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Evidence of Dr. Roerich on 29.3.58, before the
Hotel Committee.

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Dr. Roerich, a Russian Artist who has been residing in the Kulu Valley (Nagar) since 1929 was kind enough to give evidence before Diwan Chaman Lall, Chairman, Hotel Standards and Rate Structure Committee on 29.3.58.

Dr. Roerich mainly concentrated on the development of tourism to the beautiful Kulu Valley. He made out that the following two things are necessary for ~~development~~ developing any place as a tourist place:

- (i) Accessibility;
- (ii) Accommodation;

Regarding accessibility he pointed out that existing Pathankot-Mandi-Kulu Road is a very long route to Kulu. The nearest approach to Kulu Valley is through Bhabu Pass. This road is an ancient road and reaches the very heart of Kulu (Sultanpur). If this road is made motorable, a lot of mileage would be saved and it will be an impetus to the development of tourism to this important and beautiful valley. I have already discussed this question of developing this road with Military Authorities but I gather from their talks that they are not keen to take up this job.

Air strip at Bhuntar

Because of the narrow valley and the clearance between the two ridges, the air-strip could hardly be developed into an important aerodrome. ^{However} Hence it ^{and} could be improved ~~from its present conditions~~ by ^{it could be useful} maintaining it properly and ~~keeping~~ for such services which are able to operate under the circumstances. I was told that Heron planes could operate and could lift the perishable fruits which cannot be otherwise exported from the valley. ~~That this suggestion is specially for the lifting of the fruits.~~ Though ^{On} the

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other hand on their way to Kulu such Heron planes could lift useful merchandise needed by the local population ^{and} or perhaps could be utilised for some tourist traffic also.

ROADS

Dulchi Pass.

into a proper

~~Bhabu Pass~~ road should be made ~~to road~~ *motorable*

~~attract more traffic.~~ (The question of aerodrome may be

subsequently considered air-strip constructed some-

where outside the Kulu Valley.) Later after this

and the road

~~Bhabu Road~~ has been developed, my suggestion would

be that the place should be surveyed for ^a proper aerodrome *preferably*

~~located between Palampur and Baijnath in the Kulu~~

~~Valley. Some point in this place would feed the~~

whole adjoining areas as does the Bagdogra airport.

ACCOMMODATION

The place is central for Mandi, Puhur, Simla, Sasej, Kangra, Belaspur.

As it will take some time before the Bhabu *and S. C.*

Pass becomes motorable or the aerodrome is put up,

I would suggest as an interim measure to use the existing facilities of motorable traffic to Kulu (existing Pathankot-Mandi Road) and concentrate upon the accommodations for tourists in the Kulu Valley proper. The present difficulty in the Kulu Valley is the shortage of accommodations. Tourists who come to Sultanpur or any interim stopping station, very often find no accommodation whatsoever because ~~all~~ all the rooms have been occupied by touring Government Officials. And sometimes the tourists are made to quit to make room for the Government officials as a result of which tourist traffic to Kulu Valley suffers.

There are a few small hotels like MayFlair and Major Bhanon's River View at Katrian and some other establishments at Mannali. Of these, at the present moment, only Major Bhanon establishment is functioning

well and certainly better than others. But if one proposes to develop tourist traffic none of these accommodations will be sufficient or adequate to accommodate certain types of tourists who are used to all types of modern amenities. I would, therefore, propose that a survey be made of desirable places where tourist accommodation should be provided and some sort of hotels or rest houses be put up that would satisfy the average tourist who wishes to go there with a minimum of hardship.

DEVELOPMENT OF SPAS IN KULU VALLEY

At Manali(Vashist) we have hot-springs of considerable importance that could be developed into a very attractive bath resort. The Vashist spring is situated near the Vashist temple and on the road to Rhotang Pass leading to Lahul and Spiti. I feel that the advantages of hot springs such as Vashist, Kalat and the Parbati Valley hot-springs Manikaran & Kirangee etc should be exploited in the interest of tourists and pilgrims. I would mention that this constitutes the old pilgrimage route to Trilok Nath between Lahul and Chamba. It is an important place to pilgrimage and twice a year there is a pilgrim traffic passing through Kulu and stopping on the way side Dharmshalas over the Rhotang Pass through the valley of Lahul to Triloki Nath.

DEVELOPMENT OF LAHUL FOR TOURISTS.

I would also emphasise the importance of Lahul to tourist traffic because it provides a typical Tibetan country in contrast to the Kulu Valley which is quite different from the point of view of climate, flora and scenery as well as the population. After Kulu has been developed I suggest that some sort of amenities for tourists be provided in Lahul on a lesser scale of course. I believe that Manali offers one of the best places for hotels and a tourist halt because of its

many walks and comparatively flat and wooded country. From Manali one can extend trips to the Solang Valley beyond Manali upto Blas River . I suggest that some sort of Rest Houses be provided in Solang Valley. The particular spot where this Rest House should be constructed should be surveyed. The only available rest houses are at Kothi and at Rohilla on the way to Rhotang Pass and Lahul. I would say that the present conditions of these bungalows are not satisfactory especially at the Rohalla Rest House. The Kulu valley with its wonderful climate beautiful scenery and historic association offers a unique place for tourism. The small valleys on both sides of the Kulu Valley afford facilities for small and big game shooting while the rivers can be further stocked with trout. The fruits produced in the Kulu Valley are some of the best fruits provided to the tourists and it would stimulate further growing for export.

The present faulty communications have been in the way of export of fruits. Land-slides during the rainy season when the fruit is ripe and ready for export have very often ruined entire batches of fruit loaded on lorries which had to wait for days for the road to clear. The transport should be improved and there should be points on which Mistries etc. could be found to repair any damage to the vehicles as damaged vehicle is a very common occurrence there.

The development of tourist traffic would also stimulate some of the local cottage industries of the area. The most important cottage industries is shawls/^{Pashmina wool} making . This industry has been completely neglected at present . I understand there is no Pashmina wool available locally and Pashmina wool is substituted by inferior Australian wool. I will say apparently

Pashmina wool was being exported abroad in large quantities and became unavailable to the local weavers. It is very important to make Pashmina wool again available in order to stimulate this important ~~na~~ and unique industry of the valley.

I feel the emphasis at the present moment should be to improve the motor traffic to Kulu and the tourist accommodation in the valley itself. The question of road may be taken either simultaneously or at the later date.

Natural Resources.

Minerals

To be dictated.

Medicinal Plants
