

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
(1977-78)**

(SIXTH LOK SABHA)

TWENTY-FIRST REPORT

**RESETTLEMENT OF EX-SERVICEMEN
NEAR SEIJOSA**

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

[Paragraphs 31 of the Report of the Comptroller
& Auditor General of India for the year 1974-75, Union
Government (Civil)]

Presented in Lok Sabha on 22 DEC 1977

Laid in Rajya Sabha on

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PART II*

Minutes of sittings of the Committee held on 16-7-1976 (AN) and 16-11-77(AN)

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(1977-78)

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Shri Bipin Behari—*Senior Financial Committee Officer.*

*Ceased to be a Member on his appointment as Minister of State *w.e.f.* 14-8-1977.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, as authorised by the Committee, do present on their behalf this Twenty-First Report of the Public Accounts Committee (Sixth Lok Sabha) on paragraph 31 relating to 'Resettlement of Ex-servicemen near Seijosa' included in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1974-75, Union Government (Civil).

2. The Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1974-75, Union Government (Civil) was laid on the Table of the House on 26 March, 1976. The Public Accounts Committee (1976-77) examined this paragraph at their sitting held on 16 July, 1976 (AN) but could not finalise this Report on account of dissolution of the Lok Sabha on 18 January, 1977. The Public Accounts Committee (1977-78) considered and finalised this Report at their sitting held on 16 November, 1977 (AN) based on evidence taken and the further written information furnished by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Minutes of the sittings form Part II* of the Report.

3. For facility of reference the conclusions/recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report. For the sake of convenience, the recommendations/observations of the Committee have also been reproduced in a consolidated form in Appendix.

4. The Committee place on record their appreciation of the commendable work done by the Public Accounts Committee (1976-77) in taking evidence and obtaining information for the Report.

5. The Committee also place on record their appreciation of the assistance rendered to them in the examination of this Audit Paragraph by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India.

6. The Committee would also like to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of Home Affairs etc. for the cooperation extended by them in giving information to the Committee.

NEW DELHI;
November 19, 1977

C. M. STEPHEN,
Chairman,

Kartika 28, 1899 (S)

Public Accounts Committee.

*Not printed (One cyclostyled copy laid on the Table of the House and five copies placed in the Parliament Library).

REPORT

RESETTLEMENT OF EX-SERVICEMEN NEAR SEIJOSA

Audit Paragraph

1.1. In July 1968 the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency Administration informed Government of India that, 2000 acres of land would be available for resettlement of ex-servicemen near Seijosa in Kameng district of North East Frontier Agency (presently Arunachal Pradesh). Seijosa is a hilly place near the Himalayas and is connected to Tezpur, a district town of Assam, by a 74 kilometres long road suitable for heavy traffic, half of the road is metalled and the rest is gravelled. The place is also connected by a motorable road with North Rangapara Railway station of the North East Frontier Railway. The altitude of the place is about 500 feet to 1,500 feet above sea level. The average rainfall of the area is 75 to 90 inches.

1.2. The place was inspected in August 1967 by a team of officers comprising an officer of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and an officer of the Directorate of Resettlement, Ministry of Defence, who was the Liaison Officer of that Ministry attached to the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency Administration. These officers found wild elephants, wild buffaloes and wild bears in the area. The Arunachal Pradesh Government stated (November 1975) that "so far no complaint except occasional appearance of wild elephants has been received from the settlers. Presence of wild elephants is a common problem all over the foothills of the North Eastern India including Arunachal Pradesh".

1.3. At the time the place was inspected by the team of officers mentioned above the nearest village was about 6 kilometres away from the place while other villages were not less than 25 kilometres away. The nearest market was also about 25 kilometres away. According to the report submitted (September 1967) after the visit mentioned above, 3,500 acres of unhabited and unreclaimed land, rich in agricultural potential, were available in the place for resettlement of ex-servicemen. The report also stated that the area had rich potentials for growing high yielding paddy, maize, millets, pulses, potatoes, all types of vegetables, and cash crops like mustard, chillies and ginger. The team of officers recommended the place for resettlement of ex-servicemen; this was subject to detailed soil survey being undertaken for finding out the soil conditions, land being re-

claimed, communications being improved and marketing facilities being developed for the agricultural produces of the resettled families.

1.4. In January, 1969 Government of India sanctioned resettlement of 75 families in that place at a cost of Rs. 24.23 lakhs. In September, 1970 resettlement of 115 families more at a cost of Rs. 28.83 lakhs was sanctioned.

1.5. The ex-servicemen were selected for resettlement near Seijosa by the Directorate of Resettlement, Ministry of Defence, through selection boards in different States. Selection board in a district comprised of the Deputy Commissioner, the District Agricultural Officer, the Secretary of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's board of that district and the officers of the Directorate General, Resettlement, Ministry of Defence who was Liaison Officer attached to the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency Administration and represented both the Ministry of Defence and that Administration. Most of the settlers were from Punjab and Haryana.

1.6. The area of resettlement of the ex-servicemen was divided in three sectors, viz., Sector 'A', Jolly sector and Dibru sector. Sector 'A' is nearest to upper Seijosa and is about 4 to 5 kilometres from that place. Dibru and Jolly sectors are about 10 to 16 kilometres from upper Seijosa. River Dibru flows through the area. On one side of the river is sector 'A' and on the other side Jolly and Dibru sectors. The administrative centre is at upper Seijosa where a post office existed before the settlers started arriving. A health unit was set at upper Seijosa in June, 1969. A school was also started in November, 1969. A market started functioning at upper Seijosa in 1971.

1.7. The first batch of 70 ex-servicemen along with their families arrived at the place in March, 1969 and were settled in sector 'A'. Eighty-six more families were inducted in April, 1970 and May, 1970 and one family in July, 1973; they were settled in Jolly and Dibru sector. The expenditure incurred for these families upto March, 1974 was as follows:—

<i>Item</i>	<i>(In lakhs of Rs.)</i>
Compensation for land	0.10
Cost of reclamation and grants for development of land	5.38
Water supply	0.29
Construction and maintenance of roads and paths	5.99
Construction of transit camp	0.62
Construction and maintenance of houses	3.91
Grants (in cash and kind) for purchase of live-stock, tools, and implements, seeds and sellings and household equipment	4.74
Cash grants for purchase of rations	3.29
Cost of transportation of ex-servicemen and their families	0.36

24.68

1.8. Of the 70 families which arrived in March, 1969 and were to be settled in sector 'A', 16 families deserted in 1968-69, 6 families in 1969-70, 6 families in 1971-72, 7 families in 1972-73 and 4 families in 1973-74. Only 31 families are still in that sector. Out of the 87 families which came later and were to be settled in Jolly and Dibru sectors, 25 families deserted in 1970-71, 24 families in 1971-72 and 33 families in 1972-73. All the families in Jolly sector left by May, 1972. Only 5 families are left in Dibru sector. Thus, out of the 157 families which are inducted in the area for resettlement, 121 families deserted by March, 1974 and only 36 families have been continuing there. The settlers were initially accommodated in transit camps; 23 families deserted from the transit camps even before houses and land were allotted them.

1.9. Houses were constructed by the local Administration before the ex-servicemen arrived. These are stated to be "improved basha type houses" made of wooden posts, bamboo walling and corrugated galvanised iron sheets or thatched roofing each costing about Rs. 2,500. Each family, irrespective of the number of family members, was entitled to cash grant of Rs. 150 per month for the first 18 months and Rs. 75 per month for 6 months thereafter for purchase of rations.

1.10. In all, 2, 238 acres of land were reclaimed. As mentioned earlier, of the 157 families inducted into the area for resettlement, 23 families left before land was allotted to them. Each of the remaining 134 families was given on an average 1 acre of home stead land and 10 acres of land for agricultural purposes. Total area of reclaimed land allotted was 1,522 acres. Reclaimed land given for agricultural purposes needed further development (e.g., construction of terraces, levelling of land inside the terraces etc.), which was to be done by the settlers. Cash grant was sanctioned to each family. (Rs. 400 per acre) for development of land. Grants (in cash and kind) were also sanctioned to each family for purchase of live-stock (Rs. 2,550), tools and implements (Rs. 437), seeds, seedlings (Rs. 270) and household equipment (Rs. 1,013), instead of supplying these to them, although there was no market nearby where these could be purchased. The Arunachal Pradesh Government stated (November, 1975) that "to facilitate the easy procurement of various items and also in consideration of the practical difficulties involved in the selection of required articles by the settlers, the erstwhile NEFA administration constituted a Purchase Board comprising of responsible district officers and the representatives of the settlers. They were to inspect few firms of repute at the nearest town of Tejpur and nearby important marketing centres and to purchase the items."

1.11. As mentioned earlier, the team of officers which had visited the area in August, 1967 had pointed out the need for detailed soil survey. While agreeing in May, 1968 to resettlement of ex-servicemen in the

area, the Directorate of Resettlement of the Ministry of Defence had requested the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to get the necessary soil tests done. The then Arunachal Pradesh Administration stated (January, 1975) that a detailed soil survey was organised by the technical authorities of the Administration with the assistance of the Jorhat Soil Testing Laboratory of the Government of Assam, before the area was selected for resettlement of ex-servicemen.

1.12. In October, 1970 and November, 1970, 82 settlers were stated to have represented to the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency Administration that the plots allotted to them for cultivation were rocky, sandy and not fit for permanent cultivation. The Administration constituted (December, 1970) a board of officers to look into the complaints. The board found that the plots allotted to 21 families measuring 246 acres were unsuitable for cultivation and recommended allotment of other plots to them. The Arunachal Pradesh Government stated (November, 1975) that "before making any progress in this respect, the settlers started desertion from the site without any notice or intimation whatsoever. It was experienced that majority of the settlers settled in Jolly sector did not reconcile to type of land available in Foot Hill areas of the then NEFA but they were inclined to bring a comparison with the land of Seijosa area to that of Punjab".

1.13. In May, 1971, the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency Administration reported to Government of India that almost all the settlers complained against the quality of land offered to them which, according to that Administration, was best available by the standard of North East Frontier Agency. The Administration further stated that the "settlers in general were not happy with the land generally available in NEFA which is not always flat and free from boulders, small nullahas, criss-crossing here and there and slopes. A detailed soil survey (240 hectares) of area get done by the Ministry of Agriculture in November, 1973 disclosed that only about 35.80 per cent of the land was suitable for cultivation. Some of the other problems in resettling the ex-servicemen were identified during this survey as follows:—

- (i) Severe risk of life and crop caused by wild animals especially wild elephants;
- (ii) inaccessibility of the area due to torrential state of rivers during rains; and
- (iii) high cost of development of the settlement.

The then Arunachal Pradesh Administration stated (January, 1975) that a further soil survey was likely to be done by a soil survey team of the Ministry of Agriculture.

1.14. Upto march, 1974, the settlers had developed only 311.25 acres of land for agriculture as shown below:

	Acres
1969-70	161.00
1970-71	55.50
1971-72	68.75
1972-73	25.00
1973-74	1.00

	311.25

1.15. The Arunachal Pradesh Government intimated in November, 1975 that in all about 378 acres of land had been developed. The growth of weeds in the area is very quick. Land which had been reclaimed but not developed (about 1,860 acres) for cultivation may, therefore, require further reclamation. The Arunachal Pradesh Government stated (November, 1975) that majority of the selected settlers had either left from the transit barrack itself or from the settlement site within a few months of their arrival without making any serious effort for settling far from being ardent cultivators."

1.16. The team of officers which had visited the area in August, 1967 had recommended that irrigation facilities should be provided for the agricultural land. Out of 500 acres of land in sector 'A' irrigation facilities were provided to 105 acres—60 acres in September, 1972 and 45 acres in March, 1973. No irrigation facilities were provided in the Jolly and Dibru sectors. The then Arunachal Pradesh Administration stated (January, 1975) that the delay in providing irrigation facilities was due to inadequate provision of funds for irrigation. The Arunachal Pradesh Government stated subsequently (November, 1975) that "the question of providing irrigational facilities to agricultural land comes only after the land is reclaimed and properly developed. The cropping pattern that will be practised by the cultivators also play an important part in deciding appropriate arrangement for irrigational facilities. In the case of certain blocks of Seijosa, the selected settlers who ultimately deserted within few months of their arrival at the site, did not make any serious attempt to properly reclaim and develop their land thus make it suitable for agricultural practices.

The question of providing irrigational facilities to the land allotted to the settlers of Jolly and Dibru areas, who deserted, did not therefore crop up." That Government further stated (November, 1975) that a scheme for providing irrigation was being prepared.

1.17. Water supply was arranged in sector 'A' in 1968-69. In Dibru sector supply of water was arranged in June, 1973. No arrangement for supply of water was made for Jolly sector till May, 1972, by when all the settlers in this sector had deserted. The then Arunachal Pradesh Administration stated (January, 1975) that the delay in arranging water supply was due to inadequate provision of funds and delay in sanction of water supply scheme. The Arunachal Pradesh Government stated in November, 1975 that the "case could not be progressed further as the selected settlers for whom arrangements of drinking water supply was to be made had deserted within a few months of their arrival at site", and added that a scheme for supply of water was being prepared.

1.18. Construction of roads connecting Jolly and Dibru sectors with upper Seijosa was started in January, 1969 and December, 1970 respectively. A portion of the road connecting Jolly sector with upper Seijosa was completed in January, 1973 except cause-ways; by then all the settlers had deserted that sector. Construction of road connecting Dibru sector with upper Seijosa was completed to the extent of 82 per cent by February, 1974; the road is yet to be completed (January, 1975). The then Arunachal Pradesh Administration stated (January, 1975) that as settlers of some plots had in the meantime deserted, no further action in the matter was progressed for communication facilities for such plots.

1.19. The residents of Dibru and Jolly sectors were to come to upper Seijosa for attending the health unit, school, post office and the market. There being no bridge over Dibru river, the residents of Dibru and Jolly sectors had to cross the river on elephant back; the elephants were provided by the Administration. In September, 1969 the local Administration had proposed construction of a bridge over Dibru river; this was not agreed to by Government of India.

1.20. In February, 1971 construction of four causeways and pipe culverts was approved at a cost of Rs. 2.33 lakhs to make the road between upper Seijosa and sector 'A' negotiable during rainy season. The work was not taken up till December, 1975. As a result, the settlers had to face difficulty during monsoon in reaching upper Seijosa for availing of the various facilities available there.

1.21. Excluding the cost of common benefits such as construction of roads etc., the amount directly spent on the 121 families who had deserted was Rs. 11.52 lakhs as indicated below:

	(In lakhs of Rs.)
Cost of reclamation and grant for development of land	3.17
Construction of houses	2.74
Grant (in cash and kind) for purchase of tools and implement, seeds and seedlings, live-stock and household equipment	3.29
Cash grant for purchase of rations	3.23
Transportation of families	0.09
	11.52

1.22. The Arunachal Pradesh Government stated (November, 1975) that "desertion is not due to existence of wild elephants, unsuitability of land etc., but the settlers as selected for settlement were not right type of settlers and also not accustomed to stay with the geographical and climatic condition prevailing at the Foot Hills areas of North-Eastern India." The Ministry of Home Affairs stated (December, 1975) that it had decided to adopt a new procedure for selection of right type of settlers.

1.23. It was decided by Government of India in May, 1973 that the deserters should be asked to refund Rs. 3,563 each, being the cost of live-stock and house-hold equipment. The Arunachal Pradesh Government stated (November, 1975) that its district authority had taken action to recover the amount from each of the deserters.

No new ex-serviceman has come to the area after July, 1973.

[Paragraph 31 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1974-75, Union Government (Civil)]

GENESIS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME

1.24. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs the objectives of the Scheme of Resettlement of ex-servicemen in NEFA were as follows:

"The scheme for rehabilitation of ex-servicemen in Arunachal Pradesh was initiated by the NEFA Administration in October, 1967 following earlier high level policy decision after the Chinese aggression in 1962. The scheme was initiated on the following considerations:

- (i) The North East Frontier Agency (now Arunachal Pradesh) as a whole is comparatively thinly populated; the overall density of population being about 11 persons per sq. mile.

- (ii) A population vacuum near the border may result in attempts by hostile neighbour to take advantage of the situation.
- (iii) A settled community along the border will be a positive deterrent against the temptation of infiltration from across the border.
- (iv) The actual presence of a settled community along the border would further reduce the scope of any border dispute.
- (v) A progressive community will boost up the morale of the local inhabitants and inspire greater zeal for accelerated economic progress.
- (vi) The settlement of people belonging to mixed community in NEFA may help towards emotional integration of NEFA people with the rest of the country.

During evidence the representative of the Ministry, while dealing with the objectives of the scheme has stated that "one of the purpose of the scheme was to demonstrate and develop agricultural practices which were not followed in those areas. Shifting cultivation, as we have known over a period of time, is something which must give place to settled cultivation."

1.25. Asked to state the consideration which went into this particular scheme, the Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, has stated during evidence as follows:

"A number of considerations went into this particular scheme, the state of affairs as it existed, the position of the border, the low density of the population in the area, the need for security, the need for the development of the area and the need for bringing emotional integration with the rest of the country. All these considerations were before the persons who formulated the scheme... The points which were under consideration of those who formulated the scheme were that the North East Frontier Agency as a whole was a comparatively thinly populated area, the density of population being only 11 persons per sq. mile and it was felt that there was a population vacuum that existed and that the population vacuum would always attract attention and would also give some cause to the infiltrators into the area. It was felt that in this area which was very thinly populated area where there was a chance of infiltration, we must bring in certain progressive persons there, the persons who were aware of the defence requirements, the persons who had worked in the armed forces and the persons who were progressive farmers and who could

do cultivation. There was the jhuming type of cultivation there. The purpose was to develop that area on a certain basis. It was also felt that if we bring in a certain number of persons there, that would bring about an emotional integration with the rest of the country. It was felt that the resources and the potential that existed in the area could be fully developed."

1.26. It was stated during evidence that the question of resettlement of ex-servicemen had been considered by the Committee of Secretaries in 1967, when it was felt that if this particular scheme was to be enforced later on, difficulties might crop up. The matter was re-examined in December, 1967 when the Committee of Secretaries supported this scheme.

1.27. The Committee desired to know whether this scheme was taken up on the initiative of the Arunachal Pradesh Administration or on the initiative of the Central Government. The representative of the Arunachal Pradesh Government has stated during evidence:

"As far as we can see from the records, it was a joint discussion at a high level much earlier with which the head of the Arunachal Administration was associated."

The Home Secretary has added in this connection:

"As far as Arunachal Administration is concerned, right from 1967 in all the meetings which were held the Adviser to the Governor was present. The scheme was prepared by NEFA Administration and it was further vetted and finally approved. It was their scheme and then they discussed it at various levels how it should be implemented. If we go through all the correspondence, it will be seen that the NEFA Administration were fully involved in the scheme hoping that the scheme would be a success."

1.28. Government have stated that this scheme for resettlement of ex-servicemen in Seijosa was patterned mainly on the model scheme approved for settlement of ex-Assam Rifles families in Vijayanagar during the Fourth Plan period. As this scheme was to be based on self-contained and self-sustaining agricultural activities, backed by subsidiary occupations such as Animal Husbandry, Piggery, Poultry, Horticulture and Small Scale Industries, the Committee desired to know the steps taken by Government in this regard to develop these subsidiary operations. In a note furnished to the Committee, the Ministry of Home Affairs have stated:

"The scheme provided for a grant of Rs. 2550 per family for purchase of live stock including a pair of pigs, three cows and one

unit of poultry for every family. This was to enable the settlers to set up subsidiary occupations like piggery, poultry etc. The NEFA Administration sanctioned grants (in cash and kind) to each family in this regard."

Selection of Site.

1.29. The place of resettlement near Seijosa in Kameng District of NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh) was inspected in August 1967 by a team of officers comprising an officer of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and an officer of the Directorate of Resettlement, Ministry of Defence. The report submitted by this team in September 1967 stated that 3500 acres of uninhabited and unreclaimed land rich in agricultural potential was available in the place for resettlement of ex-servicemen. The report also stated that the area had rich potentials for growing high-yielding paddy, maize, pulses, potatoes, all types of vegetables and cash crops like mustard, chillies and ginger. While recommending the place for resettlement to ex-servicemen, the report said that it was subject, *inter alia*, to detailed soil survey being undertaken for finding out the soil conditions.

1.30. The team of officers who inspected the resettlement area near Seijosa in August 1967 had, *inter alia*, recommended in their Preliminary Report:

"It is very difficult to move in the area due to climbers and herbs like Assam lata, *Infortunatum audoratum*, liea and so on. Trace lines have to be cut for any movement. . . . The timber or the undergrowth from this area cannot be disposed of to advantage unless communications are developed.

In the area wild elephants, buffaloes, deer and wild bore are found. The place is heavily infested with leeches. The presence of elephants and wild bore is likely to be a great menace for the field crops unless protective measures are taken.

Land, being slopy and having open mixed forest growth land reclamation operations will have to be carried out before the settlers arrive. If it is done with manned labour it is likely to take a long time and result in a costly affair. Land reclamation is recommended by machinery. Detailed survey of the area will be required to find out the actual land available and to plan for the land development operations. Besides clearance of the jungle roots and stumps of trees will have to be taken out. For making the land fit for cultivation of WRC and to reduce the soil erosion, terraces will have to be constructed and land levelled inside the terraces. 1½ feet high bunds around the fields, with drainable outlets may be

constructed for the paddy cultivation. The growth of obnoxious weeds is very quick and therefore mechanical cultivation will be more advantageous.

For mechanical reclamation of the land, obtaining services of Land Reclamation Rehabilitation Organisation of the Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation may be considered. By employing such full mechanised unit, the communication of the area is also likely to improve and it may be possible to exploit the forest produce to advantage thereby partly compensating the cost of reclamation."

1.31. Regarding the action taken by Government in pursuance of the Team's recommendations, the Ministry of Home Affairs have informed the Committee as under in a note:

"Regarding the observation as made inthe report about existence of wild elephants, buffaloes, deer and wild bore, no complaint, except report of occasional appearance of wild elephants has been received from the settlers. Presence of wild elephants is a common problem all over the foothills region of North Eastern India including Arunachal Pradesh. The local people could solve these problems by themselves and there were no instances of this trouble. However, to give extra protection to the settlers as well as to boost up their morale, the Administration had issued few gun licences to the ex-servicemen settlers to drive away the wild elephants."

1.32. On the basis of this (Preliminary Report), Ministry of Agriculture undertook a soil reconnaissance in the area in August 1968. According to this Report submitted in September 1968 "soils may be tried for cultivation of local agricultural crops with appropriate of soil conservation and soil management practices. Cultivation of maize, jowar and pahari variety of aus paddy as well as potato, wheat, barley may be tried during their growing season."

The report stated that approximately 4100 acres of land was available in the Seijosa area. Taking approximately 35 to 40 per cent of the land as suitable for cultivation the total area of good land available was considered sufficient for the settlement envisaged.

1.33. After the aforesaid soil survey, the comments of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture were invited and these comments were also taken into consideration before a final decision was taken to implement the scheme of resettlement.

1.34. The Committee, however, note that the soil survey report of September 1968 clearly pointed out that "the Seijosa soils are not quite suitable for permanent cultivation and reclamation of the land by removing the existing shrubs on the surface was likely to result in heavy soil loss." The report had also recommended that "detailed survey of the area may be taken up before the lands were allotted."

1.35. In July 1973, another reconnaissance soil survey was conducted by the All India Soil and Land Use Survey Organisation of the Government of India, Calcutta Centre which came to the conclusion that "these soils have very low water holding capacity", that "root penetration is good upto 50 cm. but roots are very few in the sand layer" and therefore "the soils are unsuitable for cultivation."

The following table given in the report indicates the availability of cultivable land in the proposed site for rehabilitation of ex-servicemen as per July 1973 Report:

Total Area	Area suitable for agriculture.	%age of total suitable area.	Area not suitable for agriculture	%age of the unsuitable area.
240 ha.	81.0 ha.	35.8%	150 ha.	64.2%

The report also pointed out:

"Most of the cultivable lands are alluvial and lying along the youthful and torrential streams. Moreover as this site is in the hilly and mountainous region, densely covered with forest this area is heavily infested with wild animals specially wild elephants. This aspect also needs to be considered for rehabilitation of ex-servicemen."

1.36. In August 1975, another detailed soil survey was made of the soil conditions in the resettlement area. It also indicated that the soil in this area had been formed from the alluvium brought by the Dibru river and its tributaries mostly of sandstone origin. The observations made in this Report were as follows:

"General Analysis and Recommendations.

Systematic soil and drop management practices are essential to maintain fertility as over pressure for suitable land for induction of settlers in newly developed area with lower grade soil may bring about fresh unforeseen difficulties. It is evident after careful studies of land capability classification, that

Didarshu and Chakrashu soils are suitable for normal cultivation and even paddy after proper soil conservation measures may be grown. The soils of Tamanshu and Talimshu are suitable for limited cultivation with special soil conservation measures. Galashu soil is not suitable for cultivation.

Out of the 555 ha. of land surveyed, and reported, 375 ha. of land fall under IVes and VIes and are not suitable for normal cultivation and are preferably more useful for natural grass and trees. Vegetation and some orchard crops at places under special soil conservation measures may be tried. Organic matter in the surface soil is high. During reclamation process, if soil conservation measures are not adopted, the soil fertility will be lost.

Irrigation is essential during the drought spell. This can be arranged through diversion of channel water through some artificial drainage channel constructed above the field height.

Menace to Agriculture.

The area under consideration abounds in wild elephants an unremovable menace to crop production. They invade the cropped field in hard and leave nothing for the farmers to glean. Even farmers are scared of these animals. With the advent of more settlers, it may be, the beasts will retreat to some other area but at present it is an unremovable menace causing desertion of the settlers and collapsing of their huts.

The rainfall is high in the area and extends upto October end. Consequently, streams during rainy season, hinder further the already poor communication system."

1.37. It may be mentioned that the first party of settlers were inducted into the area in March 1969 and the second batch arrived in the area in April-May 1970. The Home Secretary was, during evidence, asked whether it would not have been better if a detailed soil survey was made before the area was finally selected for settlement and in any case, before the settlers were inducted into the area for resettlement. He replied:

"As I mentioned this was in 1967 that this survey was carried out. There was the report of the Assistant Commissioner, Land Reclamation and that of the Liaison Officer. Then the matter was considered at the Secretaries Committee in June 1967 where it was mentioned that the present is the time for purposes of carrying out the settlement. It might be difficult later. Then the Secretaries went into it and a reconnaissance survey was carried out during August-September 1968. This

reconnaissance survey was carried out by the Survey Committee and it is they who brought out a report which supported many of the findings which were made earlier by these people. It was on the basis of these two surveys and the regular knowledge of the agriculture officers plus the survey carried out by the Jorhat Station. Putting these together it was felt that the availability of cultivable land varied between 30 to 35 per cent."

1.38. As the conclusions of 1968 Survey was quite different from what the Home Secretary told the Committee and there were doubts about the suitability of the area for settled cultivation even in 1968 which led to further soil survey in 1973, the Committee asked the representative of the Ministry whether in view of these facts he agreed that before the project was launched proper attention was not paid to the suitability of the soil for settled cultivation for which the area was selected. The witness has replied:

"The clarification in this regard is that the survey which was carried out by the team of the All India Soil and Land Use Organisation in 1968 covered an area of about 9,500 acres. This survey mainly covered the chemical analysis of the soil characteristics. The results of this survey were examined by the Ministry which revealed the characteristics as will be found in Annexure III of the report.* Most of the soils were categorised under category IV which means that the soils were fairly good. Further analysis of the soils revealed that about 6,800 acres of land were having slopes, varying from very gentle to gentle, between 1 to 3 per cent and 3 to 5 per cent and the total soil depth of 18 inches to 36 inches. The remaining area of 2700 acres had a depth of below 18 inches. The depth of 18 inches to 36 inches in 6,800 acres was considered to be suitable for cultivation. Out of this, about 50 per cent was of very gentle slope. That means, about 3,400 acres were considered to be better and required less of soil conservation measures. So, out of 9,500 acres, about 3,400 acres were considered suitable for cultivation. This also confirmed the earlier findings that about one-third of the total area was suitable for cultivation. The All India Soil and Land Use Organisation's subsequent survey of 1973, which covered about 240 hectares also confirmed this view that about one-third of the area was suitable for cultivation. This was a very detailed survey and it covered an area where reclamation was

*Not included.

done and the people were already doing cultivation. This detailed survey covered about 20 profiles in a small area of 240 hectares as against 9 profiles which were covered in the earlier survey. This survey also revealed that one-third of the area was categorised under category II and category III which was considered to be very good.

The subsequent survey of 555 hectares which was carried out in January 1975 also led to the same conclusion. There also we found that out of 555 hectares, about 180 hectares were considered to be suitable for cultivation.

All the three surveys which were conducted with which the Ministry of Agriculture was associated right from the first survey conducted by Col..... and Mr....., confirmed the view that about one-third of the area would be suitable for cultivation."

1.39. The Home Secretary was, during evidence, asked whether at the time of soil survey and allotment of land to the settlers suitable land and unsuitable land were jumbled up together and these were not demarcated. He has replied :

"... the terrain is such that, in the entire terrain, you will come across cultivable areas and other areas also. When the question arose that some of the areas were considered unsuitable by the people, the Board again assembled and allotted them other land which they again said was unsuitable. The report of the Director of Settlement mentioned that some land which was rejected by some people was taken up by other people. So, it depended on the efforts they were going to put in. But when they received a complaint that the land was unsuitable, they were again prepared to look into it and allot them land which they considered to be better than the other. So, they were constantly looking into it."

1.40. The Ministry of Home Affairs have stated that as there were complaints regarding the suitability of land, the erstwhile NEFA Administration had constituted, in December 1970, a Board of Officers to look into these complaints. The Board of Officers found most of the complaints genuine and recommended that an area of approximately 210 acres partially reclaimed should be utilised for allocation to those who have been recommended alternate land.

Replying to the question whether he knew the other areas of Arunachal Pradesh where this kind of experiment was made with success, the witness stated :

“Chakmas, ex-Assam Riflemen and Tibetan refugees have been settled in Tirap District. We had settlement in Lohit District. In these schemes we settled about 2000 families.”

Development of Land by Settlers.

1.41. The Committee learn from the Audit paragraph that the land reclaimed by Government for resettlement of families needed further development for agricultural purposes (e.g. construction of terraces, leveling of land inside the terraces etc.) which had to be done by the settlers themselves. Cash grant was accordingly sanctioned to each family @ Rs. 400/- per acre for development of land. It is also pointed out by Audit that upto March 1974, the settlers had developed only 311.25 acres of land and that according to Arunachal Pradesh Government, in all about 378 acres of land had been developed by November 1975. The Arunachal Pradesh Government have also mentioned to the Audit that the land which had been reclaimed but not developed (about 1860 acres) for cultivation might require further reclamation as the growth of weeds in the area was very quick.

1.42. It is also observed from the Note for the guidance of settlers circulated by the Directorate of Agriculture and Community Development of the Arunachal Pradesh Administration furnished to the Committee that the logs and stumps remaining after the jungle had been cleared, had not been disposed of but had been left behind in the field. The note also conceded that immediate cultivation of land would not be possible because of the inability of ploughs and machines to operate in the area.

1.43. In the letter dated 25 February 1975 from Arunachal Pradesh Administration, Directorate of Rehabilitation and Resettlement, Shillong, to the Ministry of Home Affairs, it was stated:

“The small sum of Rs. 400 given per acre for reclamation was found inadequate to meet the expenses for removal of the stumps lying in the thickly forested plot. The forest Department therefore, uprooted as many stumps as possible from the area and cleared all other vegetation to enable further development of the area for agricultural purposes. The settlers are very keen and anxious to cultivate every inch of the land available and it is found that the stumps were proving an obstacle for better farming.”

1.44. In a note furnished by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Committee have been informed about the further development of agricultural plots of the existing settlers in the Seijosa area as follows :

“For further development of the agricultural plots of the existing settlers of the Seijosa area, a scheme costing Rs. 85,800 was sanctioned for uprooting of stumps from agricultural plots of the settlers during the year 1975-76. However, due to a short time left during that financial year, only a sum of Rs. 4,900 was spent during that year. The balance amount will be spent during the current financial year.

No further land has been developed in the settlement after March 1974 in view of the large-scale desertion by the settlers. However, only in one or two individual cases, about 4 hectares of land have been reclaimed.”

1.45. The Committee asked if it was not a fact that in bringing the settlers to resettlement sites without developing them for agricultural purposes, Government acted in haste and as a result large-scale desertions took place. The Home Secretary has stated in reply during evidence :

“We feel that the administration has done whatever was required to be done by them. I cannot but take the administration seriously when they say that if you want to make the scheme a reality and a success and if you do not want to lose another agricultural season, you should send the settlers quickly.

If about a thousand acres of land have been cleared of the forest and if you do not take advantage of it that means after the next monsoon forest growth would be there and more clearance and more expenditure would be needed: that expenditure would be added to the infructuous expenditure.”

Irrigation facilities

1.46. The team of officers which had visited the area in August 1967 had recommended that irrigation facilities should be provided for the agricultural land. Audit has pointed out that out of 500 acres of land in sector ‘A’, irrigation facilities are provided to 105 acres only—60 acres in September 1972 and 45 acres in March 1973, and that no irrigation facilities were provided in the Jolly and Dibru sectors. From the Audit paragraph it is also observed that the Arunachal Pradesh Government have given different reasons for delay in providing irrigation facilities. In January 1975, the Administration informed the Audit that the delay was due to inadequate provision of funds for irrigation while in November 1975, Audit was informed that the question of providing irrigation facilities to agricultural land would arise only after the land was reclaimed and

properly developed. It was also then stated that the cropping pattern that would be practised by the cultivators would also play an important part in deciding appropriate arrangements for irrigation facilities.

1.47. During evidence the Committee desired to know from the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs the reasons for requiring the settlers to start cultivation of land immediately without providing irrigation facilities. He replied that the advice of the Agricultural Department of the Arunachal Pradesh Administration was that the settlers should first raise two or three crops and then only it would be decided as to what type of irrigation facilities were needed by them.

1.48. When the attention of the witness was drawn to the statement of the Arunachal Pradesh Administration (January 1975) that the delay in providing irrigation facilities was due to inadequate provision of funds for irrigation, the witness stated :

“This is not mentioned in any of the earlier letters. I have not come across any letter in 1971-72 saying that because of lack of funds irrigation facilities could not be provided. . . . Rs. 500 per family were earmarked as part of the scheme. . . . A total of Rs. 40 thousands were available to them during this year.”

The Arunachal Pradesh Government have, in a note furnished in November 1975, stated :

“The Administration had already sanctioned a sum of Rs. 1 lakh from its normal budget grant for providing irrigational facilities to the settlement site. The provision of Rs. 500/- per family for irrigation facilities as provided in the scheme was deplorably short of requirement.

1.49. The Audit paragraph also states that according to the information furnished by the Arunachal Pradesh Government in November 1975, a scheme for providing irrigation was being prepared. The Committee desired to know the progress, if any, made in this regard. The Ministry of Home Affairs have, in a note, informed the Committee as follows :

“No further irrigation schemes have been taken up due to the fact that there was a definite doubt about the settlers deserting the land. Moreover, whatever irrigation facilities have already been provided have not yet been fully utilised.”

Provision of Drinking Water

1.50. The Audit paragraph states that water supply was arranged in Sector 'A' in 1968-69. In Dibru sector the water supply was arranged in

June 1973, i.e., nearly three years after the second batch of settlers arrived for resettlement in Dibru and Jolly sectors. No arrangement for supply of water was made for Jolly sector till May 1972 by when all the settlers in this sector had deserted. Arunachal Pradesh Administration is stated to have informed Audit in January 1975 that the delay in arranging water supply was due to inadequate provision of funds and delay in sanction of water supply scheme. In November 1975, the Arunachal Pradesh Government informed Audit that "the case could not be progressed further as the selected settlers for whom arrangements of drinking water supply were to be made and deserted within a few months of their arrival at site." They also informed the Audit that a scheme for supply of water was being prepared.

1.51. During evidence, the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs was asked to state how he thought the settlers could live without the basic facilities, such as drinking water. He replied: "Water is there; you have got perennial springs. Rivulets are there. Pumping sets came a few months later. Local population could take water from these sources."

1.52. The Ministry of Home Affairs have, in a note to the Committee, explained the position in regard to the water supply scheme which the Arunachal Pradesh Government was, according to the Audit paragraph, preparing, as follows :

"No new Water Supply Scheme has been taken up due to the uncertainty of the settlers to continue the settlement. With the water supply scheme already completed with an expenditure of Rs. 74,743 the settlers are getting drinking water regularly."

Medical, Educational and Marketing Facilities

1.53. Audit has pointed out that a health unit and a school were started at Upper Seijosa in June 1969 and November 1969 respectively and that a market started functioning at that place in 1971. It may be recalled that the first batch of settler families had arrived in the resettlement area in March 1969 and the subsequent batch in April-May 1970.

Grant in Cash and Kind

1.54. The Audit paragraph has pointed out that the following grants (in cash and kind) were also sanctioned to each family for the purchase of certain items :

(i) Livestock	..	Rs. 2,550.00
(ii) Tools and implements	..	Rs. 437.00
(iii) Seeds and Seedlings	..	Rs. 270.00
(iv) Household equipment	..	Rs. 1,013.00

These grants were made to the settler families in cash and kind, although there was no market nearby where these could be purchased. Explaining the position to Audit in November 1975, Arunachal Pradesh Government stated that "to facilitate the easy procurement of various items and also in consideration of the practical difficulties involved in the selection of required articles by the settlers the erstwhile NEFA Administration constituted a Purchase Board comprising of responsible district officers and the representatives of the settlers. They were to inspect new firms of repute at the nearest town of Tezpur and nearby important marketing centres and to purchase the items."

1.55. During evidence also the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs was asked to indicate the reasons for not supplying the various items in kind instead of giving them cash which could be misutilised. He has replied :

"The earlier idea was that we should purchase these items and supply them. Subsequently when some of the settlers came, there were complaints. Some of them said that animals are not good enough. Some of them said that they had their own cooking utensils. Therefore, some more flexibility was thought of, so that they could purchase items which they liked. The Administration with the permission of Internal Finance thought of a more flexible system. Individuals were allowed to purchase things of their own liking. Marketing facilities is a problem in that entire area, people marching on 20 days march or so to reach markets. In Arunachal Pradesh the system was to have weekly markets. They were depending on Itakhola for the first 8 to 10 months. After 6 to 8 months markets were established in Seijosa itself. For the items purchased they (settlers) produced documents for verification."

Construction of Roads

1.56. The team of officers in their report submitted in September 1967 had recommended improvement of communications in the resettlement area.

The area of resettlement was divided into three sectors, viz., sector 'A', Jolly sector and Dibru sector. Sector 'A' was close to upper Seijosa being about 4 to 5 kms. from that place. Dibru and Jolly sectors were about 10 to 16 kms. from upper Seijosa. River Dibru flowed through the area at one side of which was sector 'A' and on the other side Jolly and Dibru sectors. The administrative centre was at upper Seijosa where a post-office already existed before the settlers started arriving, while a health unit, a school and a market were set up there subsequently. Thus the settlers had no choice but to come to upper Seijosa for various facilities.

1.57. The first batch of 70 settler families arrived in March 1969 and were resettled in sector 'A'. The second batch of 87 families arrived in April-May 1970 and were resettled in Jolly and Dibru sectors, which was, as already stated, about 10 to 16 kms. from upper Seijosa. The Committee, however, learn from the Audit paragraph that the construction of roads connecting Jolly and Dibru sectors with upper Seijosa was started in January 1969 and December 1970 respectively. Audit has pointed out that the road connecting the Jolly sector with upper Seijosa was completed (except cause-Ways) in January 1973 by which time all the settlers had deserted that sector. Construction of the road connecting Dibru sector with upper Seijosa was completed to the extent of 82 per cent by February 1974. In January 1975 the road was yet to be completed.

1.58. In a note furnished to the Committee, the Ministry of Home Affairs have stated :

“There are two schemes for resettlement of ex-Servicemen :

- (i) Resettlement of 75 families; and
- (ii) Resettlement of 115 families.

In the former scheme, a proposal for 20 kms. long road was sanctioned. Whole of twenty kilometers roads was practically completed except some shingling work in last 2.4 kilometers.

In the second scheme, 9.5 kilometers length of road has been completed against a provision of 16 kilometers. The balance 6.5 kilometers was not started as the settlers abandoned the area.

There was provision for internal road also separately for both the schemes.

The internal roads for 75 families are completed. The internal roads for 115 families were not completed, for the reasons that the settlers abandoned the site.

The provision of cause-ways was for small streams which are wide and shallow in depth. There was no difficulty for crossing of these small streams throughout the year except for some days of very heavy floods. The work could not be started because of scarcity of cement. However, road was never closed because of absence of cause-ways. The temporary culverts, however, are already provided. Steps are being taken to provide construction of culverts and cause-ways.”

Construction of Suspension Bridge.

1.59. The residents of Dibru and Jolly sectors were to come to upper Seijosa for attending the health unit, school, post-office and the market. There being no bridge over Dibru river, the residents of Dibru and Jolly sectors had to cross the river on elephant back. The elephants were provided by the Administration. In September 1969 the local Administration had proposed construction of a bridge over Dibru river; this was not agreed to by Government of India.

1.60. The Committee desired to know the reasons for not agreeing to this proposal. The representative of the Home Ministry has stated:

We are forgetting if I may say so that Arunachal Pradesh has a population of five lakhs. . . . Fifty thousand people living in the Eastern Kameng were dependent upon the track; they were going over this river day in day out. There are so many areas like that. Even in the District headquarters of Lohit District, we are not able to link. If we are to bridge all the rivers of Arunachal then the entire national income will have to be put into the project even then in Arunachal Pradesh we will not be able to bridge all the rivers.

I am only trying to point out that it is not possible to bridge every river. This was a project envisaged for Rs. 24 to 28 lakhs. If a bridge has to be built, we would have to provide a budget of Rs. 70 to 80 lakhs. As I mentioned, the rivers are fordable in most of the seasons. It is only when the rivers are in high floods these are not fordable."

The Committee then desired to know whether any estimate of the cost of the bridge had been prepared. The witness has replied that "this was never envisaged."

Asked to indicate the cost of a wooden or bamboo bridge, the witness stated:

"If we bridge rivers with a wooden bridge, it may not last longer. I have no idea about the cost of a wooden bridge. But this was never envisaged under the scheme."

1.61. While submitting the scheme on settlement of 115 families of Ex-servicemen in Seijosa to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the NEFA Administration, in their letter dated 27 September, 1969 had stated:

"In course of time the absence of proper communication is going to cause a major problem as the entire area of settlement is criss-crossed with major and minor rivers. Survey and recon work is going on for providing permanent communication to

these areas. It, however, appears that construction of permanent bridges will be prohibitive. Therefore, at this stage it is proposed to provide only a wire-rope suspension bridge so that in summer months the area may not remain cut off from the outside world. The requirement of funds on this account would be submitted in due course."

1.62. Asked what had happened to the proposal of the NEFA Administration for a suspension bridge, the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs has replied:

"The point is that construction of bridge was never envisaged as part of the scheme. For the purpose of crossing over the rivers which are fordable they provided them with elephants whenever it was necessary. It was to be seen whether people stuck to it; if they did not stick to it then what could be done... another 24 lakhs would go down the drain because the settlement had not come up. So, it has got to be related to the overall development by the State Government."

1.63. The Ministry of Home Affairs, however, in a note furnished to the Committee intimated that a provision of Rs. one lakh was proposed for the construction of a suspension bridge over the Dibru river in the year 190-71 by the NEFA Administration. This proposal alongwith other proposals was examined in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and a communication was issued by the Ministry on 29 November, 1969 stating that the Governor of Assam was competent to accord sanction for carrying forward the scheme for 1970-71 and 1971-72 on the approved pattern of the earlier scheme for the settlement of 75 families of ex-servicemen at Seijosa during the year 1968-69 to 1970-71 sanctioned by the Government of India, provided the total expenditure did not exceed Rs. 50 lakhs. It is also stated in the note :

"The earlier scheme did not contain any provision for bridge. It appears that the stipulation in this Ministry's letter dated 29th November, 1969 that the scheme in question could be approved by the Governor on the basis of the earlier scheme sanctioned by this Ministry was construed as rejection of the proposal to put up a suspension bridge over the river Dibru and was not pursued."

Selection of Settlers

1.64. According to the Audit paragraph the ex-servicemen were selected for resettlement near Seijosa by the Directorate of Resettlement, Ministry of Defence, through Selection Boards in different States. Selection

Boards in a district comprised of the Deputy Commissioner, the District Agricultural Officer, the Secretary of the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Board of that district and the Officer of the Directorate General, Resettlement, Ministry of Defence, who was liaison officer attached to the erstwhile North-East Frontier Agency Administration and represented both the Ministry of Defence and that Administration. Most of the settlers were from Punjab and Haryana.

1.65. The Committee desired to know the procedure stated to be in existence for publicising information relating to resettlement schemes and obtaining applications from ex-servicemen and whether the media of newspaper (other than Sainik Samachar) and all India Radio had been utilised for giving publicity to the Soijosa scheme. The Ministry of Home Affairs, in a written note, informed the Committee:

"The Seijosa Colonisation scheme was published by the Director General Resettlement by giving full information to all Rajya Sainik Boards. In turn the Rajya Sainik Boards informed all Zila Sainik Boards numbering about 214, to give wide publicity to the scheme in the following manner :

- (a) Details of the scheme to be put on the notice boards of Zila Sainik Boards.
- (b) Groups of ex-servicemen could be given talk about the scheme when their secretariats/welfare workers visit respective villages.

In addition, the three service Headquarters *i.e.* Army, Navy and Air Force were also provided details of the scheme for giving wide publicity through their own media.

The media of newspapers and All India Radio were not to be utilised for giving publicity to the colonisation scheme due to its secret classification. The Rajya Sainik Boards were expressly informed not to use radio newspapers or handouts for publicising this scheme.

The intending ex-servicemen were to submit their applications to the Zila Sainik Boards. The form of the applications was approved by the then NEFA Administration. The applications were obtained/received by the Zila Sainik Boards for consideration by the Selection Board."

1.66. It is stated that the selection of settlers was broad-based and made from all the States of the Union of India. The Selection Board constituted for selection of settlers comprised of the Liaison officer, NEFA (being the representative of the Director General Resettlement

and Ministry of Defence), a representative of the Deputy Commissioner of the District from which the ex-serviceman came, District Agricultural Officer of the concerned district and the Secretary of the District Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen Board of the concerned district. Although no officer of Arupachal Pradesh Administration was directly included in the Selection Board, the specimen form for application was approved by the NEFA administration in order to acquaint settlers with the conditions of settlement it was also envisaged that a party of about 12 persons representing the selected ex-servicemen should visit the site prior to the arrival of the main party. The conditions prescribed for the eligibility of the ex-servicemen for selection as settlers were as under:—

- (a) Age below 50 years.
- (b) Should be of sound health.
- (c) Must not own more than 5 acres of land in his native place.
- (d) Character recorded in the discharge certificate should be at least 'Good'
- (e) The selected persons were required to give an undertaking in writing to the effect that they were willing to settle down in NEFA permanently and they would not leave the settlement without prior permission of the Government failing which they would be liable to pay back the Government all loans and grants and other incidental expenses incurred on them.

1.67. The composition of settlers inducted in 1969 and 1970 was as under:

Punjab	139
U.P.	14
Haryana	2
H.P.	2
	156

1.68. Describing the method of selection of persons for resettlement in this area, during evidence, the Home Secretary, has stated:

“There was a very wide publicity given to the scheme. The applications were invited from the persons who would like to settle in this area. The main consideration was given to ex-servicemen who had already served in the area in 1962, who had been there and who had served the area and who were familiar with the terrain. About 675 applications were received. . . . A

committee was set up in which the liaison officer of the Ministry of Defence as well as the Deputy Commissioner, the District Agricultural Officer and the representatives of the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Board were associated. Out of 675 applications, it was narrowed down to 300 applications. Ultimately about 175 to 190 persons were selected. There were certain considerations and when it came to the process of selection, the NEFA administration was also consulted. They said that they had no particular preference for persons belonging to a particular State but they would certainly like to have persons who were hardworking...."

1.69. The Committee desired to know the steps taken by the Government to give wide publicity to this scheme in all States of India to ensure that ex-servicemen from all over India might be selected. The witness has stated:

"From the record that I have find that the widest publicity was given to it... The publicity media was District Sailors and Soldiers Board which is a recognised agency for the purpose of passing on the information to ex-servicemen. I cannot say whether the publicity was done through the papers."

Asked whether it was a fact that 'notices were put up on the notice boards in the office of the district boards and nothing happened thereafter', the witness admitted that 'this could have happened'.

1.70. Replying to the question during evidence as to why it was considered necessary to induct ex-servicemen in the area, the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs has stated:—

"This point is mixed up with many things. I have to my right the the Director General of Resettlement whose job it is and whose primary function it is to see the resettlement of the ex-servicemen. This is one of the basic problems. Settlement may take any form. Settlement may be by allotting land near the border or elsewhere. But it has been a time-honoured policy that wherever you have got an international border, if you have ex-servicemen, if they are settled there, they would be in a position to boost up the morale of the local population. They would be the persons who would be able to inspire confidence in them by their mental make-up, discipline, and temperament, etc. They would be the persons who have served in those areas, who have already worked in those areas and who have known the local conditions and they may be in a position to bring about the emotional integration in a better way. If you put other persons who had not been in this area, that may not succeed."

1.71. During evidence, a question was asked whether any thought was given by Government to the possibility of emotional discord between the ex-servicemen from Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh and the local population of NEFA due to widely different cultural background of the different social groups involved. The witness has replied:

“This raises really a very basic question. If the objective was purely to bring about an emotional integration and get certain persons into it, perhaps many things could have been considered... Now this particular scheme starts on with the resettlement of ex-servicemen... because it will inspire some confidence in the people. We were at the time thinking in terms of persons who would be coming from those areas where there is some kind of settled cultivation... the scheme as it was envisaged was to subserve a number of purposes. There were certain things which were conceived—on the border there was a vacuum and we wanted persons to settle in those areas to avoid infiltration. In the process there will be emotional integration.”

1.72. The Committee then enquired how the Government had considered that a scheme envisaging a tiny settlement of 100 or 200 families surrounded by unfamiliar people, unfamiliar geographical conditions, unfamiliar flora and fauna was likely to succeed. The witness has answered:

“The scheme was to settle 650 families. Initially we started with the first batch of 75 families followed by another 115 families which were to be followed by another 2 or 3 other batches so that we could have 650 families... NEFA was thinly populated... We had to take into account the ecology, the environment, climatic conditions and soil conditions also. There cannot be heavy pressure of population. Availability of land was also the consideration.”

1.73. As one of the objectives was to demonstrate to the local people the merits of settled life and settled cultivation in place of *Jhum* cultivation and the land in this area was only on slopes which needed terraced cultivation, the Committee desired to know from the witness how Government had considered that the people from Haryana and Punjab who had no experience of terraced cultivation would be suitable for the settlement in this area and whether it would not have been better to select people from Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal and other mountainous regions for settlement in this area. He replied:

“... people from Tehri Garhwal and other areas including those from West Bengal who were used to the terraced cultivation

were not available out of the persons who required settlement —So long as we had the progressive and forward looking officers...it was felt that these officers...although belonging to the different States where the farming was in the advanced stage...(would), under the guidance of the agricultural staff, be in a position to switch on from the kind of cultivation that was in vogue there and be in a position to bring about a change in the area...Guidelines were of course provided for to these people as soon as they landed as to what was going to be their very first task that was to be accomplished in that area. In the first season, they were to go in for the kind of agriculture that was being practised there. It has got to be *jhun* type of cultivation...it was going to be a gradual process. There was no expectation that they would go there with certain ideas of settled cultivation and...they would be in a position straightway to go about with that. As regards terracing and other things, the advice of the local staff of Agriculture Department was available to them. The NEFA Administration knowing about the entire scheme was in a position to be helpful to them.”

1.74. The Committee desired to know whether any orientation training was given to the settlers before inducting them in Seijosa area. The witness has stated:

“No orientation in that form was given; but there was a certain administrative set-up which was there. It was a circle office that was established. As far as agricultural practices were concerned, guidelines in printed form were made available as to how they had to proceed. But giving orientation with a view to help bring about emotional integration was not done.”

The witness has further added:

“The orientation would have helped, but there are 2 or 3 factors which were taken into consideration. First the persons who were sent into the areas, had served in those areas and were familiar with the terrain. Secondly, it was felt that the first requirement would be to make them succeed in the agricultural task. They were taken there immediately, so that during March they could carry out agricultural operations before the advent of the monsoon. So, one has to make a success of the job and then gradually get integrated into the entire thing. But I do agree that this orientation would have helped.”

1.75. It was envisaged that a party of about 12 persons representing the selected ex-servicemen should also visit the site prior to the arrival of the main party. Enquired whether an advance party was actually sent to the settlement site, the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs has stated during evidence:

“...this was the idea which was under consideration and remained under consideration. It was decided upon in 1967. But in the meeting held on 10 May, 1968, the D.G. Resettlement said that he had reconsidered the entire question of sending an advance party of ex-servicemen which had been selected, to the site for rehabilitation. If such an advance party was sent, it was likely that there might be divergent opinions. This might create confusions in the minds of other prospective settlers. It was decided that all the settlers in the first batch selected, should be sent straightway, as soon as the arrangements for reclamation were made.....All I am saying is that a particular thing which was decided upon earlier, was subsequently abandoned. The other factor which came in subsequently was: when was it to be implemented. It was in January that the NEFA Administration wanted it to be implemented. A certain decision was taken by that Administration. Certain details had to be worked out. We said: let the lands be reclaimed. We felt that the persons selected must reach there by February or March, so that they can take advantage of the agricultural operations; otherwise all this work would become a failure.....I should not think that they were wanting to set up some kind of a semi-military outpost under military discipline. Perhaps they felt the persons having served there knew the terrain and they could go back there again and time was a factor which they considered they had to take advantage of. They must go at that particular time. So, when the DGR himself suggested it, it was accepted by us.”

New procedure for selection of settlers

1.76. Audit has informed the Committee that in December 1975, Ministry of Home Affairs wrote to them as follows:

“...We have now decided in consultation with Director General of Resettlement that in order to get the right type of settlers, the following procedure should be adopted:

- (a) Selection Boards of the concerned States should be given a full history of the type of land available in the area of resettlement.

- (b) Preference should be given to those who are accustomed to the geographic, climatic conditions of Arunachal Pradesh.
- (c) Selected settlers should execute a bond that they will not leave the settlement and if they desert they will have to refund all grants issued to them.
- (d) The settlers should be asked to see the area for themselves. Before executing the bond, the Directorate General of Resettlement may make suitable arrangements for this purpose.
- (e) Ex-servicemen from the neighbouring States say of Bihar and West Bengal may be considered for resettlement. If enough volunteers are not forthcoming from these States only then the ex-servicemen from other States may be considered.
- (f) The Selection Committee should consist of the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Directorate General of Resettlement, Ministry of Defence and Arunachal Pradesh Government.

We are looking into this matter further and a further communication would follow.”

1.77. Replying to the question whether the introduction of new procedure for selection of settlers reflected adversely on the selections previously made, the Home Secretary has stated:

“If you permit me to differ from this view, I would like to. The point is, if I look into the entire thing, my experience is that this is one of the schemes where the administration and the Government of India officers went months after months over it, deliberated the whole thing and today, if there is not much success, this difficulty was envisaged in the very beginning. But it was an experiment worth carrying out. Today, one can certainly say that in the matter of selection, this has not worked. But if you want to improve upon this particular scheme, whether you take it to Arunachal Pradesh or to any other State that depends upon the reaction of the administration. If you want 80 to 90 per cent success in such schemes, we should not experiment with such schemes.”

Inductment of the settlers in the Resettlement Area, their complaints and desertions

1.78. The first batch of 70 ex-servicemen alongwith their families arrived at the place in March 1969 and were settled in sector 'A'. Eighty-six more families were inducted in April 1970 and May 1970 and one family in July 1973; they were settled in Jolly and Dibru sectors.

1.79. Of the 70 families which arrived in March 1969 and were to be settled in sector 'A', 16 families deserted in 1968-69, 6 families in 1969-70, 6 families in 1971-72, 7 families in 1972-73 and 4 families in 1973-74. Only 31 families are still in that sector. Out of the 87 families which came later and were to be settled in Jolly and Dibru sectors, 25 families deserted in 1970-71, 24 families in 1971-72 and 33 families in 1972-73. All the families in Jolly sector left by May 1972. Only 5 families are left in Dibru sector. Thus, out of the 157 families which were inducted in the area for resettlement, 121 families deserted by March 1974 and only 36 families have been continuing there. The settlers were initially accommodated in transit camps; 23 families deserted from the transit camps even before houses and land were allotted to them.

1.80. In October 1970 and November 1970, 82 settlers were stated to have represented to the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency Administration that the plots allotted to them for cultivation were rocky, sandy and not fit for permanent cultivation. The Administration constituted in December 1970 a board of officers to look into the complaints. The Board found that the plots allotted to 21 families measuring 246 acres were unsuitable for cultivation and recommended allotment of other plots to them. The Arunachal Pradesh Government informed Audit in November 1975 that "before making any progress in this respect, the settlers started desertion from the site without any notice or intimation whatsoever. It was experienced that majority of the settlers settled in Jolly sector did not reconcile to type of land available in Foot Hill areas of the then NEFA but they were inclined to bring a comparison with the land of Seijosa area to that of Punjab."

1.81. According to Audit, in May 1971, the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency Administration reported to Government of India that almost all the settlers complained against the quality of land offered to them which, according to that Administration, was the best available by the standards of North East Frontier Agency. The Administration further stated that the "settlers in general were not happy with the land generally available in NEFA which is not always flat and free from boulders, small nullahs, criss-crossing here and there and slopes."

1.82. It would be seen from the reports of the following survey of the areas conducted from time to time and other reports that they have been bringing to the notice of the Government the same problems and difficulties which the settlers subsequently represented to the Government.

(i) *Report of Team of Officers (1967).*

The Team of Officers, in their preliminary Report (August 1967) had pro-warned the Government as follows:

“In the area wild elephants, buffaloes, deer and wild bore are found. The place is heavily infested with leeches. The presence of elephants and wild bore is likely to be a great menace for the field crops unless protective measures are taken.”

(ii) *Complaint to Liaison Officer on his visit to the Settlement in March 1972.*

It is stated that when the Liaison Officer, Arunachal Pradesh Administration had visited the Ex-Servicemen's settlement in March, 1972 there were about sixty five settlers. He found that a large number amongst the settlers present had complaints and grudges relating to their land. Their specific complaints like those of their deserted colleagues, were as follows:

- (a) The quality of the soil was not good meaning of course that the soil was not as good as that found in Punjab or Haryana.
- (b) Their agricultural plots were at a distance of one or two km. away from their home steads and that they were afraid to work in these plots for fear of wild animals.
- (c) There were no approach roads to take their bullocks and ploughs upto their plots.
- (d) Peculiar climatic conditions and heavy and prolonged monsoon did not allow them to work.

The remedial measures taken, assessment and recommendations made by the Liaison Officer were as follows:

“On visiting the plots, however, I found that most of the above complaints were without much substance. The Administration had already rejected the bad plots and re-allotted fresh plots and home steads to deserving settlers. Work for construction of roads leading to the various agricultural plots had mad very good progress by early 1972 and was going on with more than the usual speed. . . .

As regards the quality of land, I think the grouse really came from the fact that the settlers expected the same type of land as was

obtainable in their native places. I was told by the settlers that they were promised land in the vicinity of Tezpur according to the terms and conditions explained to them. Therefore, some of them demanded reallocation of agricultural land in the area bordering Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The agitation made on this account is too well known to all concerned to be recounted here. I cannot say how and why they had this impression but I do not think that the Liaison Officer or persons who had anything to do with the selection of the ex-servicemen ever gave them any such assurance. Their demands, therefore, appeared to be absolutely out of context which could not be satisfied.

Hazards of Wild Elephants and Climate.

The hazards that came in their way like the wild elephants and heavy rains are not uncommon in this part of the country. Despite the fact that the former had caused considerable danger to the crops of the hard working settlers, this factor alone cannot be held responsible for the large scale desertion by the ex-servicemen. The Administration is well aware of this problem and steps have already been taken to issue licences for firearms to the settlers and permits to the professional elephant catchers. These measures will gradually reduce this hazard with the passage of time.

Assessment and recommendation.

I have now been seeing the settlers about once a month for the last eleven months. My final impression is that the ex-servicemen who have deserted were not the type who could withstand the toil, hardship and the hazards a person was expected to encounter in order to resettle himself in a new place. Most of them were given to the luxuries of urban amenities and were certainly far drawn from agriculture as a profession. Some were opportunists, some proved to be agitators and instigators and the majority of them were unprepared to adapt themselves to the new conditions.

The administration, on the other hand had been quite helpful in every way during the past eleven months that I have been working with them. Quite frankly, they have done in the past and are prepared to do in future much more for the ex-servicemen's settlement than for any other settlement of refugees they are running elsewhere in the Union Territory. It

is unfortunate that so many ex-servicemen deserted the settlement the way they did."

- (iii) Letter dated 6-10-1972 from Arunachal Pradesh Administration to the Ministry of Defence.

While pressing for the sanction of 75 per cent of the amount originally recommended for relief grants, the Arunachal Pradesh Administration had, in their letter dated 6 October 1972, addressed to the Ministry of Defence, *inter alia*, stated:

"Wild elephants menace.

No concrete measures have been worked out so far to deal with this menace which is threatening the existence of the settlement. The destruction caused to the settler's crops is thus continuing unabated. The Forest Department seems to be overwhelmed with their own departmental problems and procedures regarding this aspect. They seem to be more concerned about the possible loss of a few wild elephants and the revenue rather than the losses being suffered by the ex-servicemen settlers which is robbing them of their means of subsistence. This is the reason why their efforts to deal with this problem has been inconsequential.

It is suggested that this matter be moved to the highest level and a positive direction be given to the authorities concerned to deal with this problem effectively with urgency."

- (iv) *Detailed Soil Survey Report of November 1973.*

Some of the other problems in resettling the ex-servicemen identified in the November 1973 soil survey by the Ministry of Agriculture were as follows:

- (i) severe risk of life and crop caused by wild animals, especially wild elephants;
- (ii) inaccessibility of the area due to torrential state of rivers during rains; and
- (iii) high cost of development of the settlement.

- (v) *Detailed Soil Survey Report of August 1975.*

In the Report on detailed soil survey of Ex-Servicemen Block, Seijosa made in August 1975, the wild elephants were also stated to be "an unremovable menace to crop production."

1.83. Dealing with the wild elephant menace complained of by the settlers, the Arunachal Pradesh Administration informed Audit in January 1975 as follows:

“Existence of wild elephants is a common feature in all the foot hill regions of Eastern India and Arunachal Pradesh Territory is not an exception. The local people have been residing in the area for generations and have learnt to live with the problem by using indigenous methods to drive off the elephants whenever they threaten to damage their crops. The ex-servicemen settlers were advised to adopt the same methods to scare off the wild animals and, in addition, 8 gun licences were issued by the Administration to protect their crops.”

1.84. In November 1975 the Government of Arunachal Pradesh stated that “the danger from wild elephants would automatically decrease when settlement stabilises.” They also stated that “desertion is not due to existence of wild elephants, unsuitability of land etc. but the settlers as selected for settlement were not right type of settlers and also not accustomed to stay with the geographical and climatic condition prevailing at the Foot Hills areas of North-Eastern India.”

1.85. The Ministry of Home Affairs also stated in December 1975 that “it would appear that the deserters were not temperamentally able to adapt themselves to the changed environment and conditions of Resettlement.”

1.86. Asked whether the Arunachal Pradesh Administration briefed the Union Government about the way in which the settlement was working at different stages, the representative of Arunachal Pradesh has stated:

“The position just before the arrival of the settlers was the cutting of the jungle and the burning had to be done in winter. It was necessary that if the operations had to be done, they would have to arrive by March; the target was set and the intention was to get them in and help them in every way possible to do the jhum type of cultivation. In retrospect we entirely appreciate that the people were from a totally different agricultural background and adaptation in actual practice was extremely difficult. The fact remains that a few of them did succeed because every efforts was made to try and show the way. From time to time various reports of desertions were made. Equally there was every attempt to understand the various problems of the settlers. There were meetings every two months and people assembled and went into the various

difficulties of the settlers. This was a totally novel scheme and when we faced difficulties we liberalised the procedures on the spot about the purchase of bullocks; the financial adviser himself was at Seijosa; similarly with regard to the purchase of household utensils, under the old procedures the rigmarole of tenders and so on would have to be gone into; we liberalised that procedure also; we wanted to make them as liberal and as flexible as possible so that the settlers would not feel that a lot of time was taken before their problems were looked into, of course we had to make sure at the same time that advances were not given blindly. This was frankly from our point of view a very difficult position but we did make every attempt to sit together and evolve some procedure. Despite all those efforts the desertion rate by 1971 was about 100. Certain difficulties were inherent in the scheme and they came out. For example it is clearly not possible to demarcate land by land settlement staff or a kanungo until the whole forest has been cleared. The logs are still there and they had to be there for the first jhum cultivation according to the local practice. It is not possible to set borders and identify areas that may or may not be really good for cultivation until after the initial reclamation of the land was over. At the same time if we delay the arrival of the settlers the whole thing would pose a problem because after the initial reclamation the jungle would start growing up again. All those were fundamental, practical problems which we did try to face and we did our best in the circumstances."

The Home Secretary has added.:

"May I supplement a little what Mr. . . . has said. I am referring to NEFA administration assessment and their involvement, how the scheme was proceeding from time to time. I shall quote from a letter dated 10 April 1969 from the Adviser (to the Governor of Assam) to our Additional Secretary:

'I am glad to report that we have been able to carry out our settlement scheme successfully during 1968-69. For the first time 54 ex-servicemen families have been happily settled and are already working on their ten acre plots allotted to them for sowing maize, paddy, jhum type for the current season. . . .'

Then it says:

'Sixteen out of this had gone back for various reasons. Three went back as they could not reconcile themselves and the remaining have gone back mostly on family grounds and so on. . . .'

The letter dated 24 June 1969 says:

'I see no cause for frustration among the settlers and the question of unnecessary misgivings jeopardising the prospect of their permanent settlement should not therefore arise.'

1.87. During evidence, the Committee desired to know the effect of introducing non-locals in the area on the local population. The Deputy Zonal Director, Tribal Development has stated:

"This place had been selected very carefully by the Arunachal Administration taking into account what the feelings of the local inhabitants would be. Arunachal is a very sparsely inhabited area. The place was so selected that there would be no discontent here. Discontent generally comes when there is exploitation and against this, the Arunachal administration had taken sufficient area. In this particular case, there has been no discontent. In fact, in other cases also like the Chakma and others, we have not come across any complaints."

1.88. In his letter of May 1971 written to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Adviser to the Governor of Assam had made the following comments:

"The settlement had resulted in the creation of new political and social tensions rather than assisting in the process of national integration."

When the attention of the witness was drawn to these comments, he has stated:

"Mr. pointed out social and political tensions, but they have not been spelt out in the letter."

1.89. The attention of the witness was then drawn to the background papers of the Government which revealed that tribal students had also represented against the policy of resettlement of non-locals in the NEFA area. The witness has replied :

"As far as this settlement was concerned, there have been no reactions. There were reactions about the They did not want more of them to be brought in; but any future policy of settlement in this particular area, as I said earlier; would be after taking into confidence the views of the Administration and the involvement of the people's representatives. But things have changed considerably since the period when the first scheme was conceived. Now the question whether any more settlement is to be done and whether any more ex-servicemen

should be settled in that area is under consideration with Administration. They would be fully consulted and their representatives would be fully involved in the decision."

Review and Evaluation of the Scheme

1.90. In January 1969, Government of India sanctioned resettlement of 75 families in the Seijosa area at a cost of Rs. 24.23 lakhs. In September 1970 resettlement of 115 families more at a cost of Rs. 28.63 lakhs was sanctioned. Against the provision for resettlement of 190 families only 157 families were inducted into the area of re-settlement in different phases. Out of these 157 families, 121 families deserted by March 1974 and only 36 families are continuing there.

1.91. While reviewing and examining the impact and repercussions of this settlement of ex-servicemen against the objectives set forth at the time of taking up the scheme, the then Adviser to the Governor of Assam in a letter dated 22 May 1971 to the Ministry of Home Affairs, *inter alia*, wrote :

"This Administration made efforts in short time towards creating the necessary infrastructure for the Seijosa colony and towards clearing the area for the settlers. A review, in retrospect, however, reveals that our hopes and objectives stand far from being fulfilled and that, barring some settler families, most of them have disappointed us and frustrated our objectives. Their settlement has resulted in creation of new social and political tensions rather than national integration. Above all the enormous cost of settlement of ex-servicemen and the expenditure which have been incurred has not been commensurate with the socio-economic gains.

The general impression that ex-servicemen as a class are more hardy than others and could set an example has not been justified in NEFA. In fact, they appear in no way to really represent the poor and landless peasantry from the areas of their States. Perhaps during their service careers they become accustomed to facilities in the shape of organised provisioning of their needs and therefore to some extent lose their initiative for coping with the standards of ordinary civilian life in backward territory like NEFA. It has therefore become doubtful to this Administration that they could, even if willing, be capable of taking the brunt of enemy infiltration from across the border in time of need. Besides, the settlers' areas are located at the farthest from the international border.

Among the settlers inducted during the last two years, there are all types of shady characters. There are settlers against whom cases already seemed to have been pending at their homes, groups which have brought with them factional, caste and inter-religious complexes and among whom violent quarrels have created new law and order problems. There was an example involving the discharge of bullets between some officers and a group of settlers who were expected to set an example in discipline to the tribal people. There have been few cases of cheating and forgery. Evidence have come to light that in submitting their accounts for household equipment, certain settlers have changed their original cash memos to obtain advantage to themselves for items which have never actually been purchased. In some cases inflated receipts have been produced and in several cases no proper use of funds advanced have been made, leaving aside purchasing their items. Even some of them are reported to have remitted money orders to their villages out of the Government advances for land development etc. From the talks among them, there is a growing suspicion that their intention was mainly to perpetuate the benefits of free ration money and other cash advances as long as possible. Ministry is well aware of the 86 identically worded cyclostyled petitions from the settlers in Seijosa complaining against the land given to them (the land given is regarded as good land in NEFA). They have complained of high promises made by authorities who perhaps selected them and persuaded them to come to NEFA. They have complained vigorously to high dignitaries like Prime Minister, Defence Minister as to how they have been brought 'in exile' to the 'concentration camps' in 'remote and far away NEFA territory'. The mental distance from their homes to NEFA has not been reconciled in their minds.

Recently during the visit of the Director General of Resettlement Major Gen. the settlers blocked his passage twice on the road. They shouted slogans in protest when he told them in his speech to make use of the opportunities afforded by the NEFA Administration. Indeed their indiscipline and misbehaviour has shocked the tribal people themselves who have been constantly pressing that these settlers should be expelled out of NEFA and that no further settlement of outsider should be made.

Out of 150 ex-servicemen families inducted so far, 41 have been absentees almost on regular basis only about 45 of the remaining 109 settlers have taken up cultivation in their plots.

Under these conditions, the Administration is of the view that the scheme for settlement of ex-servicemen taken up in the Fourth Plan may be suspended and that no further induction of outside ex-servicemen should take place. The NEFA Administration would, however, look after their own ex-servicemen hailing from NEFA. The Planning Commission has adversely commented on the settlement of ex-servicemen scheme of this territory."

1.92. Replying to the question during evidence that in view of the facts stated in the letter from the Lt. Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, should the scheme not be regarded as a complete failure, the Home Secretary has state :

"...it was not a complete failure, because thirty-six families are still there."

1.93. The Home Secretary was, during evidence, asked whether any evaluation of the resettlement scheme was made. He has replied:

"There has been no systematic evaluation of the type which you have mentioned. But the position has been reviewed from time to time in various committee meetings. The reports which were received from the liaison officers as well as from the DG were considered by the Secretaries Committee of the various Ministries who were involved in that. . . . In his report, the DG has analysed the problem. He has mentioned about the role and the work done by the Administration and the attitude of the settlers. About the attitude, he said that some settlers were not enthusiastic and some agitated groups were trying to mislead the other. The undesirable elements were careful enough to obtain whatever money was available from the administration against various authorisations but did not cultivate their plots. There was the problem of water also. About the administration, he has mentioned that the work of the administration has been very good. By and large the settlers have been given money. The administration has been flexible and helpful in this regard. Wild animals like elephants have been one of the problems. This is what he has mentioned in his report. But the evaluation in a systematic manner has not been carried out. It is on the basis of these things that certain decisions were taken."

Recovery from the deserters

1.94. It was decided by Government of India in May 1973 that the deserters should be asked to refund Rs. 3,563 each, being the cost of livestock and household equipment. The Arunachal Pradesh Government

Stated (November 1975) that its district authorities had taken action to recover the amount from each of the deserters.

1.95. Enquired the basis on which the Government proposes to realise money from the deserters, the Home Secretary stated during evidence:

“The settlers took advantage of the things which were given to them and the money was used by them. But I am doubtful if it is possible to realise it even from them.”

During evidence, however, the Home Secretary, explained that the orders for recovery had been issued in pursuance of “an understanding given by them (settlers) that they would refund the money” if the conditions of payment were not fulfilled. Expressing his doubts whether it would be possible to recover the money, he said:

“I am doubtful if this exercise would succeed; according to me it is a futile exercise; unless the undertaking is on bond paper validly executed, it will be very difficult.”

1.96. The Director General, Resettlement added in this connection:

“I discussed this with the Lt. Governor of Arunachal who happens to be Mr. Raja. Our intention is not to penalise anybody unnecessarily or to victimise anybody who is not to blame. A number of settlers have literally run away with whatever money they could take out of this. More than that, some of them had given their land to unauthorised persons, mainly of Gurkha extraction who are not authorised to go there; they are now farming the land and paying rent to the original settler. . . I am sure the administration has the wit and the sense to properly assess each individual case and chase those who need to be chased and condone those who deserve to be condoned.”

1.97. From a study of the material made available to them and the information gleaned during evidence, the Committee cannot help concluding that the scheme for resettlement near Seijosa in Arunachal Pradesh on which Rs. 24.68 lakhs were spent till March 1974 was ill-conceived ab initio. That the scheme ended in a dismal failure is amply proved by the fact that out of a total of 157 families inducted for resettlement in the area, only 36 are left and the rest have deserted. The reasons for the failure cannot be ascribed only to the inertia of the settlers. Government have also to bear, in a sufficient measure, responsibility for the same. Some of the more conspicuous shortcomings and instances of ineptitude displayed by the authorities are discussed in the following paragraphs.

1.98. The Committee learn that the Team of Officers which had visited the area in August 1967 had pointed out the need for a detailed soil survey of the area. The Directorate of Resettlement of the Ministry of Defence, however, agreed to the resettlement of ex-servicemen in the area in May 1968 and requested the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to get the necessary soil tests done. In August 1968, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture undertook soil reconnaissance in the area. In their report (September 1968), the Soil Reconnaissance Team also pointed out that "the Seijosa soils are not quite suitable for permanent cultivation and reclamation of land by removing the existing shrubs on the surface was likely to result in heavy soil loss." The report had also recommended that "detailed soil survey of the area may be taken up before the lands were allotted." However, in January 1969 and September 1970, Government of India sanctioned resettlement of a total of 190 families in the area at an aggregate cost of Rs. 53.06 lakhs, without waiting for the detailed soil survey and the induction of settlers commenced in March 1969. In July 1973, another reconnaissance survey was conducted by the All India Soil and Land Use Survey Organisation of the Government of India, Calcutta Centre, which came to the conclusion that "these soils have very low water holding capacities," that "root penetration is good upto 50 cms., but roots are very few in the sand layer" and, therefore, "the soils are unsuitable for cultivation." The detailed soil survey of August 1975 also did not present a very optimistic picture so far as soil fertility in the area was concerned and had suggested soil conservation measures and irrigation facilities as a pre-requisite for agricultural development of the area. On the face of these findings, the Committee are doubtful whether the site selected for the settlement was really suitable. The fact that numerous representations were made to the Government by the settlers pointing out the poor quality of soil is a clear indication that expectations of the Government in regard to the fertility of the soil, despite the reports of various teams and surveys, did not come out to be true. The Committee, therefore, cannot but deplore the hasty action taken by Government in inducting the settlers in the area without first making sure that the area was fit for agriculture which was going to be the mainstay of the settlers in the area.

1.99. The Committee note that out of 500 acres of land in Sector 'A', irrigation facilities were provided to 105 acres only—60 acres in September 1972 and 45 acres in March 1973—and that no irrigation facilities were provided in the Jolly and Dibru sectors. During evidence, the Committee have been given different reasons for the delay in providing the irrigation facilities. According to the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs, it was never intended that the irrigation facilities would be provided to the settlers immediately. He informed the Committee that the Arunachal Pradesh Administration had advised that settlers should first raise two or three crops and then only it could be decided as to what type of

irrigation facilities were needed by them. The Arunachal Pradesh Administration has, however, informed the Committee that the delay was due to inadequate provision of funds for irrigation. According to the Administration, the provision of Rs. 500 per family for the irrigation facilities was "deplorably short of requirement." The Committee are surprised that this pre-requisite for the success of the settlement scheme pointed out by the Team of Officers as far back as 1967, and reemphasised in subsequent survey of the area, had remained neglected for considerably long time after the settlers were inducted in the area. The Committee would like Government to inquire as to what extent the delay was due to shortage of funds and why funds could not be released to the Arunachal Pradesh Administration in time.

1.100. The lack of realism on the part of Government is also reflected by the fact that the logs and stumps left over as a result of the reclamation of land in this area continued to lay scattered in the fields allocated to the settlers, seriously hampering cultivation of land by them. The settlers were expected to remove these logs and stumps from their fields as a part of the process of development of land for which they were given a cash grant of Rs. 400 per acre. The Arunachal Pradesh Administration have themselves admitted that this grant was "inadequate to meet the expenses for removal of the stumps lying in the thickly forested plot." No wonder the effort of the settlers to develop their land was demonstrably low. It was as late as in 1975-76 that a scheme costing Rs. 85,800 was drawn up and sanctioned for uprooting the stumps from agricultural plots but the scheme was still-born in view of large-scale desertion of the settlers. The Committee are unable to understand how Government initially expected the settlers with their limited resources to undertake the kind of development of land envisaged and make it fit for cultivation, particularly in such a difficult terrain. In the opinion of the Committee, Government should have themselves cleared the area of logs and stumps as a part of reclamation work before allotment of land to the settlers.

1.101. The utter lack of planning and human approach to the problem of settlement is reflected by the fact that in Dibru sector, the drinking water supply was arranged in June 1973, i.e., nearly three years after the second batch of settlers arrived for settlement in Dibru and Jolly sectors and no arrangement for supply of water was made for Jolly Sector till May 1972 by when all the settlers in this sector had deserted. The Committee understand that the delay in arranging water supply was due to inadequate provision of funds and the delay in sanctioning water supply scheme. The Committee are not satisfied with the statement of the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs during evidence that the settlers could use the water from the springs and rivulets and the area. The Committee feel that Government should have taken care of the need for provision of at

least drinking water in the settlement area and made available ~~the~~ funds for this purpose. They would like Government to inquire into the reported delay in the sanction of the scheme.

1.102. The inept planning is also indicated in the delay in the construction of roads linking the various sectors of settlement to Upper Seijosa where the Administration Headquarters, school, health unit and market were located. The Committee note that Sector 'A' was about 4 to 5 kms. from Upper Seijosa. The first party of settlers was inducted in this Sector in March 1969, but the construction of 4 cause-ways and pipe culverts to make the road between Upper Seijosa and Sector 'A' negotiable during rainy season, was approved in February 1971 and the work was not taken up till December 1975. As a result, the settlers, who have not so far deserted, continue to face difficulty during monsoon in reaching Upper Seijosa for availing of the various facilities available there.

1.103. The second batch of settlers was inducted in the Jolly and Dibru Sectors, which were about 10 to 16 kms. from Upper Seijosa. The second party of settlers was inducted in these sectors in April-May 1970. The Jolly-Upper Seijosa Road, which was started in January 1969, was not completed till January 1973 by when all the settlers had deserted that sector. The construction of road connecting Dibru Sector with Upper Seijosa was not completed by January 1975. No further progress has been made due to the desertion of settlers. The Committee are surprised as to how Government were expecting the settlers in the Dibru and Jolly sectors to avail of the various facilities at Upper Seijosa without proper communication. The Committee regret that no attention whatsoever was paid to this matter.

1.104. According to the Audit paragraph, out of 157 families as many as 87 families were settled in the Dibru and Jolly Sectors. Even for availing of the elementary facilities like dispensary, school, post office and the market, the residents of these Sectors were to come to Upper Seijosa, There being no bridge over Dibru river separating these sectors from Upper Seijosa, the residents of these sectors had to cross the river on elephants provided by the Administration. Realising the hardship of these settlers the then NEFA Administration had approached the Ministry of Home Affairs in September 1969 for construction of a wide-rope suspension bridge over the Dibru river and proposed for this purpose the provision of Rs. one lakh in their budget for the year 1970-71. This proposal along with other proposals were examined by the Ministry in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the NEFA Administration were informed that the Governor of Assam was competent to accord sanction for carrying forward the scheme for 1970-71 and 1971-72 on the approved pattern of the earlier scheme provided the total expenditure did not exceed Rs. 50 lakhs. As the

earlier scheme did not contain such provision it was construed as rejection of the proposal for construction of a suspension bridge.

1.105. The Committee observe that the reply of the Central Government to the proposal from the Arunachal Pradesh Administration was vague and ambiguous and was bound to lead to misunderstanding. The Committee regret that for this reason alone the scheme for the suspension bridge over the Dibru river, which would have been an important part of the life-line for the settlers in the area, could not be proceeded with.

1.106. The Committee are unable to appreciate the wisdom of concentrating all the facilities for the settlers, such as administrative headquarters, post-office, health unit, school and market, at Upper Seijosa, which is about 4 to 5 kms. from Sector 'A' and 10 to 1 kms. from Dibru and Jolly sectors. The Committee feel that it was too much to expect the sick to march 10 to 16 kms. through inhospitable terrain, crossing Dibru river on elephant back, to reach the health unit at upper Seijosa and for the children to march 20 to 30 kms. daily to attend school at Upper Seijosa under similar conditions. They feel that Government should have set up these facilities in the settlement area itself so that the settlers could have freely availed of these facilities. As it is the facilities are well-nigh out of the reach of the settlers.

1.107. According to the Audit paragraph, grants (in cash and kind) to the extent of Rs. 4270 were sanctioned to each family for purchase of live-stock, tools and implements, seed seedlings and household equipment instead of supplying these to them, although there was no market nearby where these could be purchased. The Arunachal Pradesh Government have stated that to facilitate the easy procurement for various items and also in consideration of the practical difficulties involved in the selection of required articles by the settlers, erstwhile NEFA Administration constituted a Purchase Board comprising responsible district officers and the representatives of the settlers, who were to inspect a few firms of repute at the nearest town of Tezpur and nearby import marketing centres to purchase the items. During evidence, however, the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs informed the Committee that in response to representations, "individuals were allowed to purchase things of their own liking." He, however, admitted that "marketing facilities is a problem in that entire area." The Committee feel that in view of the marketing problem in the area it would have been better to supply the articles to them rather than to hand out cash to them. If the settlers had been given the goods in kind, Government would not have been confronted with cases of misutilisation of cash as reported by the then Adviser to the Governor in his letter to Central Government dated 22 May 1971.

1.108. Another glaring lacuna observed by the Committee is the lack of publicity given to the scheme, while inviting applications from the desirous and prospective settlers. The Home Secretary deposed during evidence that 'a very wide publicity was given' to this scheme. However, according to the note furnished to the Committee the media of newspapers and All India Radio were not utilised for giving publicity to the colonisation scheme due to its secret classification and that the Rajya Sainik Boards were expressly informed not to use radio, newspaper or handouts for publicising this scheme. When it was pointed out that 'perhaps the notices were put on the Notice Boards in the Office of the District Boards and nothing happened thereafter', the Director General of Resettlement conceded that 'this could have happened.' The Committee, therefore, cannot escape the conclusion that this scheme was not properly publicised particularly in the contiguous areas of Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and other areas where geographical conditions comparable to those prevailing in NEFA existed. Due to this lack of publicity, many potential aspirants from these areas who could have better adjusted to the conditions prevailing in the settlement area, might have been prevented from offering themselves for selection.

1.109. The Committee note that the Selection Board which selected the ex-Servicemen for settlement in the area consisted of the Liaison Officer of the Ministry of Defence, Deputy Commissioner of the District from which ex-Servicemen came, District Agricultural Officer of the concerned District and the Secretary of the DSS&A Board of the concerned district. No officer of Arunachal Pradesh Administration was included in the Selection Board. The Committee feel that it would have been prudent to include in the Selection Board a representative of the Arunachal Pradesh Administration who was fully conversant with the geographical conditions of the area and had experience of district administration. His advice in regard to the fitness of the applicants for settlement in the area would have been, in the opinion of the Committee invaluable.

1.110. In his context, it is noteworthy that the area selected for resettlement was largely slopy where only terrace type of cultivation was possible. The Committee, therefore, fail to understand as to how and on what basis were the people from Punjab and Haryana, who were not expected to have any knowledge and experience of terrace cultivation, selected for settlement and inducted in the area.

1.111. The Committee also observe that it was originally envisaged that an advance party of about 12 persons representing the selected ex-Servicemen should also visit the settlement site to familiarise themselves with the conditions obtaining in the area. The Committee were informed during evidence that this idea was given up for the reason that "there might be

divergent opinions which might create confusion in the minds of other prospective settlers." The prospective settlers were also not given any advance orientation about the conditions of living in the area and the type of cultivation suitable for adoption there. These facts establish beyond doubt that the selection and induction of people for settlement in the area was, to say the least, far from satisfactory and if the settlers ultimately deserted the area it was not the settlers entirely who were to be blamed but the responsibility therefor lies to a greater extent on Government themselves.

1.112. The Committee note that it was decided by Government of India in May 1973 that the deserters should be asked to refund Rs. 3563 each, being the cost of live-stock and house-hold equipment. The Committee are informed that before the settlers went there, an undertaking was obtained from them for refund of money if the conditions of settlement in the area were not fulfilled by the settlers. It was, however, conceded during evidence that unless the undertaking was validly executed on bond paper, it would be futile exercise to effect recovery. The Committee consider that Government should have obtained from the settlers the necessary undertakings which could be legally binding on them. They, however, trust that Government will exercise due restraint and caution in this matter so as not to penalise cases of genuine hardship.

1.113. The Committee note that in his letter of May 1971, the then Adviser to the Governor of Assam had, inter alia, mentioned that the settlement of ex-servicemen in the Seijosa area had created "new political and social tensions." It is also learnt that the NEFA Tribal students of the Gauhati University had also represented against the policies of the Administration of settling ex-servicemen in the NEFA area. During evidence the Deputy Zonal Director, Tribal Development, however, disagreed with the views expressed by the then Adviser to the Governor of Assam and stated that the place of resettlement of ex-servicemen was selected very carefully by the Arunachal Pradesh Administration taking into account what the feelings of the local inhabitants would be and that in this particular area there had been no discontentment. The representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs also confirmed that as far as the resettlement of ex-servicemen in the Seijosa area was concerned, there were no reactions. He, however, assured the Committee that any future policy of settlement in this particular area would be worked out after taking into confidence the views of the Administration and involving people's representatives. The Committee hope that in accordance with the assurance given to them, Government will actively associate the local inhabitants in formulating policies in regard to the settlement of outsiders in the area so that the feeling of the local population are not unnecessarily exacerbated and the development of the area is carried out in harmonious social atmosphere.

1.114. Considering all the aspects of the scheme for resettlement in the Seijosa area of NEFA, as discussed in the earlier paragraphs, the Committee regret that a sum of Rs. 24.68 lakhs spent on the scheme till March 1974 has been rendered largely infructuous. The Committee hope that Government will learn a lesson from this ill-fated scheme and while formulating any new proposals for re-settlement in remote areas try to avoid the lacunae and mistakes which led to the failure of this scheme.

NEW DELHI;

November 19, 1977.

Kārtika 28, 1899 (S).

C. M. STEPHEN,

Chairman,

Public Accounts Committee.

APPENDIX I

Conclusions/Recommendations

No.	Para No.	Ministry concerned	Conclusions/Recommendations
I	2	3	4
I	1.97	Ministry of Home Affairs	From a study of the material made available to them and the information gleaned during evidence, the Committee cannot help concluding that the scheme for resettlement near Seijosa in Arunachal Pradesh on which Rs. 24.68 lakhs were spent till March 1974 was ill-conceived <i>ab initio</i> . That the scheme ended in a dismal failure is amply proved by the fact that out of a total of 157 families inducted for resettlement in the area, only 36 are left and the rest have deserted. The reasons for the failure cannot be ascribed only to the inertia of the settlers. Government have also to bear, in a sufficient measure, responsibility for the same. Some of the more conspicuous shortcomings and instances of ineptitude displayed by the authorities are discussed in the following paragraphs.
I	1.98	Do.	The Committee learn that the Team of Officers which had visited the area in August 1967 had pointed out the need for a detailed soil survey of the area. The Directorate of Resettlement of the Ministry of Defence, however, agreed to the resettlement of ex-servicemen in the area in May 1968 and requested the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to get the neces-

sary soil tests done. In August 1968, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture undertook soil reconnaissance in the area. In their report (September, 1968), the Soil Reconnaissance Team also pointed out that "the Sejjosa soils are not quite suitable for permanent cultivation and reclamation of land by removing the existing shrubs on the surface was likely to result in heavy soil loss." The report had also recommended that "detailed soil survey of the area may be taken up before the lands were allotted." However, in January 1969 and September 1970, Government of India sanctioned resettlement of a total of 190 families in the area at an aggregate cost of Rs. 53.06 lakhs, without waiting for the detailed soil survey and the induction of settlers commenced in March 1969. In July 1973, another reconnaissance survey was conducted by the All India Soil and Land Use Survey Organisation of the Government of India, Calcutta Centre, which came to the conclusion that "these soils have very low water holding capacities," that "root penetration is good upto 50 cms., but roots are very few in the sand layer" and, therefore, "the soils are unsuitable for cultivation." The detailed soil survey of August 1975 also did not present a very optimistic picture so far as soil fertility in the area was concerned and had suggested soil conservation measures and irrigation facilities as a pre-requisite for agricultural development of the area. On the face of these findings, the Committee are doubtful whether the site selected for the settlement was really suitable. The fact that numerous representations were made to the Government by the settlers pointing out the poor quality of soil is a clear indication that expectations of the Government in regard to

the fertility of the soil, despite the reports of various teams and surveys, did not come out to be true. The Committee, therefore, cannot but deplore the hasty action taken by Government in inducting the settlers in the area without first making sure that the area was fit for agriculture which was going to be the mainstay of the settlers in the area.

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Do.

The Committee note that out of 500 acres of land in Sector 'A', irrigation facilities were provided to 105 acres only—60 acres in September 1972 and 45 acres in March 1973—and that no irrigation facilities were provided in the Jolly and Dibru sectors. During evidence, the Committee have been given different reasons for the delay in providing the irrigation facilities. According to the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs, it was never intended that the irrigation facilities would be provided to the settlers immediately. He informed the Committee that the Arunachal Pradesh Administration had advised that settlers should first raise two or three crops and then only it could be decided as to what type of irrigation facilities were needed by them. The Arunachal Pradesh Administration has, however, informed the Committee that the delay was due to inadequate provision of funds for irrigation. According to the Administration, the provision of Rs. 500 per family for the irrigation facilities was "deplorably short of requirement." The Committee are surprised that this prerequisite for the success of the settlement scheme pointed out by the Team of Officers as far back as 1967, and reemphasised in subsequent survey of the area, had remained neglected for considerably long time after the settlers were inducted in the area. The Committee would like Government to inquire as to what extent the delay was due to shortage of funds and

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why funds could not be released to the Arunachal Pradesh Administration in time.

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I. 100

Ministry of Home Affairs

The lack of realism on the part of Government is also reflected by the fact that the logs and stumps left over as a result of the reclamation of land in this area continued to lay scattered in the fields allocated to the settlers, seriously hampering cultivation of land by them. The settlers were expected to remove these logs and stumps from their fields as a part of the process of development of land for which they were given a cash grant of Rs. 400 per acre. The Arunachal Pradesh Administration have themselves admitted that this grant was "inadequate to meet the expenses for removal of the stumps lying in the thickly forested plot." No wonder the effort of the settlers to develop their land was demonstrably low. It was as late as in 1975-76 that a scheme costing Rs. 85,800 was drawn up and sanctioned for uprooting the stumps from agricultural plots but the scheme was still-born in view of large-scale desertion of the settlers. The Committee are unable to understand how Government initially expected the settlers with their limited resources to undertake the kind of development of land envisaged and make it fit for cultivation, particularly in such a difficult terrain. In the opinion of the Committee, Government should have themselves cleared the area of logs and stumps as a part of reclamation work before allotment of land to the settlers.

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I. 101

Do.

The utter lack of planning and human approach to the problem of settlement is reflected by the fact that in Dibru sector, the drinking water

supply was arranged in June, 1973, i.e., nearly three years after the second batch of settlers arrived for settlement in Dibru and Jolly sectors and no arrangement for supply of water was made for Jolly Sector till May, 1972 by when all the settlers in this sector had deserted. The Committee understand that the delay in arranging water supply was due to inadequate provision of funds and the delay in sanctioning water supply scheme. The Committee are not satisfied with the statement of the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs during evidence that the settlers could use the water from the springs and rivulets in the area. The Committee feel that Government should have taken care of the need for provision of at least drinking water in the settlement area and made available adequate funds for this purpose. They would like Government to inquire into the reported delay in the sanction of the scheme.

6 I-102 Do.

The inept planning is also indicated in the delay in the construction of roads linking the various sectors of settlement to Upper Seijosa where the Administration Headquarters, school, health unit and market were located. The Committee note that Sector 'A' was about 4 to 5 kms. from Upper Seijosa. The first party of settlers was inducted in this Sector in March, 1969, but the construction of 4 cause-ways and pipe culverts to make the road between Upper Seijosa and Sector 'A' negotiable during rainy season, was approved in February, 1971 and the work was not taken up till December, 1975. As a result, the settlers, who have not so far deserted, continue to face difficulty during monsoon in reaching Upper Seijosa for availing of the various facilities available there.

7 I-103 Do.

The second batch of settlers was inducted in the Jolly and Dibru Sectors, which were about 10 to 16 kms. from Upper Seijosa. The second

party of settlers was inducted in these sectors in April-May, 1970. The Jolly-Upper Seijosa Road, which was started in January, 1969, was not completed till January, 1973 by when all the settlers had deserted that sector. The construction of road connecting Dibru Sector with Upper Seijosa was not completed by January, 1975. No further progress has been made due to the desertion of settlers. The Committee are surprised as to how Government were expecting the settlers in the Dibru and Jolly sectors to avail of the various facilities at Upper Seijosa without proper communication. The Committee regret that no attention whatsoever was paid to this matter.

According to the Audit paragraph, out of 157 families as many as 87 families were settled in the Dibru and Jolly Sectors. Even for availing of the elementary facilities like dispensary, school, post office and the market, the residents of these Sectors were to come to Upper Seijosa. There being no bridge over Dibru river separating these sectors from Upper Seijosa, the residents of these sectors had to cross the river on elephants provided by the Administration. Realising the hardship of these settlers the then NEFA Administration had approached the Ministry of Home Affairs in September, 1969 for construction of a wide-rope suspension bridge over the Dibru river and proposed for this purpose the provision of Rs. one lakh in their budget for the year 1970-71. This proposal along with other proposals were examined by the Ministry in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the NEFA Administration were informed that the Governor of Assam

was competent to accord sanction for carrying forward the scheme for 1970-71 and 1971-72 on the approved pattern of the earlier scheme provided the total expenditure did not exceed Rs. 50 lakhs. As the earlier scheme did not contain such provision it was construed as rejection of the proposal for construction of a suspension bridge.

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The Committee observe that the reply of the Central Government to the proposal from the Arunachal Pradesh Administration was vague and ambiguous and was bound to lead to misunderstanding. The Committee regret that for this reason alone the scheme for the suspension bridge over the Dibru river, which would have been an important part of the life-line for the settlers in the area, could not be proceeded with.

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The Committee are unable to appreciate the wisdom of concentrating all the facilities for the settlers, such, as administrative headquarters, post-office, health unit, school and market, at Upper Seijosa, which is about 4 to 5 kms. from Sector 'A' and 10 to 16 kms. from Dibru and Jolly sectors. The Committee feel that it was too much to expect the sick to march 10 to 16 kms. through inhospitable terrain, crossing Dibru river on elephant back, to reach the health unit at upper Seijosa and for the children to march 20 to 30 kms. daily to attend school at Upper Seijosa under similar conditions. They feel that Government should have set up these facilities in the settlement area itself so that the settlers could have freely availed of these facilities. As it is the facilities are well-nigh out of the reach of the settlers.

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stock, tools and implements, seed, seedlings and household equipment instead of supplying these to them, although there was no market nearby where these could be purchased. The Arunachal Pradesh Government have stated that to facilitate the easy procurement for various items and also in consideration of the practical difficulties involved in the selection of required articles by the settlers, erstwhile NEFA Administration constituted a Purchase Board comprising responsible district officers and the representatives of the settlers, who were to inspect a few firms of repute at the nearest town of Tezpur and nearby important marketing centres to purchase the items. During evidence, however, the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs informed the Committee that in response to representations, "individuals were allowed to purchase things of their own liking." He, however, admitted that "marketing facilities is a problem in that entire area." The Committee feel that in view of the marketing problem in the area it would have been better to supply the articles to them rather than to hand out cash to them. If the settlers had been given the goods in kind, Government would not have been confronted with cases of misutilisation of cash as reported by the then Adviser to the Governor in his letter to Central Government dated 22 May 1971.

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All India Radio were not utilised for giving publicity to the colonisation scheme due to its secret classification and that the Rajya Sainik Boards were expressly informed not to use radio, newspaper or handouts for publicising this scheme. When it was pointed out that 'perhaps the notices were put on the Notice Boards in the Office of the District Boards and nothing happened thereafter', the Director General of Resettlement conceded that 'this could have happened.' The Committee, therefore, cannot escape the conclusion that this scheme was not properly publicised particularly in the contiguous areas of Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and other areas where geographical conditions comparable to those prevailing in NEFA existed. Due to this lack of publicity, many potential aspirants from these areas who could have better adjusted to the conditions prevailing in the settlement area, might have been prevented from offering themselves for selection.

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The Committee note that the Selection Board which selected the ex-Servicemen for settlement in the area consisted of the Liaison Officer of the Ministry of Defence, Deputy Commissioner of the District from which ex-Servicemen came, District Agricultural Officer of the concerned District and the Secretary of the DSS&A Board of the concerned district. No officer of Arunachal Pradesh Administration was included in the Selection Board. The Committee feel that it would have been prudent to include in the Selection Board a representative of the Arunachal Pradesh Administration who was fully conversant with the geographical conditions of the area and had experience of district administration. His advice in regard to the fitness of the applicants for settlement in the area would have been, in the opinion of the Committee invaluable.

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14	I-110	Ministry of Home Affairs	<p>In this context, it is noteworthy that the area selected for re-settlement was largely slopy where only terrace type of cultivation was possible. The Committee, therefore, fail to understand as to how and on what basis were the people from Punjab and Haryana, who were not expected to have any knowledge and experience of terrace cultivation, selected for settlement and inducted in the area.</p>
15	I-111	Do.	<p>The Committee also observe that it was originally envisaged that an advance party of about 12 persons representing the selected ex-Servicemen should also visit the settlement site to familiarise themselves with the conditions obtaining in the area. The Committee were informed during evidence that this idea was given up for the reason that "there might be divergent opinions which might create confusion in the minds of other prospective settlers." The prospective settlers were also not given any advance orientation about the conditions of living in the area and the type of cultivation suitable for adoption there. These facts establish beyond doubt that the selection and induction of people for settlement in the area was, to say the least, far from satisfactory and if the settlers ultimately deserted the area it was not the settlers entirely who were to be blamed but the responsibility therefor lies to a greater extent on Government themselves.</p>
16	I-112	Do.	<p>The Committee note that it was decided by Government of India in May 1973 that the deserters should be asked to refund Rs. 3563 each, being the cost of live-stock and house-hold equipment. The Committee are informed that before the settlers went there, an undertaking was obtain-</p>

ed from them for refund of money if the conditions of settlement in the area were not fulfilled by the settlers. It was, however, conceded during evidence that unless the undertaking was validly executed on bond paper, it would be futile exercise to effect recovery. The Committee consider that Government should have obtained from the settlers the necessary undertakings which could be legally binding on them. They, however, trust that Government will exercise due restraint and caution in this matter so as not to penalise cases of genuine hardship.

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I-113

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The Committee note that in his letter of May 1971, the then Adviser to the Governor of Assam had, *inter alia*, mentioned that the settlement of ex-servicemen in the Seijosa area had created "new political and social tensions." It is also learnt that the NEFA Tribal students of the Gauhati University had also represented against the policies of the Administration of settling ex-servicemen in the NEFA area. During evidence the Deputy Zonal Director, Tribal Development, however, disagreed with the views expressed by the then Adviser to the Governor of Assam and stated that the place of resettlement of ex-servicemen was selected very carefully by the Arunachal Pradesh Administration taking into account what the feelings of the local inhabitants would be and that in this particular area there had been no discontentment. The representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs also confirmed that as far as the resettlement of ex-servicemen in the Seijosa area was concerned, there were no reactions. He, however, assured the Committee that any future policy of settlement in this particular area would be worked out after taking into confidence the views of the Administration and involving people's representatives. The Com-

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mittee hope that in accordance with the assurance given to them, Government will actively associate the local inhabitants in formulating policies in regard to the settlement of outsiders in the area so that the feeling of the local population are not unnecessarily exacerbated and the development of the area is carried out in harmonious social atmosphere.

18 I-114 Ministry of Home Affairs

Considering all the aspects of the scheme for resettlement in the Seijosa area of NEFA, as discussed in the earlier paragraphs, the Committee regret that a sum of Rs. 24.68 lakhs spent on the scheme till March 1974 has been rendered largely infructuous. The Committee hope that Government will learn a lesson from this ill-fated scheme and while formulating any new proposals for resettlement in remote areas try to avoid the lacunae and mistakes which led to the failure of this scheme.

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