

**SELECTIONS FROM THE RECORDS OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, FOREIGN
DEPARTMENT. ANNUAL ADMINISTRATION
REPORT OF THE
MUNNIPORE POLITICAL AGENCY, FOR THE
YEAR ENDING 30TH JUNE, 1873. NO. CIX,
CXVIII, CXXVI, CXXXIV, CLIII, CLXVIII**

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Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department. Annual administration report of the Munnipore political agency, for the Year ending 30th June, 1873. No. CIX, CXVIII, CXXVI, CXXXIV, CLIII, CLXVIII by J. Johnstone

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J. JOHNSTONE

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FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

N^o. CIX.

ANNUAL

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

OF THE

MUNNIPOOR AGENCY,

For the year ending 30th June

1873.

Published by Authority.

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1874.

No. 117, dated Munnipoor, 17th October 1873.

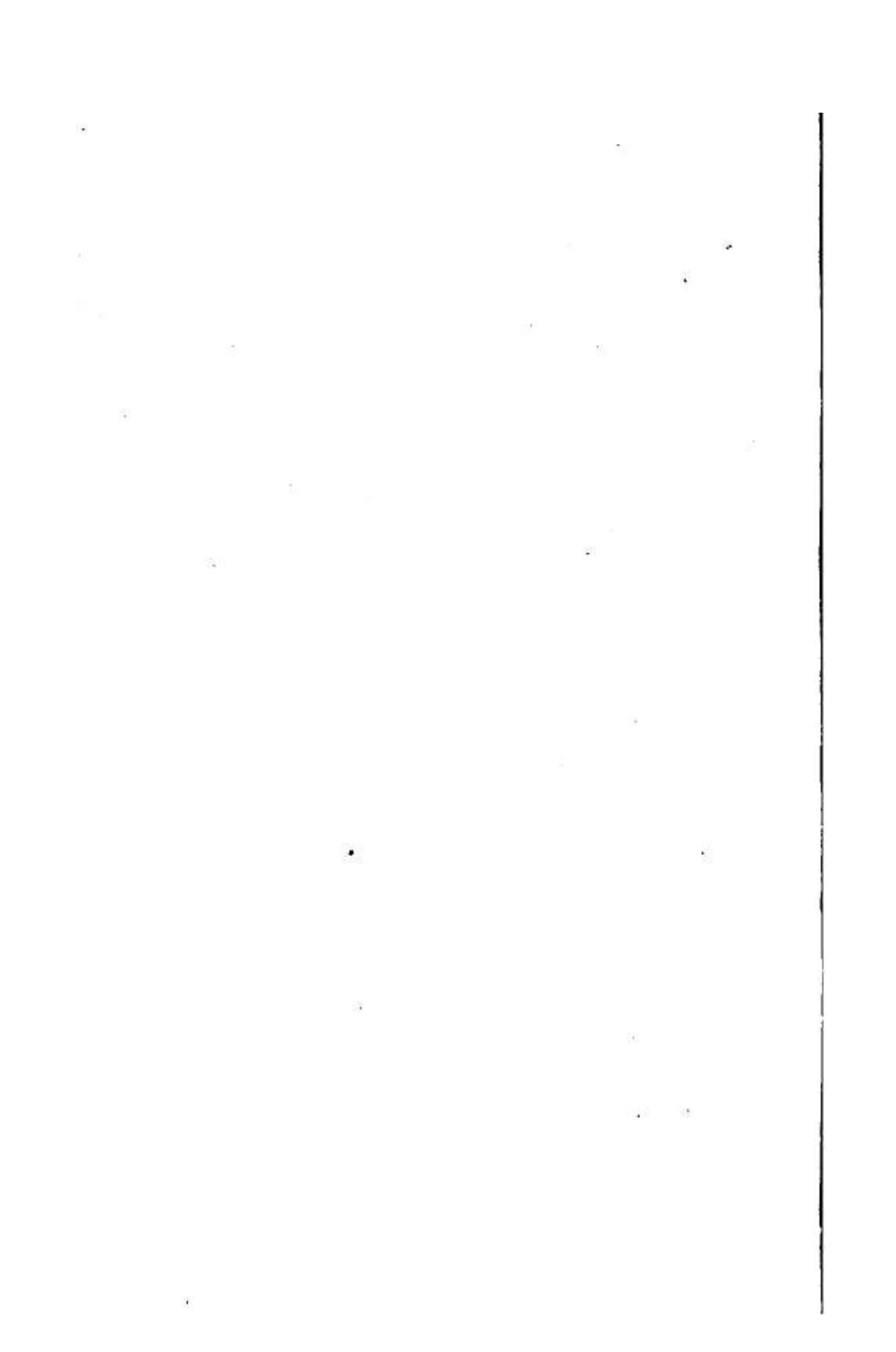
From—Political Agent, Munnipoor,

To—Secretary to the Govt. of India, Foreign Dept.

I HAVE the honor to submit the Annual Administration Report from this Agency for the year ending 30th June 1873.

2. As an explanation of its brevity I may state that I was absent on furlough in Europe during the whole of the year under consideration. I have therefore had to fall back for the most part upon letters and other correspondence for such information as I am able to convey.

3. The submission of the Report has been delayed as I felt constrained to ask Government before commencing it whether such a report would be necessary under the circumstances, for last year. Government decided however that it should be submitted as usual, and I now do so.



ANNUAL
ADMINISTRATION REPORT
OF THE
MUNNIPOOR AGENCY,
For the year ending 30th June
1873.

A generally descriptive and historical account of the State of Munnipoor having been given in my Report for the year 1868-69, it will be unnecessary to introduce any further descriptive detail here. I therefore omit any mention of this subject in this Report.

2. *Condition of roads, &c.*—As formerly reported, by far the most important road in connection with the State of Munnipoor is that lying in the hilly tract which separates the valley of Cachar from that of Munnipoor. As I had an opportunity of examining this portion of the road system of this State during the month of June last I am able to make some observations on its present condition.

In passing along it was very evident that nothing in the way of heavy repairs had been effected for many years, in fact since the road had been taken over by the Raja at his own request in 1865. Various excuses have from time to time been made by the Munnipooree authorities to account for this neglect, and it has been evident to me for years that nothing but a heavy pressure brought to bear upon the Raja will be of service in inducing him to undertake those repairs, the execution of which he voluntarily undertook. Some three years or more ago I applied for and received on account of road repairs a supply of tools and blasting powder; none of the powder has been used in levelling the road up to the present time.

By Treaty the Raja is bound to keep the road in sufficient repair to admit of laden bullocks being driven along it, its present condition does not fulfil this, and no laden animal could, I am certain, pass along it with safety.

As it happens, however, animals as bullocks or ponies are not used for carriage and never have been so far as I can ascertain, and bad as the road is it is quite passable for coolies and likely to remain so for some years even with the trifling repairs which the Munnipoorees annually execute on it.

I found then, in June last, the road comparatively free from jungle and fallen trees, and quite passable for foot passengers throughout its whole length. The bridges of cane which span the larger rivers, three in number, I found in better condition than I had ever before observed, and in spite of the forebodings of the officials with regard to the supply of cane for these bridges, there seems to be yet a plentiful stock. Three years ago there was some talk amongst them of procuring chains to pass over the river and form the mainstays of the swinging bridges, but the project collapsed, and cane is still used as formerly.

3. *Cold-weather repairs.*—Although not at all sanguine of success from my experience of former disappointments, I intend making every endeavour to rouse the authorities to take some action likely to be effective this cold weather. The very bad places requiring blasting and levelling are really few in number, and were the authorities at all willing to exert themselves the difficulties would be easily got over.

4. *Roads in the Munnipoor valley.* The roads in the valley have suffered from neglect in like manner to that in the hills. That portion in continuation of the hill road leading to the capital, and over which the largest portion of the traffic passes, is yearly getting into worse condition. The brick bridges which were in fair condition five years ago are now in a very dilapidated state, and several of them have been swept away: no attempt for the above period has been made at repairing them, and the half of the road nearest the hills has never been bridged (with brick) at all, although this was originally intended.

There are no other roads of any importance except one leading north-east to the salt wells; it is also in an unfinished state, and likely, I am afraid, to remain so.

5. *Health of the Munnipoor Valley.*—The usual healthy condition of the valley, which, except in rare seasons and on the occurrence of epidemics such as cholera, holds a high standard, was put an end to by the appearance of cholera in April 1872 of a more severe form as evidenced by the mortality than is usual, cholera having been observed by me hitherto to be decidedly a milder disease in Munnipoor than say in Bengal Proper.

As has been almost invariably observed the disease was introduced from British territory, the village of Luckipore, 14 miles from the frontier, being much infected. An attempt was made to close the road on hearing of the prevalence of the complaint, but it must have been too late as the epidemic broke out in the valley at once.

It is curious to note that none of the hill villages were affected, and this leads me to infer that the infection was brought by a single traveller or group of Bengali traders, who have no communication as a rule with the villagers on the way and camp on the road generally in some spot convenient to water. I have before observed the same phenomena, pointing to the introduction probably in the clothes of the cholera poison by traders from the British provinces.

The Native Doctor attached to the Agency informs me that the mortality was very great, probably he thinks some 400 people died; he cannot estimate the rate of mortality amongst those attacked, but knows

it was very high. The Raja was attacked but recovered; one of his Ranecs, however, who was seized with the disease, died.

The epidemic slowly subsided and finally disappeared during the month of July.

6. *Vaccination.*—Very little has been done indeed in the way of vaccination during the year under survey. The absence of the Native Doctor during the cold season with the Political Agent and survey party accounts for the small number operated on: in all 30 Munnipoorees were vaccinated, of whom only 16 were successful, and no hill-men.

During the ensuing cold weather I hope to have a larger measure of success, especially among the hill population who occasionally suffer cruelly from epidemics of small-pox, but in spite of this are apathetic in a remarkable degree about protection from the disease.

No epidemics of any kind have occurred amongst the hill population during the year, and they have been generally very healthy.

7. *Temperature and rainfall during the year.*—I append two Tables showing the minimum and maximum temperature during the year, and the rainfall, which is above the average:—

Months.		Minimum.		Maximum.
July	1872	72·9		82·2
August	"	73·19		83·13
September	"	71·29		83·8
October	"	68		80·7
November	"	62·17		77·4
December	"	45·2		74·4
January	1873	39·17		66·6
February	"	46·21		79·8
March	"	52·2		77·1
April	"	60·15		82·1
May	"	66·22		86·25
June	"	72·19		86·12

Rainfall.

July	1872	8·98	January	1873	0·50
August	"	5·38	February	"	0·56
September	"	5·12	March	"	3·0
October	"	5·14	April	"	3·76
November	"	None.	May	"	2·20
December	"	0·46	June	"	8·56
Total					51·42

8. *Earthquakes.*—Slight shocks of earthquake were felt on one or two occasions, but they were so unimportant as not to be noted. Their direction were from west to east, it is said, but this information can hardly be depended on.

No floods or droughts have visited the valley during the year.

9. *Cattle Epidemics.*—There have been no epidemics of disease amongst cattle in the valley since 1870-71 during which period a murrain swept away about two-thirds of the horned cattle and ponies; during the above period cultivation had to be carried on to a great extent by hand labour. Matters are now improving, but some years at the best must elapse before affairs assume their normal condition. Ponies fit for present use at present are so scarce that prices have doubled within the last two years. Two or three years hence will probably see prices again nearly at their former level, for rates once risen seldom under the most favourable circumstances resume their former standard.

10. *State of trade during the year.*—There is very little to be said on this head as trade varies but little from year to year, the supply of articles either for import or export remaining pretty stationary. The chief articles exported from the Munnipoor State are in live stock, elephants, ponies, and buffaloes. An excellent and unusual catch of elephants was made in October 1872, in the valley of the Limetak river, immediately at the base of the first range of hills to the west of the valley; in former times it was not unusual to catch a few elephants to the north-west of the valley, but of late years their appearance at all near the valley and in any numbers have been rare. In all 21 elephants were captured at the above place and most of them sold in Cachar.

For reasons already given the trade in ponies has been limited and will remain so for probably another year or two. On account of the cattle epidemic already alluded to there has been no exportation of buffaloes or other cattle whatever during the year. Rubber and elephant tusks, tea seed, wax, silk, and various kinds of coarse cloths are exported. I have not been able to ascertain the value of the trade between Munnipoor and Bengal, or *vice versa*, for 1872-73, the Munnipooree authorities being averse to giving particulars.

11. *Imports to Munnipoor.*—The following is a list of the principal articles of import as furnished by the authorities:—Long cloths, American cloths, muslins, chintz, serges, woollen cloths, and flannel, broken brass pots (for re-manufacture into the small coin called "sel," &c.), cocoa-nuts, betel and pán, dried-fish, looking-glasses, soap, sandal wood, cutlery, &c. The importation of fire-arms, gunpowder, or the materials for its manufacture are forbidden by the State.

12. *Duties, &c., levied.*—There is no charge reported on former years in the amount of duties levied on imports or exports. As in the case of the gross proceeds of trade for the year the nature of the duties levied, although pretty generally known as to the more valuable articles, is not complete, information being withheld.

13. *Monopolies and trade restrictions.*—From time to time notice has been taken by the Political Agent for the time being to the increasing tendency of the Raja to monopolize trade both import and export, either by retaining it in his own hands, or by farming out the exclusive right to deal in sundry articles to officials. The articles of export ostensibly monopolized are India rubber, tea-seed, and ivory amongst exports, and betel-nut amongst imports. I have drawn the attention of the Maharaja and the authorities to Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty