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making since 1958, it is still in the process of construction; and from the beginning has been mired in controversy and contention. It runs through the middle of what was prime Jarawa territory, and has now become its rough eastern boundary. Apart from anthropologists and environmentalists, the need and alignment of the road was questioned by economists, who saw transport by water, as adopted by the British, as a far more feasible solution to the communication requirements of the islands. But, once sanctioned, the momentum of construction was difficult to arrest even though the fears that it would be a constant drain on resources quickly proved to be only too true. Work had to be suspended in 1975, for a period almost eight years, while the whole project underwent a review after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed her doubts on the wisdom of disturbing the Jarawas or opening up the forests to people and their inevitable requirements. But it was too late to halt the juggernaut: an incomplete road attracts far more opprobrium than no road at all, and the settlers were by then veterans at exerting their political rights. Apart from cost escalations, the review had no other results.

----- Initially, one of the reasons for delay in construction was the threat the Jarawas represented to the labour, who became frightened and ran away at the slightest of provocation, so great was their fear of the Jarawas, despite the Jarawa Protection Posts and the armed Bush Police. Other major problems were frequent delays in shipment of material and equipment from the mainland to the Islands, the rough weather for the major part of the year, and the technical difficulties of construction of culverts and bridges. To cap it all, money flowed in, not according to requirement but according to availability, in some years as little as Rs. 25 lakh, a mere pittance when one considers the total cost of the road. On construction alone, leaving out of the reckoning the punitively heavy costs of maintenance, and the costs incurred by the Border Roads Organization that is engaged in completing the northernmost tip of it, Rs. 443 crores have so far been spent – almost Rs. 1.5 crore a kilometer -----".

The Anthropologist Dr. B.S. Guha (1950) made the following observation: "The fact remains, however, that so long our activities in the Middle Andaman are confined to exploration of forest products the Jarawa can continue to hunt down his wild pigs or