

camps there. As a general rule, therefore, I would not prohibit the acquisition by Chiefs of houses for residential purposes, at certain selected centres, but I would require that the transaction should, in each case, be subject to the sanction of the Government which had charge of the political relations with the Chief in question.

The case of Simla is peculiar, and it is doubtful whether here some closer restrictions would not be needed. The accommodation is, and from the nature of the site always must be, very limited; whilst the presence here for the greater part of the year of the Government of India is an attraction to Chiefs from all parts of the country. I do not think it would be right or politic to discourage Chiefs from free intercourse with the Government of India; but, on the other hand, it is unfair to the officials who are forced to live here to let all the best houses be bought up by owners who make no use of them for more than two or three weeks in the year. This seems to me to be a question for municipal regulation, and it is assuming so much importance that I think it would be well worth while to have it considered and reported upon by a special committee.

Lastly, as to the particular case referred by the Punjab Government, I think their order is quite right, on the assumption that the property was to remain vested in the Kashmir Durbar. But, if the Maharaja merely desired to perform a charitable and generous act by providing rest-houses for travellers, and was prepared to make them over when erected to the local committee, then I think his offer might have been accepted.

(Sd.) C. G.

15-8-82.

I AGREE very much with Mr. Grant. The question of Simla should be raised separately and will probably have to be considered in Council.

(Sd.) R.

17-8-82.

SECRETARY.

I PUT up two letters from Mr. Sinkinson about the sale of his house on Jacko to the Dholepore Chief, and the file about the possession of houses in Simla by Native Chiefs generally.

As to Mr. Sinkinson's house, it may be at once admitted that there is no sort of objection to the sale on the score of price. I stayed with General Mac Gregor in the house immediately after it was built, and he told me, if I am not mistaken, that, exclusive of money spent in various minor ways, *e.g.*, improving roads, buildings, a lawn tennis ground, &c., he had paid over Rs. 13,000 to the contractor whom he dealt with. The house is new, and well worth Rs. 15,000 as it stands now.

This, however, is not the whole question. The propriety of permitting the sale depends upon the further question whether the particular case is to be governed by any general ruling which may be arrived at regarding the purchase of houses in Simla by Native Chiefs. I see no reason why it should not. Doubtless there will be some inconvenience to Mr. Sinkinson if he is not allowed to sell, but no more to him than to others hereafter; and if anything is to be done, the sooner we begin the better.

The general objections to the purchase of houses by Native Chiefs in Simla have been already stated. The possession of house property in British territory puts them in a false position, and it gives openings for unsatisfactory dealings with Government officers, while

as regards Simla particularly it causes much inconvenience to officials who are forced to come up here on duty. This inconvenience, not altogether unworthy of consideration even now, will infallibly increase as time goes on; and the statement below, which, of course, has no pretensions to strict accuracy, will serve to show where the shoe pinches and is likely to pinch. It will be seen that already the Chiefs possess about 30 houses, while the total number of houses ordinarily available for hire is about 350. But, further, of these 30 houses no less than 13 or 14 according to my calculation are among the larger class of houses whose rental is, or would be, over Rs. 1,500 per season; and the total number of such houses available for hire in Simla is under 90. The houses which Native Chiefs will buy in the future will probably be almost always from this small class, and I may remark that it is almost impossible for any married officer to get a house fit to live in for a smaller sum than Rs. 1,500 per season.* Building sites are limited, moreover, so that the amount of accommodation of a decent description available for Government officers is already far from large, and is likely to become sensibly less. Even if Native Chiefs ordinarily let their houses, as some do, the evil would not be decreased—rather the contrary in some respects. I have heard very unpleasant remarks made, for instance, about the occupation at its present rent of one large house now let to a Government officer, though this is an old standing arrangement. And I remember a case in which a Government Secretary was so much exercised at the smallness of the rent asked for his house that he insisted on raising it by Rs. 1,000. All this kind of thing is very disagreeable, and affords an opening for much that is more than disagreeable. It is impossible without going very much more accurately and deeply into the matter than we can do in this office to point to any trustworthy facts or statistics; but it seems clear that, speaking roughly, the number of decent houses in Simla not occupied by shops, offices, &c., is about a hundred, and that Native Chiefs hold about one-eighth of that number; further, that that number cannot in the nature of things very largely increase, while the demands upon it, and the proportion of it held by Native Chiefs, is likely to increase year by year. This seems to me to be a state of affairs sufficiently serious to call for careful investigation by a Committee, and, if necessary, for the enforcement of a rule against purchases by Native Chiefs or by persons acting for them. There is no necessity for Chiefs to come to Simla. They can just as easily in most cases come to Calcutta, where houses can be hired at all times.

The question presents many difficulties, no doubt; for example, the difficulty that non-resident and non-letting proprietors may be our own subjects, like the Maharaja of Durbhunga; but still I think some good may be done by looking into the whole question.

I would let Mr. Sinkinson's case be governed by the general rule, as I said before; and in connection with this I take occasion to point out another objection to the present arrangement which had not occurred to me. Mr. Sinkinson says some people object to taking his house on account of its proximity to the Dholepore house. I quite agree that this objection is in the particular case ill founded; but a similar objection is by no means ill founded in all cases. I once lived in a house in Calcutta the next house to which was let to a Chief, and during his stay the place was rendered almost intolerable by noise and other unpleasant incidents of the position. The same might easily be the case here unless the Chiefs are limited with regard to the retinues they bring up. I would suggest that something might be done in this direction, whatever is done on the general question: So long as no restric-

* For instance, I have a house which is very much out of the way, close to the municipal boundary, and is in consequence supposed to be exceedingly cheap, few people caring to live so far out. I pay Government Rs. 1,540 for it including taxes, *i.e.*, 1,400 net. The accommodation consists of a drawing room and dining room, not over large, and two rooms of the same size which are habitable. There is one other room which is pitch dark and otherwise almost unfit for use, and two or three small slip rooms which can be used as pantries or dressing rooms. It would be difficult to live in less, and this house if in a better position would cost considerably more than it does.

tion is imposed, the Chiefs must for their own "izzat" bring up large numbers of followers, and ride about with a big sowarree. I have seen, for instance, the house in which Major Baring is now living, or rather its compound, so filled with lines of horses and tents that there was hardly a foot of ground to be seen. Such crowding is a great nuisance, and might be dangerous to the public health, and it is quite unnecessary. If it were understood that all Chiefs who came to Simla were expected to come with a very small following, there would be no heart-burning and emulation in this way; and considering that it has always been the custom for the Viceroy to go about in Simla almost unattended, we could fairly ask the Chiefs to do the same.

This, however, is a separate question, which can be dealt with afterwards.

(Sd.) H. M. D.

4-10-82.

HIS EXCELLENCY.

ALTHOUGH it may be hard on Mr. Sinkinson, I think his case should be governed by general rule, which may be determined upon. As regards the Rana of Dholepur, there can be no hardship to him in submitting to this decision, for he has a good house already, and can have no real need of another.

The question is one which, as I before suggested, might suitably be referred to a committee.

(Sd.) C. G.

6-10-82.

I SHOULD like to have the opinion of my hon'ble colleagues upon the general question raised in these Notes. Circulate.

(Sd.) R.

10-10-82.

I WOULD not appoint any Committee or move in the matter at all. I do not see how we can properly prevent Native Chiefs from acquiring house property in Simla if they wish to do so. Officers of Government should not, of course, be allowed to purchase or rent from a Native Chief without the permission of Government. I believe that this is already understood. The transaction in Mr. Sinkinson's case appears to be a very legitimate one, and I do not think that the Government should offer any objection to it.

As to the pressure for houses, that I believe to be caused, not by the purchases effected by Rajas, but by the Punjab Government coming to Simla instead of going, as was formerly the case, to Murree.

(Sd.) E. B.

11-10-82.

THERE can be no question about the serious inconvenience pointed out by the Foreign Department, but I see no way of evading it that is not open to most serious objection. I should not object to the appointment of a committee if anything like a feasible scheme can be submitted for their consideration, but I do not consider the mere forbidding or purchase by Native Chiefs on grounds of the convenience of officials is feasible.

(Sd.) S. C. B.

11-10-82.

I AM disposed to agree with Mr. Grant.

In places like Agra or Calcutta I see no objection to Chiefs having a house of their own for use during their visits.