves for itself the right to remove a recalcitrant Chairman of a local authority. That the Government has not done so in case of the District Councils is perhaps a healthy change. For one thing, government may misuse this power for political reasons. For another, there is hardly any scope for misuse of powers by the Chairman of the District Council. It is noteworthy that the Chairman here is merely a Presiding officer. He has no executive powers.
RESIGNATION:

The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman may resign at any time in writing. The Chairman may submit his resignation to the Deputy Chairman and the Deputy Chairman to the Chairman. The resignation shall come into effect immediately.

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CHAIRMAN:

The Chairman performs certain statutory functions. He also exercises both general and special powers.

The main function of the Chairman is to preside over the meetings of the District Council. In his absence, the Deputy Chairman presides. If the Chairman seeks a re-election to the office, he shall not preside over the meeting of the District Council called for the purpose. Nor shall he preside over a meeting called for the discussion of a motion of no-confidence against him.

The Chairman calls for the meetings of the District Council at stated intervals. He may also call for special meetings. He has no option than to call for a special meeting when requisitioned by members. The Chairman may also prorogue the Council.

The Chairman may exercise all the powers vested in the members. But he shall not act in a manner which is against any order of the Council. Nor shall he exercise any powers which the Council as a whole may exercise. The Chairman may delegate his powers to the Deputy Chairman.

There are certain special powers which the Chairman may exercise independently of any authority. First, he has the power to exercise
a casting vote in case there is a tie in voting. Second, he may direct any member to withdraw or discontinue his speech. Third, he may order the withdrawal of a member for frequent violation of his rulings. Fourth, he decides all points of order and his decision is final. Fifth, it is he who allots time for official and non-official business. Sixth, he decides on the admissibility of any question or motion. Seventh, he decides the method of taking votes when a division is called for. In short, he has all the powers necessary for regulating the proceedings of the District Council in the manner of a Speaker of a legislative assembly.

The Chairman shall vacate his office when he ceases to be a member of the District Council. When the office of the Chairman is vacant or during the absence of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman shall perform his functions. If the Deputy Chairman is also absent, a member of the Council nominated by the Chairman shall discharge his functions. Further, at the commencement of every session, the Chairman nominates two persons to preside over the meetings of the Council in case he and the Deputy Chairman were both absent.

The District or the Sub-divisional officer acting as ex-officio Chairman of the District Council of either the Mikir or North Cachar Hills had been entrusted with certain extraordinary responsibilities. Thus he had the power, subject to the approval of the Governor "to annual or modify any resolution or decision of the District Council or to issue such instructions to the District Council, as he may consider appropriate
and the District Council shall comply with every such instruction issued. 1

These guardianship powers were, however, tenable only for the first six years after the first constitution of the District Councils concerned.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN : MIZO DISTRICT COUNCIL :

The first District Council was constituted in 1952. It met on 25th June 1952 and elected Dr. Rosiama, a nominated member hailing from Lakhipur as Chairman. In the same meeting Tuikhurliana, hailing from the southern end of the district was elected as Deputy Chairman. 2 Dr. Rosiama and Tuikhurliana continued to be Chairman and Deputy Chairman until the next general elections held in 1957.

The second District Council met on 24 June 1957. Dr. Rosiama did not seek re-election, for he wished to be a member of the Executive Committee. The District Council elected V.L. Tlunnga as Chairman. 3 Three days later, the Council elected Hrangaia who was till then a member of the Executive Committee, as Deputy Chairman. 4 Dr. Rosiama died in June 1959. Thereupon, Hrangaia resigned from Deputy Chairmanship and went back as a member of the Executive Committee in the vacancy caused by the death of Dr. Rosiama. C. Pahlira was elected Deputy Chairman in the vacancy caused by the resignation of Hrangaia. V.L. Tlunnga and C. Pahlira continued as Chairman and Deputy Chairman till the next general elections held in 1962.

7. Proviso to sub-paragraph (7) of paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule.
9. Ibid., dated 24-6-1957.
10. Ibid., dated 27-6-1957.
The third District Council which met on 25 June 1962 elected H.K. Bawichhuaka who was till then Secretary to the Council as Chairman and V. Rosiama as Deputy Chairman. But Bawichhuaka resigned on 30 April 1965 to become the Chief Executive Member. In his vacancy, Lalbusaia was elected the Chairman. The latter proved to be quite competent as Chairman. He continued in office till the next general election held in 1970.

The fourth District Council met 29 June 1970 and elected F.J. Nghina as its Chairman. But he did not remain in office for long. He resigned on 16 January 1971 to become the Chief Executive Member. On 6 February 1971, J. Thanghuama was elected the Chairman in the vacancy caused by the resignation of Nghina. Thanghuama remained in office till the abolition of the District Council in 1972.

From the facts stated above, certain points emerge. First, all the Chairman and Deputy Chairmen were elected unanimously. Second, no Chairman or Deputy Chairman sought re-election for a second term. Third, no Chairman or Deputy Chairman was ever removed from office. Fourth, no Deputy Chairman was subsequently elevated to the office of Chairman. Every Chairman or Deputy Chairman who resigned while in office did so either to become a Chief Executive Member or at least a member of the Executive Committee. Fifth, the choice of the first Chairman (Dr. Rosiama) was made from the nominated members of the District Council. All others were chosen from amongst the elected members of the District Council.

11. Ibid., dated 25-6-1962.
12. Ibid., dated 29-6-1970.
Sixth, the first two Chairman, Dr. Rosiama (1952-57) and Tlunnga (1957-62) served a full term of five years. The third Chairman, Bawichhuaka and the fifth Chairman, Nghina resigned while in office to become Chief Executive Member. The third Chairman, Lalbuia served a term of five years (1965-70) and the Sixth Chairman had a term of about one year (1971-72). Thus there were frequent changes in the office of the Chairman of the District Council. Finally, of the six Chairman who held office between 1952 and 1972 the first four belonged to the Mizo Union and the last two to the Congress Party.

THE GABO HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL:

The first District Council met on May 2, 1952 and elected Rangam. G. Momin as its Chairman. The following day Mohan Sangma was elected Deputy Chairman. Both Monin and Sangma continued to hold office till the next general elections held in 1957. On 1 May 1957 they were elected for a second term as Chairman and Deputy Chairman. Monin thanked the members for reelecting him Chairman and served the whole of his second term as well. In 1958, Mohan Sangma resigned from Deputy Chairmanship and joined the Executive Committee as its Deputy Executive Member. Robert Momin was then elected as Deputy Chairman.

Elections to the third District Council were held in 1964. On 29 April 1964 the District Council met to elect its Chairman. Mody K. Marak who was the Chief Executive Member for good six years was elected the Chairman. On 1 May 1964 Bronson D. Momin was elected
Deputy Chairman. When Mody K. Marak resigned in 1970 to become the Chief Executive Member once again, B.W. Momin, the Deputy Chairman was elevated to Chairmanship and Marson Sangma was elected Deputy Chairman. B.W. Momin and M. Sangma continued as Chairman and Deputy Chairman till the next general elections held in 1972. On 25 March 1972 the fourth District Council met and elected Lohindra Sangma who was till then a member of the Executive Committee as Chairman and Pipsen Son Momin as Deputy Chairman.

From the above facts, certain points emerge. First, elections to Chairmanship and Deputy Chairmanship were always unanimous. Second, changes in Chairmanship were less frequent. Between 1952 and 1972, the Chairmanship was held by four persons. The first Chairman, Rangam G. Momin served two consecutive terms. Only one Chairman, that is Mody K. Marak resigned while in office to become the Chief Executive Member. Third, of the five Deputy Chairman who held office during the period, two resigned while in office, one to become Deputy Executive Member and the other to become Chairman. Finally, all the Chairman and Deputy Chairman held office after sufficient experience in other capacities.

THE NORTH CACHAR HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL:

From 1952 to 1958 the District Officer of the North Cachar Hills acted as the ex-officio Chairman of the District Council. M.C. Daolagupu was elected the Deputy Chairman. Even after 1958 when the six

19. Ibid., dated 1-5-1964.
year limit of the ex-officio Chairman ended, election to the office of
the Chairman was not held. Daologupu continued to function as Deputy
Chairman without a Chairman. It was on 6 December 1960 that the Chair­
manship election was held for the first time. There were two nominations
one of H.M. Haflangbar and another of S.R. Thaesen. Thaesen withdrew his
candidature and hence Haflangbar was declared elected unanimously. 21

On 10 May 1962 the third District Council met to elect its
Chairman. There were again two candidates, Deisongpa and Panidra Kumar
Gorlosa. The former's nomination was, however, rejected as the nomina­
tion papers were received in the afternoon of 9 May, 1962. Under rules
for election of the Chairman, the nomination papers should be received
before noon on the day preceding the date of election. Deisongba's
nomination was thus rejected. Garlosa was declared elected as Chairman. 22

In 1967 following an understanding between the congress and the Union
Party for distribution of political offices, Garlosa had to resign to
make way for P.C. Langthasa of the Union Party who[without office since
1962. On 16 January 1967 a meeting of the District Council was called for
to elect the Chairman. But since the Governor did not notify the date
of election, the Council could not elect the Chairman on 16 January as
proposed. More than two months after, that is on 28 March 1967, a meet­
ing of the District Council was finally arranged for electing the Chair­
mam. There were two nominations, one of P.C. Langthasa and another of
Thoen Thado. The latter's nomination was, however, rejected on techni­

22. Ibid., dated 10-5-1962.
On 2 August 1968, the third District Council met to elect its Chairman. There was only one nomination. That was in favour of S.K. Dey, a nominated member. But he could not be elected as he reported to the Secretary of the District Council that his consent was not obtained for the nomination. The District Council met again on 7 August 1968 to elect the Chairman. There were two nominations and both were in favour of Lalvunoma and hence he was declared elected unanimously. For the Deputy Chairmanship, there were two candidates namely M.K. Thaosen and Sarmalik. A contest ensued. Sarmalik polled 15 votes and Thaosen seven. The former was declared elected.

On 21 February 1969 the Chairman of the North Cachar District Council faced a motion of no-confidence. It was alleged that he did not call for the meetings of the District Council at regular intervals, that he was partisan in his attitude, that he was a traitor and so on. The motion was, however, defeated for want of necessary support in the Council.

In June 1970, following an understanding between the People's Democratic Party and the Congress, S.R. Thaosen who was without a political job was elected the Chairman.

From the above facts regarding Chairmanship elections to the District Council, North Cachar Hills, certain points emerge. First, between 1960 and 1970, Chairmanship of the District Council was held by

23. Ibid., dated 28-3-1967.
24. Ibid., dated 2-8-1968.
five persons, thus making the average term of the Chairman as short as two years. Second, there were occasions when the office of the Chairman was hotly contested. There were also times when the office went a begging for want of a suitable nomination. Third, although all the Chairman had finally emerged as being unanimously elected, a contest seemed imminent on three out of the five occasions when the Chairmanship was thrown open to election. On the other hand, there was an actual contest for Deputy Chairmanship in 1968. Finally, politics in the District Council ran so feverish that on one occasion (1969) the Chairman was subjected, though unsuccessfully, to a vote of no confidence on charges of a very serious nature.

THE MIKIR HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL:

In the Mikir Hills as in North Cachar Hills, the District Council had the District Officer as its ex-officio Chairman during the first six years of its life. The office of the Deputy Chairman was, however, open to election from the very beginning. One Janardhan Pathak, an Assamese who married a Mikir woman and who engaged himself in social work in the Mikir Hills was first appointed as a nominated member of the District Council and later elected as its Deputy Chairman.

The six year limit during which the Deputy Commissioner acted as the Chairman being over in 1958, the District council met to elect its chairman. Chatrasing Teron who was in the Bishmuram Medhi Ministry and who was later dropped by Chaliha while forming his ministry, was for the time being politically unemployed. He returned to District politics
at an opportune time. He was elected Chairman of the District Council. He continued in office till the next general elections.

The third District Council met on 25 June 1962 and elected Chandrasing Teron who had earlier held the offices of Executive Member and Chief Executive Member as Chairman.\textsuperscript{27}

As regards Deputy Chairmanship, Janardhan Pathak was succeeded in 1957 by one Harsing Ingty. In 1962 the office came to be contested between Longsing Tiso and Sar Be. The former who was one of the oldest members of the District Council polled nine votes as against four polled by the latter. Tiso was elected the Deputy Chairman.

Chandrasing Teron died while in office (March 1965). In the vacancy caused by his death, the Deputy Chairman, Longsing Tiso was elected the Chairman. Sar Be who lost to Longsing Tiso in the election to the Deputy Chairmanship held in 1962 was this time elected the Deputy Chairman.\textsuperscript{28}

General elections to the fourth District Council could not be held till 1971. The new District Council met in March 1971 and elected Joysing Doloi and Langtuk Terang as Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively.\textsuperscript{29}

Joysing Doloi was known to be a good and honest man but he was a failure as an administrator. Therefore, he was dropped from the Executive Committee headed by Dhaniram Rongpi. Thus he was shifted to the Chairmanship of the District Council.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., dated 25-6-1962.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., dated 28-12-1965.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., dated 25-3-1971.
Luck, however, favoured Joysing Doloi. Dhaniram Rongpi came to trouble with his party and had to resign from office in 1974. Consequently Joysing Doloi was elected the Chief Executive Member. Soi Soi Terong was elected Chairman of the District Council.

From the above it is clear that Chairmanship of the District Council was more or less a smooth sail. All the Chairmen were elected without contest and only one Chairman (Joysing Doloi) resigned while in office to become Chief Executive Member. There was contest for Deputy Chairmanship in 1962. Otherwise the office of the Deputy Chairman, like that of the Chairman, was also a smooth sail. Almost all the persons who were elected to the offices of Chairman and Deputy Chairman had generally commanded the confidence and respect of the members of the District Council.

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL, KHASI-JAINTIA HILLS:

The First District Council met on 27, June, 1952 and elected F. War as its Chairman. A motion of no confidence was brought against him in March, 1955 but it fell through for want of necessary support. F. War continued to be the Chairman till he resigned the office on 31, August, 1957. A few days later R. Nongrum was elected Chairman and he remained in office till the dissolution of the District Council in November, 1957.

H. Haden who was elected Deputy Chairman on 1, July 1952 resigned on 6, March, 1954. On 27, May 1954 Dr. R.K. Tariang was elected Deputy Chairman and he remained in office till the dissolution of the District Council in November, 1957.30

The Second District Council met on 3, January 1958 and elected W. Reade as Chairman. Reade resigned from the office on 14, September 1963 but was reelected on 5, October, the same year. Two years hence, Reade resigned again. Thereupon G.S. Giri was elected Chairman on 23, March 1966 and he held the office till the dissolution of the District Council in November 1966.

O. Lyngdoh was elected Deputy Chairman on 23, March 1958. He ceased to hold office after the creation of the Jowai District Council in 1965. Thereupon, W. Blash was elected Deputy Chairman on 5, January 1966. 31


S.H. Shangdiar was elected Deputy Chairman on 18, April, 1967. He had to quit office when a vote of no confidence was passed against him on 27, November 1970. 32

The Fourth District Council elected B. Wanniang as Chairman on 23, May 1972. He resigned office two year later. Thereupon, J. Phongch was elected Chairman on 18, July 1974.

M. Lyngdoh who was elected Deputy Chairman on 27, July 1972 resigned office on 17, July 1974. Thereupon, L. Sangriang was elected Deputy Chairman on 26, July 1974. 33

Elections to the Chairmanship and the Deputy Chairmanship of the District Councils in five of the Hill Districts surveyed led us to certain conclusions. First, there was practically no contest for the office of the Chairman. None but the first Chairman of the Garo Hills District Council held office for more than a single term. Similarly, but two of the Deputy Chairmen were elected unanimously. And none except one of them held office for more than a single term. Quite a few Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen had either held the offices of the Executive Member or Chief Executive Member before they were elected to the office of Chairman or Deputy Chairman as the case might be, or more usually, were aspiring to be appointed to the Executive Committee. In fact, many of them resigned while in office to become an E.M. or C.E.M. It was more usual for a Deputy Chairman to aspire for membership of the Executive Committee rather than elevation to the office of the Chairman. By and large Chairmanship and Deputy Chairmanship of the District Councils remained politically unattractive.

Second, most of the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen were elected from amongst the elected members of the District Councils concerned. There were, however, a few who belonged to the nominated category. Thus the first Chairman of the Mizo District Council, the first Chairman of the N.C. Hills District Council and the first Deputy Chairman of the Mikir Hills District Council were nominated members.

Third, a close study of the social and educational background of the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen reveals that most of them had sound knowledge and experience in public affairs. They observed the rules strictly and conducted the proceedings fairly and impartially. They generally commended the respect and confidence of the members. There were two notable exceptions. The Chairman of the third District Council, N.C. Hills and the Chairman of the first District Council, K and J. Hills had incurred the displeasure of the members and had in fact to face a motion of no confidence. However, the motions could not be carried out.

Finally, it is surprising that the tribals who admit their women to all walks of life and whose women have a high degree of literacy, sometimes higher than that of men, have not had a single occasion when they elected a woman to be the Chairman or Deputy Chairman. From this it appears that women do not take active part in politics.
COMPOSITION OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILS:

Originally the Sixth Schedule provided that each District Council should consist of not more than twenty four members of whom not less than three-fourths should be elected on the basis of adult franchise. The provision as amended \(^{34}\) increases the maximum strength of the District Council to thirty and restricts the number of nominated members to four. Thus the District Council consists of elected and nominated members.

Subject to the above provisions, the actual strength and composition of the District Councils has been left to be determined by rules. Who frames the rules? The Governor shall frame rules for the first constitution of the District Councils and thereafter the District Council may frame rules subject to the approval of the Governor. \(^{35}\) The requirement that the rules framed by the District Council shall be subject to the approval of the Governor has been incorporated by Act 55 of 1969.

When the District Councils were first constituted in 1952, the strength and composition of the members was fixed as follows. \(^{36}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the District Council</th>
<th>No. of elected members</th>
<th>No. of nominated members</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khasi and Jaintia Hills</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garo Hills</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizo Hills</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikir Hills</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cachar Hills</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{34}\) Act 55 of 1969.

\(^{35}\) Under Sub-paragraphs 6, 6-A and 7 of paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule.

\(^{36}\) Under "The Assam Autonomous Districts" (Constitution of District Councils) Rules, 1951.
In 1957 following the decision of the government to nominate a non-tribal to the District Council, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the latter resolved not to have any nominated members. In other District Councils the nominated element was retained but it was reduced to two members. The position in 1957 was as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the District Council</th>
<th>No. of elected members</th>
<th>No. of nominated members</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khasi and Jaintia Hills</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garo Hills</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizo Hills</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikir Hills</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cachar Hills</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1962 the District Councils registered no further change in their strength and composition. The position as it existed in 1957 was retained.

In 1970 the number of elected members was increased to twenty seven in the case of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Garo Hills and the Mizo Hills and to twenty in the case of the Mikir Hills and the North Cachar Hills. The District Council, Khasi and Jaintia Hills continued to do without any nominated members. The Garo and the Mizo Hills had three each while the Mikir and North Cachar Hills had four each. The position was as follows.
The Jowai District Council which was constituted in 1965 consisted of twenty elected members and four nominated members.

NOMINATED MEMBERS:

The idea behind the nominated members has been to see that such sections and interests which might not have secured representation through election be represented, as far as possible, through nomination. There were nominated members in all the District Councils constituted in 1952. They constituted one-fourth of the total membership. But from 1957 onwards the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District Council had done away with the nominated element. Other District Councils had retained the nominated element but in a much reduced proportion.

Who shall appoint the nominated members? There was some controversy about this question. Rules provided that the Governor shall make nominations for the seats reserved for nominated members. Some of the District Councils especially those of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the North Cachar Hills had apprehensions about the Governor nominating members in his discretion. They thought that the Governor might nominate...
members who might not be acceptable to the elected members and the people in general. In other words, they thought that the Governor, that is to say, the State Government might misuse the power of nomination for their own political ends. It is precisely to eliminate the influence of the State Government that the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District Council resolved not to have any nominated members. The North Cachar Hills District Council had acted in a slightly different way. But the object was the same. In 1958 it resolved that the nominated members shall be appointed by the Governor in consultation with the elected members of the District Council and that the suggestion of the majority shall prevail. The vacancies among the nominated members shall also be filled in the same manner. This meant that the Governor should forego his discretion and should merely rubber stamp the decisions of the District Council. What if the District Council suggests a person whom the Governor thinks undesirable or unworthy of being nominated? Since the Governor is the essential link between the District Council and the State Government and is in fact conceived as the safety valve for the experiment in the administration of the Autonomous districts in general, he ought to have discretion in nominating members to the District Council. The District Council is likely to adopt an emotional attitude towards the issue. The Governor is in a position to secure the larger interests. It is on account of these considerations that the Governor was restored the power to nominate members in his discretion. 37

The nominated members shall also remain in office during the pleasure of the Governor. Normally, however, the nominated members remained in office for a single term of five years. If necessary, the Governor could nominate a candidate for a second term.

The legal aspect apart, the question arises: What is the actual procedure in nominating members to the District Council? There is no fixed procedure. Nor could any definite principles be evolved. The Executive Committee of the District Council or rather the Chief Executive Member recommended certain names to the State Government. The latter had either accepted or rejected the recommendations. It all depended on the relations between the Chief Executive Member and the Minister for Tribal Affairs. If the relations were cordial, the recommendations were accepted. If the relations became strained, the State Government adopted its own way of doing things.

There is an interesting case in point. In the Garo Hills, following the death of Singdom K. Sangma, a member of the District Council, in August 1953, the Executive Committee recommended to the State Government the nomination of Henry W. Momin (58) and Jefferson Areng (38). Both were Garo Christians. While recommending their names, the Chief Executive Member said that their nomination would ensure efficient coordination of the various self help activities of the Community Development Project Area of Renu Belpara of which they were both the residents. Later the C.E.M. at the instance of his colleague Harison W. Momin changed

38. Act 55 of 1969 inserting sub-paragraph 6-A to sub-paragraph 5 of paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule.
his mind and recommended Nandaram K. Sangma from the same area on the ground that he was a reliable social worker. For a second time, the C.E.M. changed his mind and recommended the nomination of Sudhindra Marak. Sudhindra was a school teacher in the pay of the government. The government, therefore raised an objection to his nomination. Meanwhile, the government thought of reducing the number of nominated members. The C.E.M. advised Sudhindra Marak to resign his job. Later on the basis of a telegram received from Sudhindra that he resigned the job, the C.E.M. Captain Williamson Sangma requested Bishnuram Medhi, the Chief Minister of Assam to nominate Sudhindra Marak. The Government was informed by its own agency that Sudhindra Marak did not, in fact, resign. The C.E.M. was informed of the same and asked to report on the actual position. In a telegraphic message the C.E.M. reported that Sudhindra had resigned his job but rejoined temporarily at the request of the school committee and that he was ready to relinquish the job as soon as his nomination was finalised. The Government kept postponing their decision. Meanwhile the C.E.M. met the C.M. and the latter had reportedly said that the government would make nominations on the advice of the Executive Committee. But the government did not take any concrete step. Thereupon Capt. Sangma wrote to Bishnuram Medhi on 6 December 1954 requesting him to state if the government had any objection to the nomination of Sudhindra Marak in which case he said further that the Executive Committee might consider some other names. To this Medhi replied that:

41. Ibid., 15-5-1954.
42. TAD/R/117/55/, I July 1954.
he did not assure Sangma that the government would always abide by the recommendations of the Executive Committee. As to Sudhindra Marak, Medhi said that he continued to work in the school to which he belonged and the school had made no arrangements to replace him. Further to that, Medhi noted that "there are certain allegations against Sudhindra Marak and the Government is making certain enquiries into these allegations." An angered Sangma retorted in his reply: "Kindly permit me to observe that in this district it is only the Garo National Council which commands the confidence of the people. As such it claims...... that it speaks for the people...... The Government is requested to kindly take this fact into consideration in deciding the question of nomination of Shri Sudhindra Marak." Sangma had fifteen members of the District Council sign and send a petition to the Chief Minister stating that if the government did not approve of the nomination recommended by the Executive Committee, the seat lying vacant in the District Council should not be filled up at all.

Meanwhile, the C.M. was pressed by the Congress Party to nominate a Congress M.L.A. Emonsing Sangma to the seat awaiting nomination for nearly two years. The C.M. vacillated for some time and finally sent a communication to the C.E.M. stating that Emonsing Sangma was nominated in the vacancy caused by the death of Singdon K. Sangma in 1955.

44. Ibid.
46. TAD(r) 117-55-20-9-1955. Singdon K. Sangma died on 24-8-1955 and the vacancy was filled on 20-9-1955, that is 2 years, 1 month, and 4 days after the death of the member.
In no uncertain terms, the C.E.M. replied: "We are deeply disappointed and express our misgivings with regards to the real intention of the government."

This case brings to light how vacillation, procrastination and naked assertion of a legal right for nomination on the part of the State Government could embitter the feelings of a popularly elected District Council or its Executive Committee and again, how possible personal and political differences between a C.M. and a C.E.M. might lead to an open confrontation even on such a minor matter as nomination to a casual vacancy in the District Council.  

In 1957, the State Government accepted the nominations recommended by the C.E.M. In 1964 when the Parliamentary Party of the Garo National Council recommended the names of Dalbir Lohar and Srimati Bishadini Sangma for nomination to the District Council, the government said that the advice of the District Council in session should be obtained for nomination. It may be recalled that from 1952 to 1964, the government acted on the recommendations of the C.E.M. But in 1964 it insisted on the recommendations being made by the District Council in session. The District Council met and approved the names promptly. Meanwhile, the District Congress and the All India Ghurkha League recommended other names for nomination. The Governor had, however, accepted the recommendations of the District Council.

47. It is noteworthy that Capt. Sangma had the most cordial relations with Bishnuram Medhi till 1952. On 7 May 1952 he moved a resolution in the District Council "recording the great confidence in his (Chief Minister's) capacity, sincerity and able leadership." But in 1954 the same Sangma demanded a separate Hill State for the Autonomous districts.
Nominations in Other Hill Districts:

Notable among the persons nominated to the Mikir Hills District Council were Janardhan Pathak, Dhaniram Rongpi and Pulsing Lalung. Janardhan Pathak was nominated mainly for his services as a social worker in the Mikir Hills where he settled down after having married a Mikir woman. The first District Council elected him as its Deputy Chairman. Dhaniram Rongpi was nominated mainly for his qualities of leadership. The District Council elected him as its Chief Executive Member. Pulsing Lalung was nominated for three successive terms mainly because he represented the Lalung tribe which now demands a separate District Council for itself.

Significant among the nominations made to the North Cachar Hills District Council were those of Jay Bhadra Hagjer and Haflongbar. The former was nominated for two successive terms beginning from 1951. The District Council elected him to membership of the Executive Committee. Jay Bhadra Hagjer was later appointed as Minister in the State Government. Haflongbar was nominated after his defeat in general elections of 1957. The District Council elected him as its Chairman in 1958.

In the Mizo Hills, the nomination of Dr. Rosiama was significant. Dr. Rosiama was nominated to the first District Council which also elected him as its Chairman. Rosiama was nominated again in 1957 and this time he was offered membership of the Executive Committee.

Against this background of a brief survey of nominations in the various District Councils, one may raise a theoretical question as
to whether the principle of nomination is necessary and desirable and if so for what reasons and purposes. The question is never finally settled. There are always some who support the principle of nomination and others who are opposed to it. Those who object to the principle of nomination argue that it is undemocratic, for it gives the nominated member the same status as that of the elected member. Second, nominated members are like Independent members representing none but themselves. Finally, the power of nomination being vested in Executive, it becomes a handle for the latter to exercise political patronage with a view to furthering its own interests. Or where nomination is the privilege of the majority to recommend, the majority would most surely use it, rather misuse it to boost its own ranks.

On the other hand, those who support the principle of nomination argue that it is the only means by which the minorities, the weaker and less vocal sections may be adequately represented. Further, there are always persons whose services may be necessary and useful and yet they may not in a position to contest the election. Like nomination, nomination seeks to enlist the support of those who might be expected to make a distinctive contribution to the purpose at hand.

The principle of nomination assumes an added significance in the Hill Areas of North East India. In these areas there are not enough men and women qualified to participate in public affairs. In the Mikir and the North Cachar Hills particularly, the people are so backward socially and educationally that there are not enough men available for public service. Further, no Autonomous district is homogeneous from
the point of view of population. Besides a major tribe or tribes, there are many other tribes and sub-tribes in each district. Left to themselves, they may not be in a position to secure representation through the democratic process. Finally, the majority community in each district is yet to develop a spirit of tolerance towards the minorities and appreciate their needs and aspirations. In these circumstances, the only alternative is to provide for the principle of nomination even at the risk of offending the democratic principle of election.

But for the principle of nomination to serve a useful purpose, certain limitations should be observed scrupulously. First, persons defeated at the general elections should not be nominated. Second, nominated members should not be made eligible for elective offices like Chairmanship or membership of the Executive Committee. Finally, communities which were already represented should not be considered for purposes of nomination.

These limitations were not observed in the nominations made to the District Councils. Further, nominations were used for securing the interests of the party in power.

By and large the State Government had not abused the power of nomination. Except in rare cases, the recommendations made by the District Councils were accepted. But the State Government has a responsibility to see that the above limitations are observed by all concerned.
DOUBLE MEMBERSHIP:

Certain members of the District Council or of its Executive Committee were also members of the state legislature and at times of the Parliament. Thus they held double membership. Does the Constitution permit double membership? It does not, so far as the Houses of Parliament and of the state legislatures are concerned. But a member of the District Council could also be a member of the State Assembly or of Parliament provided that the membership of the District Council is not considered as an office of profit under the State or Central Governments.

The legal opinion was that an Executive Member (as opposed to an ordinary member) of the District Council should be considered as holding an office of profit under a corporate body in which the State and Central Governments have both a financial interest.

Captain Williamson Sangma, the C.E.M. of the Garo Hills advocated that the Executive Members of the District Councils including the C.E.M. should be allowed to be elected to the Assam Legislative Assembly so that a better understanding between the State Government and the District Councils could be promoted. He had himself aspired to be a member of the State Assembly. He, therefore wrote to the Home Minister requesting him to remove the disqualification that an Executive Member of the

48. The following persons held double membership.
a. Keitobin Rymbai M.D.C. and also M.L.A. from the Khasi Hills.
b. Harrison Momin E.M. and also M.L.A. from the Garo Hills.
c. Emousing Sangma M.D.C. and also M.L.A. from the Garo Hills.
e. Thanhlira M.D.C. and also M.L.A. from the Mizo Hills.
f. J.B. Hagjer M.D.C. and also M.L.A. from the North Cachar Hills.

49. Sections (1) and (2) of Articles 101 and 190 of the Constitution.

50. Section (3) of Articles 101 and 190 of the Constitution.
District Council could not hold membership of the State Assembly simultaneously. Accordingly, the People's Representation Act of 1951 was amended in 1956. Thus, Clause 3 of the said Act as amended says that the elected members of the Autonomous District Councils as well as Members of the Executive Committee are eligible for election to either House of Parliament or to the State Legislative Assembly. Is double membership desirable? For various reasons, it is not desirable. First, a member of the District Council who is also simultaneously a member of the State Assembly or of Parliament will draw salary and allowances at two places. This is not healthy and desirable for obvious reasons. Second, if a member of the District Council is also a member of the State Assembly and if he belongs to the party in power, he will have a predominant influence over the administration of the District Council. He will have an undue advantage over other members of the District Council. Again, if a member of the District Council is also a Minister in the State Cabinet, his influence on the District Council will be the greatest. Finally, double membership may also result in divided loyalty on the part of the members concerned.

The number of persons holding double membership may be very few. But the principle behind (if it could be called a principle is few. But the principle behind (if it could be called a principle is

51. An elected member of the District Council was not considered as holding an office of profit under the State or Central Governments for purposes of Art 102(1) of the Constitution. But a member nominated by the Governor would clearly attract the disqualification under the said Article. Sub Rule 3 of Rule 6 of the Autonomous District (Constitution of District Council) Rules 1951 provides for the nomination of members by the Governor. But an elected member of the District Council was not disqualified from being a member of Parliament. See Letter No. T2-1-53 Public Ministry of Home Affairs, of 11-11-1955 to R. Thanhliira, M.P. See also letter No. Nil from H.K. Tandon, Private Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi dated 19-12-1956 to Williamson Sangma. See also Section 5 of the People's Representation Act, 1956. This amended section T(e) of the Representation of Peoples Act, 1951.
unsound. When double membership is forbidden in the Houses of Parliament or the State legislature where there are two Houses or between a State Assembly and a House of Parliament, there is no reason why it should not be similarly forbidden as between a District Council and the State Assembly or Parliament.
ELECTIONS TO THE DISTRICT COUNCILS:

GARO HILLS: GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1952:

There were 18 seats thrown open for election in single member constituencies. Six candidates were returned unopposed. There was straight contest in 9 out of the remaining 12 constituencies. In one there was a triangular contest, and in two others a four-pronged contest. There were in all 29 candidates for 12 seats. The Garo National Council fielded its candidates in all the 18 constituencies. It won in 15 of them. Captain Sangma contested against three rivals and all three of them forfeited their deposits. Surjamoti Momin was the only lady candidate. She stood as an independent candidate and won.

GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1957:

The number of nominated seats was reduced to 2. Consequently, the number of seats open for election was raised to 22. Only 2 candidates were returned unopposed. There was straight contest in 15 constituencies and triangular contest in the remaining 7. In all there were 47 candidates for 20 seats. Among them was Surjamoti Momin, the only lady candidate who contested in 1952 and won, and who contested again in 1957 and won by an absolute majority of votes polled defeating two male rivals who opposed her. In a straight contest Capt. Sangma defeated his life long political rival, Emonsing Sangma by a margin of 100 votes out of a total of 2060 votes polled in his constituency. Emonsing Sangma, however, elected from another constituency. All the successful candidates except one were elected by an absolute majority of votes.
polled. Six candidates forfeited their security deposits. As many as 17 out of the 22 candidates elected, were elected for a second term.

GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1964:

In 1964, elections were more keenly contested than ever before. Out of the 22 seats open for election, there was only one uncontested return. There were 10 straight contests, 7 triangular contests and 4 four-pronged contests. In all there were 58 candidates who stood for 22 seats.

Significant among those defeated were Emerson Momin and Nallin-dra Sangma. They were both M.L.As elected to the State Assembly on behalf of the GNC with a definite understanding that if the demand for a Hill State was not conceded, they should resign their seats in the Assembly. They did not resign as promised. The electorate had, therefore, rejected them when they stood for the elections to the District Council in 1964. Emerson Momin could not even retain his deposit.

Besides Emerson Momin, three others forfeited their deposits in 1964. Among the successful candidates, 7 were elected for a third term, 5 for a second term and 10 for the first time. There was not a single lady member elected. Bishadini Sangma was a nominated member. She was thus the only lady member in an otherwise all male Garo District Council.

ELECTIONS HELD IN 1972:

Elections which were due in 1969 could not be held till 1972. Meanwhile the strength of the District Council was raised to 30. Of these 27 were to be elected and 3 nominated.
The APHLG of which the GNC was a constituent contested for all the 27 seats and won 21. The Congress won 5. The remaining 3 were won by Independents.

In all there were 64 candidates for the 27 seats. Five candidates — all belonging to the APHLC were returned unopposed. Out of the 22 constituencies facing a contest, there were straight contests in 16, triangular contests in 6, four-pronged contests in 5, and a multi-pronged contest in one.

Among the successful candidates, two were elected for a fourth term, two for a third term, four for a second term and the remaining 19 were elected for the first time. Thus the new element had triumphed.

The only woman candidate, Evangeline Shiro (Independent) was defeated by an APHLC candidate.

A few significant aspects of elections to the District Council, Garo Hills may be noted. First, in all the elections put together, there were first three women candidates. All of them stood as Independent candidates. From this it follows that the dominant political parties like the GNC or the APHLC did not favour women candidates. For all practical purposes, the Garo District Council was an all male Assembly. Second, in all the four general elections, the number of straight contests was greater than that of triangular contests or multi-pronged contests. Therefore, the member of candidates who were elected by an absolute majority of votes polled was always greater than the number of candidates who won by a minority of votes. This was a healthy tendency. Third, the GNC emerged as a single dominant party in the first three
elections. In the fourth general elections also, the GNC stood as a constituent of the APHLG and continued to maintain its dominant position. The only other party which had any seats won was the congress. Finally, there was a strong tendency to reelect candidates for second, third and even fourth terms. In fact, in the second and third general elections, the number of candidates who were elected for a second or third term as the case might be was greater the number of candidates who were elected for the first time. In the fourth general elections, however, new blood triumphed over the old. The number of older candidates reelected was only eight compared to nineteen other candidates who were elected for the first time.

The table below shows comparative figures of elections in all the four general elections to the Garo Hills District Council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1952</th>
<th>1957</th>
<th>1964</th>
<th>1972</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total seats</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seat elected</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seats nominated</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncontested returns</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seats contested</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight contests</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangular contests</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-pronged contests</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-pronged contests</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of contestants</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>Number of women candidates who contested</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of women candidates who won</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of candidates who forfeited deposits</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of candidates elected for a 2nd term</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. elected for a 3rd term</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. elected for a 4th term</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MIKIR HILLS:

GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1952:

It appears that all those who served as members of the Tribal Advisory Committee before the first constitution of the District Council contested the general elections held in 1952 and were elected uncontested. General elections held in 1957.

Out of a total of 16 seats, 14 were to be elected and 2 nominated. In 3 constituencies there was no contest. In two constituencies, there were 4 candidates each. A straight contest took place in 7 constituencies. In all there were 22 candidates. Among the successful candidates, 7 won by an absolute majority of votes polled and 2 by a minority of votes. One candidate forfeited his security deposit.

GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1962:

The figures in detail are not available. Out of the 12 members elected, 4 were elected for the first time, 4 for a second term and 4 others for a third term. Out of a total 16 members including nominated members, 7 were new members and the remaining 9 had served earlier.

GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1971:

The fourth general elections which were due in 1967 could not be held till 1971. Meanwhile the strength of the District Council was raised to 24 seats of which twenty were to be elected and four nominated.

52. There is no record showing the figures for general elections held in 1952. The office of the Deputy Commissioner, Diphu has also not kept any record.
There were two uncontested returns and straight contests in three constituencies. In the remaining 15 constituencies, there were more than two candidates. In all there were 64 candidates for the 18 seats contested. As many as 18 candidates lost their security deposits. Ten were elected by a minority of votes polled in their constituencies. Among the notable victors were Chatrasing Teron, Soi Soi Terang and Dhaniram Rongpi. Of these, the former two were elected for a fourth consecutive term.

NORTH CACHAR HILLS:
GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1952:

Out of a total of 16 members of the District Council, 12 were to be elected and 4 nominated. Four seats went uncontested. There were 18 candidates for the remaining 8 seats. There was straight contest in all but one of the constituencies. D.B. Thaosen contested from two constituencies and won in both. S.R. Thaosen who was defeated in one constituency was elected later in one of the constituencies in which D.B. Thaosen resigned.

GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1957:

Interestingly, all the 12 seats thrown open for election were contested and in all of them there was a straight contest. So all the successful candidates were elected by an absolute majority of votes polled. Six of them were elected for a second term and the remaining six were new members.
GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1962:

As in 1957, all the 12 seats were contested. There were, however, 25 candidates. In the first 11 constituencies, there was straight contest. The 12th constituency witnessed a triangular contest. Eight candidates had served more than one term. In other words, the older element predominated.

GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1968:

The strength of the District Council was raised to 24 members of whom 20 were to be elected and 4 nominated. There were three uncontested returns. In the remaining 17 constituencies, there were 35 candidates. Thus there was straight contest in all but one constituency. All the victors except one were, therefore, elected by an absolute majority of votes polled. In some constituencies the contest was so keen that the candidates who won had but a slender majority of votes polled against their rivals.

There were a few noteworthy features of the elections held in 1968. First, Nirupama Nagaj was the only lady candidate to contest and she defeated her male rival by a thumping majority of votes polled. Second, eight of the 24 members had served earlier. S.R. Thaosen was the oldest member serving the District Council for more than two decades. Finally, the Peoples Democratic Party and the Congress were strongly arrayed against each other. The former secured 11 seats and the latter 9. Two of the four nominated members joined the congress and thus made its strength equal to that of the PDP. Two defected from the PDP to join
Congress. The congress had thus gained a majority while the PDP was pushed into opposition. In North Cachar Hills loyalty to the party was a matter of secondary importance. Political opportunism reigned supreme.

MIZO HILLS:

GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1952:

The District Council was to consist of 24 members, of whom 18 were to be elected and 4 nominated. The Mizo Union contested all the 18 seats. Another political party which contested the elections was UMFO. But it was completely routed by the MU which won 17 out of the 18 seats contested by it. The remaining seat was won by Pachhunga a former President of the MU.

The first District Council was an all male assembly. The only lady member, Pi. Lalziki was nominated by the Governor. Another significant nomination was that of Dr. Rosima who took a leading part in organising political activity in the Mizo Hills before the formation of the District Council. He was later elected to the Chairmanship of the Council. One Medhia Chakma was nominated to represent the Chakmas, a minority tribe in the Mizo Hills. Thus nominations to the first District Council were significant.

53. The office of the Deputy Commissioner, Aizawl has no record of election figures.
GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1957:
The total strength of the District Council was 24 as before. The number of nominated members was, however, reduced from 6 to 2. The number of members to be elected was thus raised to 22.

Four political parties - the MU, the UMFO, the Tribal Union and the Congress contested the election. The MU which was the only dominant party in 1952 faced a set back in 1957. The UMFO which was totally routed in 1952 resurrected itself in 1957. The MU won 11 seats as against 8 seats by the UMFO, 2 seats by the Tribal Union, and one by the congress.

Nine out of the 24 members had served earlier in the District Council. Fifteen of them were new members. Dr. Rosiama was nominated for a second term. Pi. Latziki was dropped and Pi. Haingliani was nominated in her place. Madhia Chakma who was nominated in 1952 got himself elected in 1957.

GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1962:
The strength and composition of the District council remained what it was in 1957. For the 22 seats thrown open for election, there were 67 candidates. Significantly, there was not a single constituency where a straight contest was held. Besides the MU, four other parties joined the contest. They were the MNF, a newly formed party, the Congress, EITU, and PLR. The MU won 16 seats, EITU 2, PLR 2 and Independents 1. Thus the MNF and the Congress were thoroughly beaten.
Of the 24 members elected and nominated 17 of them were new and the remaining 7 had served earlier in the District Council.

**GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1970:**

Elections which were due in 1967 could not held till 1970 on account of the outbreak violence in the Mizo Hills. In 1970 the Congress which won 10 seats scored a victory over the Mizo Union which got only 9 seats. Independents won 3 other seats. Of the 24 members including 2 nominated members, 2 were elected for a fourth consecutive term, 3 for a third term, 4 for a second term, and the remaining 15 were elected for the first time.

In all the general elections since 1957, the younger element - the new blood prevailed over the old.

The Mizo District Council was abolished in April 1972 following the formation of Mizoram into a Union Territory.

**MEMBERSHIP:**

The District Council is like a miniature legislative assembly. Its members are like the members of the legislature, representatives and not delegates. A delegate has merely to do as he is instructed. The responsibility which a representative owes is more delicate and onerous, though less direct. A representative represents not merely the people of his constituency but the people in general. He is not merely a servant of the people reflecting their wishes and aspirations, he ought to be their leader. In short, he is elected to do the best he can in the right
of his intelligence and his conscience. "Were he merely a delegate, instructed by a local caucus, he would cease to have either moral or personality."\textsuperscript{54}

As representatives, members of the District Councils ought to observe certain principles. First, while promoting the interests of their constituents, they should not lose sight of the general good of all the people. Where the demands of the people of a given constituency are unreasonable, they ought not to be entertained. The representative may incur the displeasure of his constituents, but he is there not merely to follow them but also to guide them along the right course.

Second, as far as possible the representative must keep the promises he might have made at the time of his election. But promises have to be viewed in the light of circumstances. If there is no change in the circumstances in which promises are made, they must be carried out. If circumstances have changed in the meantime a reconsideration is imperative. The general rule is that promises should be fulfilled so long as the general good is not compromised with.

Third, every member of the District Council, irrespective of the party to which he belongs must bear in mind that he represents the people as a whole, and not merely those who might have supported him. He should, therefore, be helpful and sympathetic to any one who might approach him from his constituency.

Finally, every member of the District Council must address himself three questions, if he should discharge his functions efficiently.

First, he should know what the people want. Second, he should decide in the light of his intelligence and experience what needs to be done. Third, he must find out the best way of doing it.

In order that the members of the District Council act in the manner suggested above, they should keep themselves informed about all matters with which the District Council is concerned and in particular about the needs and problems of their constituencies. Assuming that every member has the necessary interest and aptitude, it is not difficult for him to pose himself with all the information and facts needed for the proper discharge of his functions. He and his party will have already prepared the ground work before issuing a manifesto or statement of aims and objectives at the time of every election. Further, every member has ample opportunities to meet with the various interests and groups and discuss their needs and problems. He also receives petitions, memoranda, suggestions and complaints almost daily. He ought to evince a keen and sympathetic interest in all these. They give him a practical understanding of the needs and problems of the various localities and groups. Finally, it is open to every member to seek information and advice from the Secretary to the District Council and his staff. The Executive Member may specially to gain a great deal from the professional advice which the Secretary and his assistants might tender.

Thus every member has ample sources of information on which to work. His next task would be to formulate his own ideas and views on policy. And then he must give an expression to these in the District Council and outside. He must watch closely the reaction with which his
ideas and policies may be received. Public opinion may not always be favourable to him. It may be that he is up against a volley of hostile criticism. But his duty lies as much in obeying public opinion as in shaping and educating in the direction in which he thinks right. A member who adopts a populist attitude in playing to the gallery may succeed in ensuring his reelection. But he will not be a successful member in the long run.

TERM OF OFFICE:

Originally, the term of the District Council and of its members was left to be determined by rules framed by the Governor for the first constitution of the District councils and thereafter by the District Councils themselves. The Governor fixed the term at 5 years and all the District Councils had accepted it. But the Commission on the Hill Areas in Assam appointed in 1965 opined that the term of the District Council should be fixed statutorily. Further, they recommended that the power to extend the life of the Council for any reason should not vest in the District Council itself but should be exercised by the Governor. Accordingly the Sixth Schedule was amended and provision made fixing the term of the District Council at 5 years. The power to extend the life of the Council for not more than one year at a time was also vested in the Governor.

56. Sub-paragraph 6-A of Paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule as inserted by Act 55 of 1969.
A five year term is quite reasonable. Further it agrees with the term of the State legislatures and of Parliament in the country. A uniform term for all representative institutions would also make it possible to hold general elections for all of them at one and the same time.

While members of the District Council hold office for five years, a member elected in a casual vacancy holds office only for the remainder of the term of office of the member whom he replaces.\(^{57}\)

There were frequent extensions in the terms of the District Councils. This is not a healthy tendency. Extension of the life of a District Council should not be granted except under exceptional circumstances. No such extension should be for more than one year.

QUALIFICATIONS AND DISQUALIFICATIONS:

Rules framed under the Sixth Schedule prescribe the qualifications and disqualifications of members. Thus it is laid down that for being elected to the District Council one must be a citizen of India, one is not less than twenty five years in age and is entitled to vote at elections to the District Council of an Autonomous district.

Disqualifications for membership of the District Councils are many. First, no person shall be a member of more than one District Council at a time. If one is elected to two District Councils, he must resign in one of them before the prescribed date. Second, if a person is elected from more than one constituency, he shall resign in all but one. Third,

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\(^{57}\) Proviso to sub-paragraph 6-A of paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule.
if a member is absent for thirty days continuously, he shall forfeit his seat in the Council. Fourth, government servants, State and Central, employees of the District and Regional Councils, lunatics, uncertified bankrupts undischarged insolvents, persons who are not citizens of India, or citizen's of India who have acquired the citizenship of foreign countries, or who owe allegiance to a foreign country, persons convicted by a criminal court involving punishment by way of imprisonment for 2 years or more, persons who resorted to corrupt practices in previous elections, employees of the government or of the District and Regional Councils dismissed from service for corruption and disloyalty to the state — all these categories of persons are not entitled to membership of the District Councils.

The disqualifications as prescribed are not comprehensive.

A few more may be suggested. First, a person who is not a resident of an Autonomous district should be disqualified from seeking a membership of its District Council. A resident of an Autonomous district is likely to understand its needs better than the one who comes from outside. Second, persons who fail to pay their dues to the District Council should be similarly disqualified from its membership. Third, members who acquire an interest in a subsisting contract with the District Council should not be allowed to continue membership. Fourth, members who might be guilty of misconduct should be debarred for seeking membership again for a fixed period. Fifth, double membership, that is simultaneous membership of the District Council and the Legislative Assembly or Parliament should not be permitted for obvious reasons. Sixth, a member who has been surcharged
for Rs. 500/- or more should be disqualified for seeking reelection for at least another five years. Finally, lawyers who may be pleading either on behalf of the District Council or against should not be allowed to become its members at least for the period of such pleading.

**RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS:**

The District Councils have adopted the same procedures of business as are followed by a legislature. Members of the District Councils have, therefore, more or less the same rights and obligations as of members of a legislature.

A member of the District Council has a right to participate in its discussions and deliberations and to vote on any issue before it, a right to put questions and supplementary questions, a right to move resolutions, a right to introduce bills, and a right of access to the records of the District Council. All these rights have, of course, their limitations. As for example, the right to ask questions is limited by the fact that no question may be asked on any matter which is sub-judice and so on.

A member of the District Council has also the right to call the attention of the Executive Committee on any matter of public importance including gross wastage of public funds by any public institution or authority, wanton neglect of a certain locality or constituency and so on.

Members have also their obligations. Their first obligation is to take oath in the prescribed form. This they have to do immediately on their election.
Second, members have an obligation to attend the meetings of the District Council regularly. If a member is unable to attend the meetings of the District Council for 30 days consecutively, he must apply before hand to the chairman seeking his permission to be so absent. If a member is absent for 30 days consecutively without permission, the Chairman should inform the same to the Council which may declare the seat vacant. It may be suggested here that the provision for cancellation of membership for non-attendance should apply automatically and not depend upon a further consideration of the District Council. The latter may, however, restore a member to his seat under exceptional circumstances.

Third, members of the District Council should be prompt in the payment of their dues to the Council or to any Cooperative Society or Government. Indeed, members should set an example before the people in paying their taxes promptly and regularly.

Fourth, in view of the frequent cases of misuse or misapplication of funds leading to inefficiency, wastage and extravagance, members should have an obligation to show utmost care in the spending of public funds and where such an obligation is not properly discharged, they should make good any loss, waste, or misuse or public money or property for which they are responsible directly or indirectly.

Finally, members must make it a point not to have any interest in any subsisting contract with the District Council. However, if the District Council enters into a contract with a registered company or corporation in which a member happens to be a share holder, he should not be considered as evincing an interest in such contract. Similarly
a member who may be engaged as a legal or medical practitioner on behalf of the District Council should not be deemed as showing an interest in a contract. At present an obligation of this nature does not exist. But in the interests of good and honest administration such an obligation be imposed on the members.

PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES:

A question that has often baffled both scholars and public men alike has been whether the representative especially at the local level be paid a salary for his services or not. England is the traditional home of the unpaid representative. The United States on the contrary, has established the practice of paying a salary to almost all the categories of its local representatives. Since the District Councils are essentially local bodies, though in certain respects they enjoy a greater measure of autonomy than do local bodies, pure and simple, the question arises whether their members be remunerated as in the U.S.A. or remain unpaid as in Britain. A further aspect of the question is whether they should be paid an allowance, if not a salary or they should be paid both salary and allowance. If experience is any guidance, payment of an allowance for travelling and other purposes has now been generally recognised as necessary and desirable. Even in England the county councils can, if they choose, pay the travelling expenses of their members. However, a final answer to the question depends on what type of service is expected of the local representative and how much of his time and energy are in demand. A member of the District Council is not expected to possess an
expert knowledge on matters with which the Council is concerned. Nor is he called upon to provide details of any policy or measure. He has to have a general understanding of the issues and he should be in a position to formulate broad policy. He has to reflect and guide people's opinion and bring to bear the same on the policies of the District Council. In short, he is expected to function in a non-specialist way and give a coherent expression to the needs and interests of the people at any given time. Any person of ordinary intelligence can do this. No special training or education is necessary. Any person who has any interest in public affairs and concern for public welfare is competent to be a member of the District Council. But the question is how much of his time and energy may be necessary for the purpose. In the past when local communities were small and predominantly rural in character and life itself was simple and changed little over the centuries, the local representative could attend to the business of the local council at intervals of his own business and enjoyed the opportunity and privilege of serving the people with whom he came in daily contact. It was against this background that the principle of unpaid representation came into being and became popular in Britain. But gradually as the local communities grew in size and the needs of the people became complex and manifold, the local representative had necessarily to face increasing demands on his time and energy. Moreover, he has now to function not merely on the general Council but on some of its numerous committees and for this purpose has often to travel long distances at considerable expense. No longer is local government service a pastime, undertaken at one's leisure but that it calls for a
full mind and a fresh mind. Members are not expected to do all this for nothing. They should, therefore, be remunerated for their services.

Now, the question is how much should a member be paid and on what basis. If each member is to be paid on the basis of his qualifications, there would be endless bickerings on. Moreover, it is not for local government to attract any special talents. The professional and the layman alike can be its members. Members should therefore be paid at a uniform rate. But what should be the amount to be paid. The general rule is that the amount should be fixed at a figure which would attract competent persons. Here again is the problem that if a certain amount is fixed, it may be considered as attractive by some, inadequate by others and marginal by a few.

Further, if a salary is to paid and not merely an allowance local government service will lose the prestige of an honorary service and become just another example of a paid public employment. The aristocracy and the higher middle classes might cease to be interested in it. People at the lower rungs of the social order would aspire for it more. There is nothing wrong in this so long as the persons who are elected to the local authority remain competent and responsible. But it is likely that fewer such persons will be elected. Elections will be fought less on principles and more for the monetary benefits of membership. Viewed in this light, members of the District Council should not be paid a salary. But they should be paid an allowance for travel and other purposes. However, all the District Councils have voted salaries for the members. The salary of a member varies from one District Council to another. It is sometimes as high as Rs. 500/- per month.
RECALL OF MEMBERS:

Neither the Sixth Schedule nor any rule made thereunder provides for the recall of members.

REMOVAL OF MEMBERS:

There is no provision for the removal of members either by the District Council or by Government. There is, however, provision for cancellation of membership, if any member is absent without permission for a continuous period of thirty days. Again, a member may be disqualified if he attracts any of the disqualifications specified in the Peoples' Representation Act as amended from time to time. If a question arises whether a member has acquired any disqualification, the matter is referred to the Governor and his decision is final.

Any member may resign his seat in the District Council without assigning any reasons.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF ELECTION TO THE DISTRICT COUNCILS:

The Sixth Schedule lays down that the members of the District Councils other than those nominated shall be elected on the basis of adult franchise. Among other things, the methods and procedures of election are left to be determined by rules to be framed by the Governor for the first constitution of the District Councils and thereafter by the District Councils (if they so choose) subject to the approval of the Governor.

58. Sub-paragraph(1) of paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule substituted by Act 55 of 1969.
59. Sub-paragraphs (6) and (7) of paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule.
Accordingly, the Governor framed the rules under which elections to the District Councils shall be direct. An alternative could be that the members of the District Councils may be elected indirectly through the existing village councils or the parent tribal councils. But it was a wise decision to have the elections direct rather than indirect. The essence of democratic representation lies in direct election. There is hardly any dispute about it. As Laski puts it so succinctly and so convincingly: "This principle (direct election) is as much a matter of solid experience as of abstract theory. The only way in which we can secure anything approaching a continuous democratic control of policy making bodies is by preserving direct contact between the elector and his representative; for otherwise, an inevitable remoteness supervenes, and public interest in the making of policy declines through that remoteness." The educative value of the representative system will be the first casualty. People are less likely to be informed of what is going on in the Assembly or Council because their relationship with that body is not a straightforward relationship. Again, people will miss the simple mechanism of fixing responsibility for any policy or decision which they consider wrong. Thus indirect election has the danger of frustrating both public interest in representative government and public control over elected bodies.

In the context of the District Councils indirect election will lead to further evils. The choice of members will be conferred

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60. The reference to "the general elections" in sub-paragraph (6.4) of the Sixth Schedule is by implication a reference to direct election.
automatically on the village councils or Tribal Boards which are likely to exercise it as a matter of their patronage rather than on any principles. In other words, they would elect their yes men rather than competent men. The representative would become less of a representative and more of a delegate. He will receive instructions from the Council or Board which elected him and act accordingly. Above all, since the electorate in an indirect election will be small, the election of members may degenerate into a matter of cliques and groups and corrupt practices.

It was a great milestone in the history of political and constitutional development in the Hill areas of North-East India to have adopted a system of direct election based on adult franchise.

ELECTORAL DIVISIONS:

Rules framed under the Sixth Schedule prescribe that each Autonomous district shall be divided into as many territorial constituencies as the number of elected members fixed for its District Council. The Deputy Commissioner who demarcates the constituencies must see that each constituency is equal to every other constituency in the matter of its voting population, if not in area. If the constituencies are unequal in the strength of their voters, the voters as well as the votes polled by them will have different weightages. If the number of voters in constituency A is double the number of voters in constituency B, each voter in the latter will be equal to two in the former. Accordingly each vote polled in constituency B will be double the weight of a
corresponding vote polled in constituency A. On the other hand, other things being equal, the representative elected in constituency A will have more popular backing than the one elected in constituency B. Thus it is necessary that constituencies are as nearly equal as possible in the matter of their voter strength.

The number of constituencies in the Autonomous districts of North East India varied from time to time. In each of the districts of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Garo Hills and the Mizo Hills, the number of constituencies was fixed at 18 in 1952 and was raised to 22 in 1957. In 1970 it was further raised to 27. The Mikir and the North Cachar Hills Districts had 12 each in 1952, 14 in 1957 and 20 in 1970. Each constituency was made more or less equal to every other constituency.

FRANCHISE:

The Sixth Schedule lays down that members of the District Councils other than nominated members shall be elected on the basis of adult franchise. This brings the District Councils in line with all other directly elected democratic institutions in the country.

It was a momentous decision to introduce adult franchise in the Hill Areas as in the rest of the country. Many members of the Indian Constituent Assembly felt that it was a bold step and a big experiment. Some, however, expressed the doubt whether adult franchise was suitable to India where nearly ninety percent of the people were illiterate and politically inexperienced. But by the same logic, if only ten percent of the people who were literate should be enfranchised and should choose
the government, would it not become the vested interest of a relatively small minority? Further, one could not have such high ideals as equality and social justice on the one hand and restricted franchise on the other. The two are incompatible. It is precisely for the reason of ensuring political equality and elimination of special privilege based on property or education or sex, that adult franchise has been adopted all the world over. This does not, however, mean that adult franchise is a perfect solution to all the problems of democracy but that every other alternative is worse than it.

In the application of adult franchise, certain limitations have to be observed. A general limitation is that only those whose names are registered as voters are entitled to vote. Further, one must be a citizen of India, not less than twenty one years in age, not of unsound mind and not otherwise disqualified from voting under the electoral law. Again, one must be a resident in a constituency for not less than 180 days.

Limitations specifically applicable to the electors in the Autonomous districts are that one must belong to a Scheduled Tribe and in case of non-tribals, one must have resided within the Autonomous district concerned for not less than 12 years on the qualifying date.

PREPARATION OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL:

The procedure for the preparation of the electoral roll is simple. Since the territorial constituencies of the District Councils fall within the Assembly Constituencies, the electoral roll of the latter
can be adapted to the requirements set by the areas included in the former.

The electoral roll is prepared in the principal language of the region, arranged alphabetically and numbered in one series for each constituency, giving the particulars of each elector.

Since the Deputy Commissioner supervises the preparation of the electoral roll, there is no scope for its manipulation deliberately by any interested party or politician. There may be some omissions and anomalies but so far there is no serious instance of any such omissions and anomalies affecting the results of election.

PROCEDURE FOR THE ELECTION OF MEMBERS:

The first step in the holding of elections to the District Councils relates to the publication of a notice, at least three weeks before the date fixed for the poll. The notice must state the number of seats to be filled, the constituencies at which the election will be held, the dates on which nominations should be presented and the places where they will be accepted, the date on which the nomination papers will be taken up for scrutiny and the date of the poll.

The second obvious step is the filing of nomination papers by the candidates. Each candidate has to have an elector to propose his candidature and another to second. The proposer and the seconder must sign the nomination papers. The candidate shall also affix his signature accepting the nomination. He must also declare the acceptance of one of the symbols mentioned in the list of symbols. The nomination papers must
be presented to the Returning officer on or before the date prescribed for such presentation. The candidate must also deposit a sum of Rs. 150 as security. If the total votes polled by a candidate is less than one-eighth of the total number of votes polled, he shall forfeit his deposit.

SCUTINY OF THE NOMINATION PAPERS:

The Returning officer arranges the scrutiny of nomination papers on the date prescribed for the purpose. The candidates and their agents may be present at such scrutiny and may raise objections with regard to any of the nomination papers which they think are not in order or which they consider to be attracting any of the disqualifications prescribed by law. The Returning officer shall examine all such objections and the grounds thereof and give his decision. His decision shall be final.

Soon after the scrutiny of nominations, the Returning officer shall assign a symbol to each candidate whose nomination is held valid and shall also publish a list of the candidates in the principal language of the region.

A candidate may withdraw his candidature before the date prescribed for the purpose. A candidate who has once withdrawn his candidature shall not be permitted to revive it.

UNOPPOSED RETURNS:

In every election, it is usual to come across a few uncontested returns. The number of uncontested returns in the elections so far held
to the District Councils varied from zero to one-third of elected membership. The trend has been clearly towards less and less uncontested returns. If there is a single nomination for a particular constituency the candidate so nominated will be declared to have been elected uncontested. If there is no nomination at all, fresh nominations will have to be called and a fresh poll arranged. If the number of candidates contesting the elections is less than the number of seats to be filled, a fresh poll is inevitable.

POLL:

It is usual to have elections contested rather than uncontested. The magnitude of the contest depends largely on the diversity of interests present and organised expression given to them by the political parties, pressure groups and the like. Each political party puts forth a fairly big list of candidates. Dominant parties set up candidates in all the constituencies. Elections to the District councils were generally fought with a keen contest. Where the number of candidates is greater than the number of seats available poll must be held.

IMPERSONATION:

One of the malpractices noticed in elections is impersonation at the time of polling. Provision has been made for challenging the identity of a voter. Any candidate or his agent may challenge a person who claims to be a particular voter. To prevent frivolous challenging, the candidate or his agent must make a certain amount of deposit. The Presi-
ASSISTANCE TO VOTERS:

Where the electorate is predominantly illiterate, assistance to voters becomes necessary and important. If a voter who by reason of his ignorance or infirmity of body is unable to exercise his franchise, he may seek the assistance of the Polling and the Presiding officers. The simplest method of assistance is by what is called whispering ballot. Under this, the Presiding officer sits close to the ballot box and asks a voter if he needs assistance. If assistance is sought, he will then ask the voter to whom he wants to vote and accordingly mark the ballot paper. This is no doubt a quick and easy way of disposing off illiterate voters. But it puts a premium on the honesty and integrity of the Polling and the Presiding officers. An unscrupulous Presiding officer may not mark the ballot paper according to the wishes of the voter who seeks assistance. He may mark according to his own whim and fancy. If he is interested in a particular party or candidate, the position becomes even worse. He may manipulate all illiterate votes in favour of that party or candidate.

Sometimes there may be a bigger conspiracy. Voters may be intimidated to seek assistance so that votes may be manipulated in favour of a particular candidate. Voters who are literate outside become illiterate inside the polling station. Thus the provision for assistance to voters frustrates not merely the secrecy of the ballot but may also lead to the practice of fraud and violence. In order to get over this difficulty,
each candidate is asked to select a pictorial symbol, an animal, bird, tree or any striking object. In his election campaigns, the candidate has to acquaint the voters with his symbol. He must try to make the symbol associated with his candidature in every possible way. It then becomes fairly easy for an illiterate voter to exercise his franchise. He has simply to locate the symbol on the ballot paper and mark it. Or if marking becomes a problem, there may be as many ballot boxes as the candidate: and each ballot box will bear the symbol of the candidate. In that case, the voter need not mark the ballot paper. He has simply to cast it in the box bearing the symbol of his candidate. But there is one danger in this. The voter may not cast his vote at all and may bring it outside and sell it to the highest bidder. This will lead to chain voting. It may, however, be prevented by watching whether a voter has cast his vote or not. But this will again come in the way of the secrecy of the ballot.

In the elections to the District Councils in the Hill area, the difficulties of the nature discussed above did not present a serious problem. Cases of fraud, intimidation or violence were not being heard of.

If by reason of a riot, violence or a natural calamity, polling is interrupted in any given station or constituency, the Presiding Officer may adjourn the poll and report on the same to the Governor stating the reasons and circumstances which compelled him to adjourn the polls.

Immediately after the receipt of the ballot boxes, counting of votes is arranged and the results are declared. In case of equality of votes, the matter is decided by the tossing of a coin.
SETTLEMENT OF ELECTION DISPUTES:

A candidate who might be defeated or any one interested in the election might file an election petition against the successful candidate to the Governor. The Governor may appoint a commissioner to hear and report on the election of the candidate alleged in the petition. The final decision is given by the Governor.

By and large, elections to the District Councils were free and fair. The percentage of polling was usually above fifty percent. In none of the proceedings of the District Councils is there reference to any serious act of corruption or malpractice in election such as impersonation, intimidation, violence etc. The voters in the tribal areas took to voting in a sportsman-like spirit. Further, the administrative machinery for the conduct of elections was well devised. The Deputy Commissioner supervised the preparation of the electoral roll as well as the conduct of elections. The rules framed for the conduct of elections were comprehensive. In fact, the conditions laid down in the Representation of the Peoples Act as well as the rules framed thereunder were adopted and strictly adhered to.

MEETINGS OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL:

The Governor fixes the date of the first meeting of the District Council. The Deputy Commissioner presides over the meeting. The first task of the District Council is to have its members sworn into office and to elect its Chairman and Deputy Chairman.
Thereafter, regular meetings shall be held every three months. Special meetings may be called for by the Governor or by the Chairman on his own initiative or at the requisition made by a specified number of members.

The quorum for the meeting of the District Council is six or one-third of the total membership, whichever is greater. If at any time during a meeting, there is no quorum, the Chairman shall suspend or adjourn the meeting till a quorum is obtained.

The regional language is adopted as the medium for the transaction of business. Any member may speak in any language recognized by the state. Thus Assamese, Hindi and English may be used.

Attendance at meetings was generally good. It was on the average 80 percent in the North Cachar Hills and 75 percent in the Mizo Hills.

The proceedings of the District Councils were generally smooth and orderly. The District Council, North Cachar Hills had on occasion scenes of a violent and disorderly nature. Three such occasions are worth noticing. First, on 7 September 1960, the Deputy Chairman, M.C. Doalgupu who was in the Chair threatened to adjourn the House if the members were not prepared to restore the House to order.62 Second, on 17 April 1968, the Government and the opposition came to a serious clash. "In the din and confusion that followed, nothing could be heard distinctly. It became impossible to record the proceedings and the

chairman was compelled to prorogue the council and left the hall." Finally, a disturbance of a more serious nature than could be noticed on the two occasions earlier took place on 24 August 1968. Some of the members of the People's Democratic Party entered the meeting hall at 8.30 a.m. and bolted its doors from inside. Their purpose was to prevent the meeting scheduled to be held on that day for the selection of the C.E.M. The Congress Party was then in a majority. When the members of the Congress Party arrived at the meeting hall later, they found the doors closed from inside. The Secretary to the District Council requested members of the PDP repeatedly to open the doors but to no avail. The police were summoned to break open the doors. Later the police requested the Chairman for permission to arrest the members responsible for the disorderly behaviour. When the PDP members heard of this, they came round and submitted an unconditional apology to the Chairman.  

63. Ibid., dated 17-4-1968.  
64. Ibid., dated 24-8-1968.
THE POLITICAL EXECUTIVE:

Rules framed under the Sixth Schedule provide for a Cabinet type of an executive to the District Councils. Thus each District Council shall have an Executive Committee with a Chief Executive Member at the head and two other Executive Members. The C.E.M. shall be elected by the District Council and the two other Members shall be appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the C.E.M. All the members of the Executive shall belong to the District Council and shall be collectively responsible to it. The District Council may by passing a vote of no confidence remove the C.E.M. Removal of the C.E.M. shall automatically mean the resignation of the Executive Committee. The District Council must elect a new C.E.M. within forty-eight hours from the date of removal of the C.E.M. If the District Council fails to elect a C.E.M. within the prescribed time, the Governor may appoint any member of the District Council to be the C.E.M. and two others as Executive Members. They shall hold office until the District Council elects a C.E.M. and a new Executive Committee is constituted.

ELECTION OF THE C.E.M. : DISTRICT COUNCIL, GARO HILLS:

The first District Council, Garo Hills elected Capt. Williamson Sangma as its C.E.M. Thanking the members for electing him unanimously the C.E.M. Capt. Sangma said: "We must feel ourselves as one with the rest of Assam and of India. Let us all be guided by the saying 'to unto others as you yourself would like others to do unto you.' Reflecting on the proceedings of the First District Council, Garo Hills, dated 3-5-1952.
the same spirit of friendliness and integration Capt. Sangma moved aesolution in the House "Recording the great confidence in his (Chief
Minister of Assam, Bishnuram Medhi) capacity, sincerity and able leader­
ship and that the Autonomous Districts of Assam would march rapidly to
progress and prosperity."66

Capt. Sangma took Harrison W. Momin and Mody K. Marak into
his cabinet. They became an able, experienced and homogeneous team.

Capt. Sangma was reelected as C.E.M. for a second term in
1957. He in turn retained his old collegues H.W. Momin and M.K. Marak
as members of the Executive Committee.67

In 1958 he was grafted to the State Cabinet headed by P.P.
Chaliha. The District Council elected Mody. K. Marak as C.E.M. Meanwhile
his colleague Harrison W. Momin died while in office. Mody K. Marak had,
therefore, to reconstitute the entire cabinet. He took Simison Sangma
and Emerson Ch. Momin as members of the Executive Committee. There were
others who aspired for the membership of the Executive Committee. But
under the rules, the Executive Committee shall consist of three members
including the C.E.M. and not more. Mody K. Marak devised a method of
overcoming this legal difficulty. He created two posts of Deputy Execu­
tive Member and selected Lohindre Sangma and Mohan Sangma for the same.
Thus the Executive was expanded to include two Executive Members and
two more Deputy Executive Members.

Mody K. Marak continued to be the C.E.M. till the next general
elections held in 1964. Meanwhile Capt. Sangma resigned from the Assam

66. Ibid., dated 7-5-1952.
67. Proceedings of the Second District Council, Garo Hills,
dated 3-5-1957,
Ministry on the language issue and returned back to district politics in the Garo Hills.

The third District Council met on 1 May 1964 and elected Capt. Sangma as C.E.M. Thus Captain Sangma was back again in the saddle for a third time. He dropped Mody K. Marak who was C.E.M. during his absence and took Lohindra N. Sangma and Lt. K.R. Marak as Executive Members. Lt. K.R. Marak was a new entrant. Albinston Sangma and Grohonsing Marak were appointed as Deputy Executive Members.

The third District Council completed its term in 1969. But in view of the impending constitutional changes, its life was extended till 1972. Meanwhile, Captain Sangma became the Chief Minister of the newly formed Autonomous state of Meghalaya. The District Council elected Mody K. Marak as C.E.M. for a second non consecutive term. Mody K. Marak retained L.N. Sangma as E.M., dropped Lt. K.R. Marak and promoted Albinston Sangma who was Deputy E.M. as E.M. In the place of Albinston Sangma, Brinsing Marak was appointed as Deputy E.M. Grohonsing Marak was retained as another Deputy E.M.

General Elections to the fourth District Council were held in 1972. The new District Council elected Mody K. Marak as C.E.M. for a third term. Mody K. Marak made certain changes in the Executive Committee. Lohindra Sangma was dropped. He was, however, elected as Chairman of the District Council. In the place of Lohindra Sangma,

69. Ibid., dated 18-5-1970.
Brinsing Marak who was Deputy E.M. was made E.M. Albinston Sangma was retained as E.M. while Grohonsing Marak was dropped. Levinson Marak and Arshit Marak were appointed as Deputy E.M.s. They were both new entrants.

From the above facts, certain conclusions emerge. First, Capt. Sangma was the most popular C.E.M. He was elected C.E.M. for three non-consecutive terms. He served a total of twelve years in that capacity. Mody K. Marak has been the longest surviving office bearer of the District Council. He began as E.M., became C.E.M. in 1958, and after an interlude of six years as Chairman (1964-70) he was back again as E.M. He is now more than seventy, sick and slow to dispose of business. He has been in office for more than two decades. Lohindra Sangma was another important figure in the Executive Committee. He began his career as Deputy E.M., became E.M. and was finally made Chairman of the District Council in 1972.

Second, during the period under review the office of the C.E.M. was held either by Capt. Sangma or Mody K. Marak. But there were six occasions when the C.E.M. was elected. On none of these occasions was there a contest. Both the C.E.M.s belonged to the Garo National Council which was the single dominant party retaining power through all the four general elections to the District Council. Members of the party were held together by a strong sense of discipline. There were no defections and no contests for office. So strong was the loyalty to the party that if any member had left it, he was most surely disowned by the electorate ever afterwards.
Third, the C.E.M. had almost always enjoyed the confidence of the District Council. There was no occasion when a motion of no confidence was moved against the C.E.M. Recently, however, a few members demanded the resignation of the C.E.M., Mody K. Marak on the ground that he did not attend office regularly and that he was too slow to dispose of public business. Capt. Sangma had, however interfered and assured the members that when Mody K. Marak completed his present term, he could be made to retire. Thus a reconciliation was made.

Fourth, the Executive Committee had at all times functioned as a harmonious team and provided able leadership in administration.

Finally, during the period under review, the five offices in the Executive Committee were held by 13 persons. Among them 7 were elected or selected for more than one term, and the remaining 6 for a single term. It is surprising that not a single lady was ever chosen as a member of the Executive Committee or as Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the District Council. Non-representation of the fair sex in the Executive Committee as elsewhere is conspicuous in a land where there are many educated ladies and ladies in general play a significant part in the social and economic life of the people.

THE MIKIR HILLS:

Khorsing Terang who had the unique distinction of being the member of the Assam Legislative Assembly for 15 years was elected as the first C.E.M. of the Mikir Hills District Council in 1952. Khorsing took Soi Soi Terang and Harsing Ingty as his colleagues in the Executive Committee.
During his brief stay as C.E.M., Khorsing was accused of showing favouritism in the disposal of contracts as well as in the making of appointments. The C.E.M. admitted the charge but said that he made no violation of any rule. He promised to frame comprehensive rules for the disposal of contracts and making appointments.

Following the death of Khorsing Terang on the 28 of November 1955, Nihang Rongphar was elected the C.E.M. Rongphar retained Soi Soi Terang and Harsing Ingty as members of the Executive Committee. Soi Soi Terang, a step brother of the late Khorsing Terang accused Rongphar of incompetence and secured his resignation. The District Council elected Chatrasing Teron to succeed Rongphar as C.E.M. Chatrasing reinstated Rongphar as Executive Member. He also retained Soi Soi Terang who was by relationship his step father-in-law. Harsing Ingty was dropped. Chatrasing's government lasted only for a short while as he joined the State Cabinet headed by Bishnuram Medhi in 1957. In less than two years, the District Council met again to elect the C.E.M. Strangely, Nihang Rongphar who was considered incompetent in 1955 and was replaced by Chatrasing Teron was now acclaimed as competent and elected C.E.M. by an unanimous vote. Rongphar dropped Soi Soi Terang, his confirmed critic and rival and took two new aspirants, Chandrasing Teron and Joysing Dolley as his colleagues in the Cabinet. Soi Soi Terang would not forgive Rongphar for the latter's unceremonious removal of the former. In less than five months after Rongphar assumed office, his rival Soi Soi Terang

Khorsing Terang did not live to complete his term. He died on 28-11-1955.
succeeded in getting a motion of no confidence against the C.E.M. introduced in the District Council. Eight members of the District Council signed the motion. When leave was sought to admit the motion in the House, six members got up in support of it. Rongphar who was neither a successful politician nor a good administrator found the scales turned against him and hence resigned. C.S. Booth, the Deputy Commissioner who was also ex-officio chairman of the District Council thought that since Rongphar submitted his resignation, the motion of no confidence tabled against him need not be pursued any further. This was also the view of Chandrasing Teron who was a member of Rongphar's Cabinet. But Soi Soi Terang was bent on humiliating his arch rival Rongphar. So he would not agree for dropping the proceedings of no confidence against the C.E.M. He threatened that he and his supporters would stage a walk out from the Council should the said proceedings be dropped. C.S. Booth was for avoiding further unpleasantness. It was no use beating a dead horse. But he could not go against the wishes of the District Council. He, therefore, fixed December 2, 1957 to be the date on which the motion of no confidence against the C.E.M. would be taken up. In the meantime, he secured the Governor's acceptance of the resignation submitted earlier by the C.E.M. So on 2 December when Soi Soi Terang and his supporters arrived triumphantly to pursue the motion of no confidence against the C.E.M, the Chairman, C.S. Booth informed them politely that as the Governor accepted the resignation of Rongphar, there was neither the C.E.M nor his Executive Committee in existence and therefore, the motion of no confidence against the C.E.M. would be redundant. He thus saved
a delicate situation from degenerating into an open slander against an out-going C.E.M.

On the following day, the District Council met to elect a new C.E.M. There were two candidates, Chandrasing Teron who was a member of the outgoing Cabinet and Harsing Ingty who had earlier served at E.M. and was currently the Deputy Chairman of the District Council. Ingty had, however, withdraw from the contest. Chandrasing Teron was elected by a unanimous vote. He took Joysing Dolley and Sar Rongpi as his colleagues in the Cabinet.

The third District Council which met in June 1962 elected Dhaniram Rongpi, a nominated member as C.E.M. This was the first time in the Mikir Hills that a nominated member was elected the C.E.M. Dhaniram was General Secretary of Karbi-A-Darbar and was also a member of the Assam Legislative Assembly. But he had little political and administrative experience. He retained as his colleagues Joysing Dolley and Sar Rongpi who had served in the previous cabinet.

Elections to the fourth District Council were held in 1971. In March 1971 the District Council met and re-elected Dhaniram Rongpi as the C.E.M. Dhaniram was the first C.E.M. in the Mikir Hills to be elected for a second term and he served as such for a period of 12 years without a break. This time, Dhaniram Rongpi expanded his Cabinet to consist of 4 members besides himself. They were Sar Be who was Deputy

74. Dhaniram Rongpi was elected C.E.M. in 1962. He was re-elected in 1971 and he resigned in 1974.
Chairman of the District Council, Mohansing Teron, brother of Chandrasing Teron who was C.E.M. during the term of the Second District Council, Sar Rongpi and D.S. Terang. All of them were new recruits to the Executive Committee.

Dhaniram Rongpi resigned in 1974 following the dissatisfaction of certain members with his leadership. Joysing Dollejr was elected as the C.E.M. He went a step ahead of his predecessor in appointing 5 members to the Executive Committee. He retained Sar Rongpi, Mohan Teron and D.S. Terang, dropped Sar Be and appointed two new members, H. Mech and D. Hante.

From the facts noted above, certain conclusions emerge. First, in the Mikir Hills as in the Garo Hills, all the C.E.Ms were elected unanimously. On one occasion (1957) there were two candidates - Chandrasing Teron and Harsing Ingty, but the latter withdrew in favour of the former and there was no contest.

Second, if the Garo National Council was the single dominant party in the Garo Hills, the Congress held a similar status in the Mikir Hills. As a result, there was political stability and a fairly able leadership in administration.

Third, during the period under review (1952-74) six persons held the office of the C.E.M. The first C.E.M. Khorsing Terang died while in office. Nihang Rongphar who was elected the C.E.M. first in 1955 and again in 1957 was forced to resign on both the occasions. The second time when he resigned, he was virtually on the verge of being thrown out by the District Council which pressed for a vote of no confidence.
against him and a clever handling of the situation by the Deputy Commissioner who was the ex-officio Chairman of the District Council saved Rongphar the ignominy of being unceremoniously dethroned. Dhaniram Rongpi was the only nominated member to be elected C.E.M. Though considered to be inexperienced politically and administratively, he was the longest standing C.E.M. so far. He held the office for 12 years (1962-74) without a break.

Finally, a notable feature of the politics in the Mikir Hills has been that a few families related to each other by matrimonial alliances held a monopoly of most of the political offices. It began with Khorsing Terang, the first C.E.M. who took Soi Soi Terang, his step brother as one of the members of his Cabinet. Khorsing Terang was the first M.L.A. elected from the Mikir Hills under the Government of India Act, 1935. He retained his seat in the State Assembly for 15 years. Khorsing had two daughters and a son. One of his daughters was married to Chatrixing Teron who was the C.E.M. from 1955 to 1957, who became Chairman of the District Council between 1958 and 1962 and who was finally invited to the State Cabinet as a Minister. Khorsing's second daughter was married to Chandrasing Teron who began his career as an Executive Member in the Cabinet of N. Rongphar, who became the C.E.M. after the dethronement of Rongphar and who was finally elected Chairman of the District Council. Chandrasing Teron had a brother and a sister. His sister was given in marriage to Dhaniram Rongpi who became the C.E.M. in 1971. Dhaniram promptly took Mohansing Teron, brother of Chandrasing Teron and his own brother-in-law as a member of his cabinet. The present
C.E.M. Joysing Dolley gave his own daughter in marriage to a brother of Dhaniram Rongpi. Khorsing Terang’s only son, Sarathe Sing Terang considered to be one of the richest persons in the Mikir Hills and currently Chairman of the Town Committee, Diphu is now a prospective candidate for the office of the C.E.M. Soi Soi Terang was perhaps the most enterprising politician in the Mikir Hills District. He was member of the District Council for more than two decades, member of the Executive Committee on two occasions, M.L.A. for three terms and a member of the Chaliha and Chaudhury ministries in Assam. He brought about the dethronement of Rongphar when the latter dropped him from his Cabinet. He was the stern brother of Khorsing Terang, the first C.E.M.

It is unlikely that members of the few families mentioned above lose their grip over Mikir Hills politics in the foreseeable future. When an extraneous group challenges their supremacy, they stand united in resisting it. Inter-personal rivalries among themselves were, however, not infrequent. This, in part explains the frequent changes in the offices of the C.E.M. and the Executive Members.

MIZO HILLS:

Mizoram was characterised by pretty frequent political and factional rivalries leading to rank opportunism and instability. At no time was the Executive firmly saddled and efficiently run.

The first District Council met in June 1952 and elected Lalsawia as the C.E.M. Though unanimously elected, Lalsawia felt that

some members were not quite satisfied with his leadership. Therefore, instead of selecting the members of the Executive Committee himself, he requested the District Council to elect them by a secret ballot. Accordingly the District Council elected Sangkhunga and Hrangaia and they were promptly appointed as Executive Members. Thus all the three members of the government including the C.E.M. were elected by the District Council. But this did not make the government any more popular than it was. Nor did it make Lalsawia acceptable to all. The Mizo Union had, in fact, forced his resignation. What made the Mizo Union so firmly opposed to Lalsawia as to demand his resignation? There is no record of evidence giving the reasons for the resignation of Lalsawia. Personal interviews with some of the actors in the drama reveal the following information. Hrangaia, one of the two members elected to the Lalsawia Cabinet, said that Lalsawia favoured members of his sub-tribe, Lushei and this caused resentment among the members of the other tribes. They, therefore, demanded his resignation. Lalbuaia, a senior member of the Mizo Union said that Lalsawia was deposed because he was incompetent. The statement of Lalbuaia was corroborated by Lalhungha, another prominent figure in the Mizo politics. Thus there are two contradictory versions. Neither of them appears to be true to facts. The version of Hrangaia can not be accepted atleast for one reason. If Lalsawia were disposed to favoring men of his sub-tribe, he would have exercised his privilege of selecting members of his executive committee. Instead, he requested the District Council to make the selection and he accepted its verdict. This suggests that Lalsawia was straight forward in his actions.
On Lalsawia's resignation, the District council elected Saprawnga as the C.E.M. Saprawnga was a parliamentary Secretary in the state ministry. The M.U. thought that he was a fit person to lead district politics and so he was brought and elected the C.E.M. Saprawnga admitted no interference in the formation of his government. He dropped both Hrangaia and Sangkhunga belonging to the previous cabinet and took Lalsawia and Lalbuia. Saprawnga kept all dissenters at bay and came to a successful completion of his first term in office.

The second District Council met in June 1957 and reelected Saprawnga as the C.E.M. Saprawnga replaced his earlier colleagues by Dr. Rosiama and Tuikhurliana who were Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively during the first term of the District Council. When Dr. Rosiama died in June 1959, Hrangaia who was then the Deputy Chairman of the District Council was appointed an Executive Member. Thus Hrangaia staged a come back to the Executive Committee five years after the fall of the Lalsawia's government of which he was a member.

Saprawnga's second term in office was by no means a smooth sail. The Mizo Union of which he was the leader lost its commanding majority in the District Council. The W.M.P.O emerged as a strong contender for power. Saprawnga had scarcely completed the first year of his second term when a motion of no confidence was moved against his government by Lalvunga of the M.U. Lalvunga levelled a series of charges both general and specific against the C.E.M. and his government. The more important among the charges were that the C.E.M. showed favouritism in the

76. Ibid., dated 16-11-1954.
disposal of contracts as well as in the making of appointments, that the Executive Committee paid scant regard for the decisions of the District Council, that certain primary school teachers were dismissed without sufficient cause, that instead of striving for the welfare of the people, the Executive Committee was only busy with the distribution of house sites and that some allottees for house and shop were given more land than was absolutely necessary and so on. 78

Lalthankima, another member of the UMFO made similar charges. He charged the Executive Committee for adopting a partisan attitude in the allotment of house-sites. He charged the C.E.M. for exercising powers beyond authority and for spending public money for the entertainment of private persons. He charged the Finance Member Dr. Rosiama for collecting money from the stall-holders without proper authority and without issuing receipts. He thus supported the motion of no confidence against the Saprawnga Government.

Lalmawia, a third member of the UMFO made slightly different charges. He declared that the Executive Committee failed to utilise the funds made available by the Government, that it did not secure a planned economic development of the district, that it appropriated 15 percent of the bills payable to the contractors for its own party funds and that it did not promote private ownership of land in the district.

The C.E.M. denied all the charges, dubbed them as baseless and threw a challenge to the opposition saying: "If you really consider that you have earned the support of the people, let us all resign our member-

78 Ibid.
ship and hold fresh elections giving the people an opportunity to hear a new verdict." The opposition retorted saying: "We have no objection. That is what we desire."

The motion of no confidence was finally put to the vote of the members. Eight members voted in favour of it and twelve against. One of the nominated members Pi Hmingliani and two members of the Tribal Union from the Pawi-Lakher region remained neutral. The motion was defeated. But what about the challenge thrown by Saprawnga on behalf of the MFC and its acceptance by the members of the opposition? The latter honoured its word but the former backed out. For, when Lalthankima moved a resolution calling for the dissolution of the District Council and ordering of fresh election, the MU opposed it and secured its defeat.

This gave rise to a further complication in the situation. A conference of the leaders of the ruling MU and the opposition under "MSC" was hurriedly arranged. It was agreed that Lalthankima should move a fresh resolution similar to the one he moved earlier in a special meeting of the District Council.

Accordingly, a special meeting of the District Council was called for in January 1959. Lalthankima moved a resolution on behalf of the MFC as agreed. The MU had also tabled a resolution. Both the resolutions were substantially identical. Both sought the dissolution of the District Council and holding of fresh elections. Then came a procedural wrangle as to which of the two resolutions should be moved first. Lalthankima said that his resolution should be taken up first as agreed to in the conference of the leaders in which the MU participated. The ruling
MU did not accept this. On its behalf, it was argued that if the resolution framed by the opposition were to be taken up and adopted, it would amount to a vote of no confidence in the government. On two occasions earlier, the opposition tried to vote the Government down. But the government was vindicated by majority support. And so, if the District Council were to be dissolved, it should be at the instance of the government and not the opposition.

The Chairman admitted the official motion on the ground that the government had an absolute majority in the District Council. Dalhan-kima said that the opposition would not participate in the discussion on the official motion. The C.E.M. said that if the opposition was not participating in the discussion on his motion, he would withdraw his motion and not move it at all. In other words, he would not agree to the dissolution of the District Council. If the opposition were to move its resolution, it must stand on its own support. Therefore, the opposition too did not press for it. Thus the two parties reverted back to their original positions. In the heat of a certain moment, they were both led to agree for the dissolution of the Council. But when such dissolution seemed imminent, each of them fought shy of it for its own reasons.79

In June 1962, the third District Council met to elect the C.E.M. Saprawnga who had successfully weathered the storm and turmoil of his second term was reelected for a third time.80 But Saprawnga did not complete his third term. The forces of opposition grew stronger and

became impatient with his leadership. He had, therefore, to resign on 30 April 1965, that is to say two years and ten months after he assumed office for a third time.

On the very day of his election for a third term as C.E.M. Saprawnga wanted to nominate his colleagues in the Executive Committee. But the Chairman of the District Council did not permit him to do so as he had not obtained the consent of the members concerned beforehand. Later on, Saprawnga selected Hrangaia and Lalbuaia to be the members of his Cabinet. Both Hrangara and Lalbuaia had earlier worked as Executive Members and were thus familiar with the tasks of administration. Saprawnga for his part had all the qualities necessary to make a successful politician and a sound administrator. He was moderate in his views, humble in behaviour and realistic in outlook. He stood strong and firm whenever the occasion demanded it. But he never closed the doors for moderation and conciliation. He held the office of the C.E.M. Continuously for over a decade. But he was never known to be haughty or autocratic. The question arises. What made Saprawnga resign in the middle of his third term and not continue till its end? His colleagues in the Executive Committee who ought to have known him better had this to say.

Hrangaia : According to Hrangaia, two of the members of the MLI, Ch. Chunga and Pahlira accused Saprawnga of favouring a composite Hill State and not a separate state for Mizoram. They had, therefore, lost faith in his leadership and threatened to resign from the party if he continued as the C.E.M.

81. Ibid.
Lalbuaia: Lalbuaia did not agree with Hrangaia that Saprawnga was not in favour of achieving statehood for Mizoram. According to Lalbuaia, the C.E.M. was not in favour of direct action on the issue of statehood for Mizoram. There was however, increasing disenchantment with his leadership.

These two versions were not substantially different from one another. Saprawnga sensed a split in his party. He did not like to precipitate it. He had, therefore, resigned. Perhaps he thought that he should not stand in the way of all those who considered that they could do better without him.

The day on which Saprawnga resigned, that is 30 April 1965, the District Council met to elect a new C.E.M. H.K. Bawichhuaka who was then the Chairman of the District Council was unanimously elected the C.E.M. The new C.E.M. retained Hrangaia from the outgoing cabinet. Lalbuaia, the other member of the outgoing cabinet was elected Chairman of the District Council. C. Pahlira who was the Deputy Chairman of the District Council between 1959 and 1962 and who was without a political job since then was now taken into the Bawichhuaka Cabinet as an Executive Member. Bawichhuaka was a devoted party worker and was known to be the brain behind the drafting of the Mizo Union's all important documents. The Lalbuaia - Bawichhuaka team, as the Chairman and the C.E.M. was one of the most successful teams of its kind in Mizo history.

The fourth District Council met in July 1970 to elect its C.E.M. There were two candidates, Vaivenga of the Mizo Union and Zaawma of the Congress. In the contest that ensued, the Congress candidate
obtained 13 votes as against 10 by the Mizo Union's nominee. Thus for the first time in 18 years, the Mizo Union was ousted from power. But Congress which gained power was by no means a disciplined party. When the new Congress C.E.M. selected R. Lalhuzauva and Z.V. Lalmawia as members of his team in the Executive, there were many others in the Congress party who aspired for office. They urged the C.E.M. to increase the number of Executive Members. In November 1970, the C.E.M. proposed to add three more members and appoint one of them as Deputy C.E.M. In other words, the Executive Committee was to have its strength doubled. The MU was strongly against any such proposal to expand the Executive Committee. But the ruling party insisted on it and placed it before the District Council for its approval. The Mizo Union staged a walk out from the Council session in protest—a step which was never taken at any time before. But the Congress had acted on their proposal and on 4 November 1970 increased the membership of the Executive Committee from three to six. In less than two weeks, the Congress added three more members to the Executive Committee. As from 16 November 1970, the Committee had a total of 9 members, that is three times its original strength.

The Congress was a house divided against itself. Many of its members were known for their rank opportunism. Expansion of the Executive Committee was but a temporary palliative. Internal squabbles had increased and finally, a split in the party occurred in January 1971. Dengthuama and Hranchhuama emerged as leaders of two rival factions named after them. The Dengthuama congress controlled the District Council and cons-

83. Ibid., dated 2-11-1970.
stituted the main support behind the government. The Hrangchhuana Congress was pushed back into an opposition group. But it did not keep quiet. On 12 January 1971 it sought the leave of the House to introduce a motion of no confidence in the Zalawma government. Leave was granted by eleven votes to ten. The MU was obviously happy with the Congress split. It was seeking its own gains.

P.C. Sarema who moved the motion of no confidence against the government charged it with corruption, misrule and high-handedness. Thus he said that the government did not hold elections to the village councils; that it appointed village council authorities without sanction; that the members of the Executive Committee were selected without consulting the party; that the property of the District Council was gifted away to private persons; that a stall near the Cinema Hall in Aijal was given to Dengthuama; that the Dengthuama Congress boycotted the visit of the Chief Minister and another Minister, A. Thanglura to the Mizo Hills; that the officers of the District Council were appointed without consulting the District Council; and finally, that the Executive Committee did not hold talks with the MNF as promised at the time of elections. 84

The C.E.M. denied the charges as being baseless. The Hrangchhuana Congress had a deal with the MU to topple down the government. Before extending its support to the Hrangchhuana group, the MU laid down certain conditions. First, the new government which might be set up on the full of the Zalawma Executive should pass a resolution demanding statehood for Mizoram. Second, the Chairmanship of the District Council should go to

the nominee of the MU. Eventually, the motion of no confidence was put to vote. It was carried out by 13 votes to 9. The nominated members abstained from voting. Zhawma's government fell.

On 16 January 1971, the District Council met to elect a new C.E.M. with the support of the MU, the Hrangchhuana group set up C.E.M. Nghina as their candidate for the office of the C.E.M. and he was elected. Nghina rewarded his supporters in congress. Saprema who brought about the motion of no confidence against the former government and Thanchungnuna who supported it were both appointed as Executive Members.

On 6th February 1971, Nghina had one of his own candidates, J. Thanghuama elected as Chairman of the District Council. The MU was disappointed with Nghina. The Hrangchhuana Congress did not keep its promises made to the MU. Just at this moment when the MU was simmering with discontent over the Nghina government, it was approached by the Dengthuama Congress for support to topple down the Nghina government. The MU agreed to the proposal on the condition that in the new government to be formed, the C.E.M. should be its nominee. The Dengthuama Congress had no alternative but to accept the condition laid down by the MU for the latter was at its best bargaining position then.

As planned, the Dengthuama Congress moved a motion of no confidence against the Nghina government. Nghina realised, though reluctantly that his earlier supporters had joined the opposition camp. So he submitted his resignation. He also sent a letter to the Chairman of the District Council stating that he was ill and therefore, would not be in. 85 The Fourth District Council – Proceedings of the no confidence motion against the C.E.M. dated 17-3-1971.
a position to attend the meeting of the Council. It is difficult to say whether his illness was physiological or political. For a time, the Chairman was in a fix whether in the absence of the C.E.M. the motion of no confidence against the government should be taken up or not. Finally it was decided that the motion should be discussed and put to the vote of members. The voting revealed that the motion was supported by 18 members against one who opposed it. 86

The new found friendship between the Dengthuama Congress and the MU resulted in an agreement between the two to form a United Mizo Parliamentary Party. The agreement stipulated further that the C.E.M. should belong to the Mizo Union. There should be five Executive Members, two each from the Congress and the MU and one from the Independents. One of two Congress members should be appointed as Deputy C.E.M. Accordingly when the District Council met on 20 March 1971, Ch. Chhunga of the MU was elected the C.E.M. The new C.E.M. selected as Executive Members Zalwma and Sapnela from the Congress, Thansiama and Vaivenga from the MU and Ruala from the Independent nominated block. Zalwma, former C.E.M. and members of the Dengthuama Congress was appointed the Deputy C.E.M. Thus the new Cabinet consisted of six members including the C.E.M. and the Deputy C.E.M.

Immediately after the Chhunga cabinet assumed office, a delicate situation arose. The Government of Assam directed the District Council to send all papers and documents relating to the resignation of the former C.E.M., Nghina and his subsequent removal by the Districts Council. The

86. Ibid., dated 18-3-1971.
question was whether it was within the competence of the District Council to debate on a vote of no confidence against a C.E.M. and decide on his removal after he had already submitted his resignation. The Government of Assam advised the District Council that until this case was disposed of, it should maintain the status quo. But status quo meant that the government of Chhunga which had already been formed should be kept in abeyance. This was something which the District Council could not accept. On 23 March, the District Council met and expressed disapproval of the Government's action. Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner informed the District Council that the election of Ch. Chhunga as the C.E.M. would be notified in the State Gazette. This meant that the Government had approved the election. The succession issue was thus set at rest.

But the United Mizo Parliamentary Party on which Chhunga's ended was short-lived. Certain well-meaning congressmen who had the good of the party at heart made painstaking efforts to forge a unity between the two warring factions in the Mizo Congress. The leaders of the two factions were persuaded to realize that while they engaged themselves in a mud-slinging campaign against each other, it was the MU that gained. The congress won a majority of the seats in the 1970 elections. But because of the split in the party and the consequent political wrangles between its two factions, the congress as a whole was pushed into the background, while the Mizo Union was merry forming the government with a C.E.M. of its choice and two more Executive Members. After about a year the unifying efforts bore fruit; the leaders of the contending factions agreed to come together and the Congress was again united. This new found unity encouraged
Congressmen post haste to bring about the downfall of the Chhunga government. If congressmen were to be a little more decent in their behaviour, they could have allowed the Chhunga government to continue for the few days in office which it had been left with. But with indecent haste they proceeded and got the District Council to pass a motion of no confidence in the Chhunga government. On 22 March 1972, the District Council met and elected Zalawma, Deputy C.E.M. in the Chhunga Cabinet as the C.E.M. C. Nghina, a former C.E.M., C.I. Ruia, Sapnana, Thanchungnunaga were chosen to be the members of the Executive Committee.

Thus there were frequent changes in the Political Executive in Mizoram. This has to be attributed not merely to the existence of rival political parties contending for power but also to the internal squabbles within each party and faction. The Congress was especially known for its infights and for the rank opportunism of its leaders. Further, the incidence of instability was less frequent during the first three terms of the District Council when the Mizo Union was more or less firmly in saddle. But the fourth term which is also the last term for the Mizo District Council was characterised by chronic instability. During the first 18 years of the working of the District Council, the C.E.M. was changed only thrice, but during the last two years (1970-72) four C.E.Ms were installed.

87. The District Council was soon to be dissolved following the decision to constitute Mizoram into a Union Territory from April 1972.
88. The Chhunga Government assumed office on 20 March 1971 and ceded from office on 21 March 1972, that after one year and one day in office.
NORTH CACHAR HILLS:

The Political Executive in the North Cachar Hills was as much a scene of instability as that of the Mizo Hills. For the first ten years, however, North Cachar Hills had its Executive Committee stable and undisturbed. Thereafter it became the object of many a no confidence motion and bitter political and factional rivalry.

The first District Council met in June 1952 to elect the C.E.M. The choice fell on C.H. Khotland, a Hmar. He selected S.F. Thaosen and Joy Bhadra Hagjer as his colleagues. When Joy Bhadra Hagjer was appointed parliamentary Secretary in 1954, he resigned his membership of the Executive Committee and in his place D.B. Thaosen was appointed as an Executive Member.

The Second District Council met in June 1957 and elected P.J. Langthasa as the C.E.M. Langthasa selected H.M. Das Burman and Bullon Hmar as his cabinet colleagues. Till 1962 Langthasa had a smooth ride. He had almost completed his term when he was up against a no confidence brought about by that ever vigilant critic of the administration, S.R. Thaosen. Thaosen levelled a series of charges against the Langthasa government. The charges were that the Langthasa Executive had failed to utilize the loans taken from the Government for the construction of quarters for the Executive Members and staff; that it failed to utilize the grants for rural housing, communication in the rural areas and provision of drinking water facility; that it fixed a high rate of land tax in the newly opened settlements, and that it taxed heavily on the goods entering the markets for sale.
The object of S.R. Thaosen in framing these charges was not that he really believed in them or that he wanted to prove them but that they provided the much needed pretext for overthrowing Langthasa's government. In this plan, he had the support of M.C. Daolagupu, the Deputy Chairman of the District Council and T.R. Changsan.

Interestingly, the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman belonged to two rival groups in the District Council and were not on speaking terms with each other. The Deputy Chairman aspired for membership in the Executive Committee. In order to improve the prospects of his popularity, he resigned from his office and handed over the letter of resignation to the Secretary of the District Council. On hearing that the Deputy Chairman had resigned, the Chairman, Halflongbar thought that his position would become weaker if he continued in office. He too had resigned and handed over his letter of resignation to the Secretary. The situation became delicate as there was neither the Chairman nor the Deputy Chairman to preside over the meeting called for on 1 January 1962 to consider the motion of no confidence in the government. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the C.E.M. instead of deciding to face the motion of no confidence against him, had also chosen to resign from office. Thus there were neither the Chairman, nor the Deputy Chairman nor the Executive Committee to carry on the administration. It was a total break-down in administration and a complete dead-lock in the affairs of the District Council. Rules framed under the Sixth Schedule have, however prescribed a way to meet with such extraordinary situations. The Governor exercised his special powers and
appointed Inggimba as the Chairman. He also set up a caretaker Executive with M.C. Daolgupu, S.R. Thaosen and T.K. Changsan as Members.

Elections to the third District Council were held in February 1962. On 12 May 1962, the District Council met to elect the C.E.M. There were two candidates, S.R. Thaosen who brought about the downfall of the former C.E.M., P.C. Langthasa and Longthu. Longthu had, however, withdrawn his candidature. S.R. Thaosen was declared elected as the C.E.M. Thaosen formed a coalition government selecting Lalvuoma from the Union Party and G.C. Langthasa from the Congress as his colleagues in the cabinet.

For five years to follow, the C.E.M. had a smooth sail. But in 1967 he felt that his colleagues were not quite loyal to him. So he wanted to get rid of them. But he did not desire an open confrontation with them. He wanted to pursue the path of least resistance. He, therefore, adopted a surreptitious method. It is alleged that he took Thogen Thado into his confidence, asked him to move a motion of no confidence in the Executive Committee, puruse it to its logical end and thereafter elect him again as the C.E.M. at a subsequent meeting. Thado did exactly as he was instructed with the result that the government of Thaosen fell on 7 November 1967. On 9 November the District Council met to elect a new C.E.M. The same Thogen Thado who moved the motion of no confidence against Thaosen and who condemned him in unmistakable terms had on this occasion raised Thaosen to the skies and acclaimed him as the fittest person to hold the office of the C.E.M. Thaosen was elected once again as the C.E.M. So he could get rid of his old colleagues and reward his
new friends and supporters. Thus he chose Thogen Thado, K.N. Thaosen, and P.K. Gorhosa as his colleagues in the Cabinet.

During the remainder of his term, S.R. Thaosen faced a series of hostile attempts to dislodge his government but P.C. Langthasa, the Chairman whom he once opposed tooth and nail and whose election to themanship he later supported with all his influence, stood firmly by him and saved him from many a crisis by his timely adjournments of the meetings of the District Council.

General elections to the fourth District Council were held in 1968. The new District Council met on 24 August 1968 to elect the C.E.M. The day witnessed an unprecedented situation. Some members of the Peoples Democratic Party who were bitterly opposed to the Congress and who wanted to sabotage the attempts of the Congress to form a government entered the meeting Hall well ahead of the scheduled time and bolted the doors from within. Congress members who arrived later were dismayed to find the doors locked from inside. The Secretary of the District Council appealed to the members of the PDP to open the doors but in vain. Police assistance had, therefore, to be sought. Even when the police arrived, members of the PDP were not willing to open the doors. Thereupon, the police sought permission of the Chairman to break open the doors, and arrest the dilinquent members for their disorderly behaviour. When the latter heard of the decision to arrest and prosecute them, they opened the doors and meekly submitted an unconditional apology. The meeting was then held. There were two candidates for the office of the C.E.M. They were S.R. Thaosen who was the C.E.M. during the term of
the third District Council, and R.C. Langthasa. Peculiarly, S.R. Thaosen did not poll a single vote. Even his proposer and seconder deserted him. R.C. Langthasa was elected by a unanimous vote. He chose G.C. Langthasa, N.K. Bathari and Semian Jame, a Naga as his colleagues in the Cabinet.

On 26 November 1971, R.C. Langthasa laid down his office. The reason for his resignation is not stated. On the same day, G.C. Langthasa, one of the Cabinet colleagues of R.C. Langthasa was elected the C.E.M. G.C. Langthasa did not make any changes in the membership of the Executive Committee of his predecessor. He, however, included G.C. Hojo. From this it appears that the former C.E.M. had to resign at the instance of his cabinet colleagues who might have refused to work under him. In 1973 when the fifth District Council was constituted, G.C. Langthasa was reelected as the C.E.M.

From the above, it is clear that during the first decade of the working of the Political Executive in the North Cachar Hills (1952-1962), there was comparative peace and stability but during the decade to follow (1962-1972) there was hardly an occasion when the Executive Committee was not plagued by instability of one kind or other. On one occasion the C.E.M. disfavoured his colleagues and manoeuvred to get rid of them. On another occasion, the colleagues got the better of their C.E.M. and compelled him to resign. Further, there was a time when the PDP, an opposition party went so far as to physically obstruct the holding of a meeting of the District Council Scheduled to elect the C.E.M.

90. Ibid., dated 26-11-1971.
The main reason behind political instability in North Cachar Hills has to be found not so much in the existence of political parties fighting their way to power but in the manoeuvres and machinations of a few ambitions individuals who aspired to gain power either for themselves or for their friends. There were six such individuals and control over most political offices was held by one or two of them at a time as if by a strange process of rotation.

THE KHASI AND THE JAINTIA HILLS:

The people of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District were politically more advanced than the people of other Autonomous Hill Districts. There was, therefore, keen contest for all political offices, including the office of the C.E.M. The first District Council met on 3 July 1952 for the election of the C.E.M. There were two candidates, Joysinta Rynjah and B.M. Roy. Both were retired civil servants and both had vast administrative experience but little political background. Rynjah was elected, for he polled 16 votes as against 5 votes polled by B.M. Roy. The C.E.M. took Rostanwell war from the Khasi Hills and Ehowell Poshna from the Jaintia Hills as members of his cabinet.

Rynjah was not long in office when a motion of no confidence was tabled against his government. But when the motion was actually taken up for consideration, the mover refused to move his motion. The crisis was averted. But on 9 July 1953, exactly after 1 year and 9 days in office, Rynjah resigned from the office of the C.E.M. for reasons of health.

92. Ibid., dated 4-12-1952.
93. Ibid., dated 5-12-1952.
On 13 July 1953, the District Council met to elect the C.E.M. There were two candidates, B.M. Roy who was defeated by Rynjah in the previous election and Hobell Rynjah. The latter polled 17 votes against none by the former. B.M. Roy did not get the votes of his proposer and seconder even. The new C.E.M. retained Bnowell Poshma from the former executive and appointed J.E. Tariang in place of Rostanwell war.

Hobell Rynjah was hardly ten months in office when a motion of no confidence was moved against his government by one Bormanik Siem. The motion was admitted as there were seven members to support it.

When the motion of no confidence was taken up for discussion, Bormanik Siem charged the government for suspending Jormanik Siem without sufficient reason, for appointing as many as 23 electors to the Myllum Siemship which was not proper and so on. The motion was carried out by 11 votes to 10.

Having dislodged Hobell Rynjah from office, the District Council met on 27 February to elect a new C.E.M., B.M. Roy was a candidate for a third time. He was opposed by R.N. Nongrem. B.M. Roy won by polling 12 votes. He chose H. Cotton and H. Haden as his colleagues in the Executive Committee.

For two years and three months, B.M. Roy carried on his administration without much opposition. But H. Rynjah, the C.E.M. who preceded B.M. Roy and who was unceremoniously dislodged from office was waiting for an opportunity to take revenge on B.M. Roy. On 21 May 1955, he...
succeeded in lodging a motion of no confidence against B.M. Roy. He charged the latter and his colleagues in the Executive Committee for not cooperating with the State Government, for not utilizing the loans given at low rates of interest for purposes of house construction, for not accepting a sum of Rupees one lakh given by the government for rehabilitation work in the border areas, for not taking over primary education and so on.

Some of these charges were no doubt true and valid. But the object of H. Rynjah in listing them was not so much to prove them as to dislodge the B.M. Roy's government. The motion of no confidence was carried out. 97

On 25 May 1956 the District Council met to elect the C.E.M., for a fourth time in less than four years. B.M. Roy, the deposed C.E.M. was again a candidate. Joysing Rynjah who resigned from the office of the C.E.M. in 1952 was another candidate. J. Rynjah polled 15 votes while B.M. Roy drew a blank. Even his proposer and seconder deserted him. 98 J. Rynjah continued in office till the next general elections to the District Council.

The second District Council met on 7 January 1956 and elected B.M. Pugh as the C.E.M. B.M. Pugh was the first C.E.M. to be elected unanimously. However, after two years in office, he was compelled to resign. One of his colleagues in the Executive Committee, T. Cajee, was elected the C.E.M. in 1960. Cajee took E. Barah and Rokendro as his cabinet colleagues. After the death of Cajee, E. Barah and H. Hagen erra-

97. Ibid., dated 23-5-1956.
98. Ibid., dated 25-5-1956.
red into a contest for the office of the C.E.M. They polled an equal number of votes. E. Bareh was elected by the casting vote of the Chairman of the District Council given in his favour. In 1964 when a separate District Council was constituted for the Jowai sub-division, E. Bareh resigned from the office of the C.E.M. and took over as the C.E.M. of the Jowai District Council. In the vacancy caused by the resignation of Bareh as C.E.M., Wilson Reade was elected to the office. Reade retained the members of the Executive Committee appointed by his predecessor. Reade was succeeded by Justman Swer. Swer was the only C.E.M. who remained in office continuously for five years. We had Humphrey Nongrum and D.D. Pugh as his Cabinet colleagues. Later when D.D. Pugh resigned, S. Selwing was taken as an Executive Member.

In the general elections held in 1972, the APHLC failed to get an absolute majority. The Hill Peoples' Democratic Party formed the government. L. Gilbert Shullai was elected the C.E.M. Shullai took Miss Luisana Brosila Lamin and Syrtok Sing Nongrum as his Cabinet colleagues. Miss Luisana B. Lamin had the distinction of being the first lady to be appointed as an Executive Member in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. She was also the first lady Executive Member ever appointed by any District Council in North East India.