



Proceedings of the Ninth Session of the First Assam Legislative
Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government
of India Act, 1935

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 11 a.m., on
Saturday the 8th March, 1941

CORRECTION SLIP TO THE ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
DEBATES (BUDGET SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY HELD IN
MARCH, 1941)

Correction Slip No. 2 of 1941.

For the words " The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali replied ", wher-
ever they occur below Unstarred questions, put and answered during the
1941 March Session of the Assam Legislative Assembly, substitute the words
" The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia replied ".

[File No. As.-17-L.A. of 1941.]

SHILLONG :
The 15th July 1941.

A. K. BARUA,
Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.

A. G. P. (L.A.) No. 85—500—16-7-1941

(c) What were the orders of Government on those proposals ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI replied :

9. (a)—Rupees 15,000 per Local Board subject to the provision that
the amount may be raised upto Rs. 18,000 in exceptional cases where the
utility of the improved length is definitely enhanced by improving the
road upto an important point e. g., a hat, village, road junction, etc.

(b)—A statement showing the proposals is placed on the library
table.

(c)—Government accepted the projects recommended by the Assam
Communications Board as per list of roads at pages 2 and 3 of the Proceed-
ings of the Sixth Meeting of the Assam Communications Board, a copy of
which was sent to hon. members of this House with Public Works
Department letter No. 9216/30-C., dated the 13th November 1940.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know whether this amount of
Rs. 15,000 was allotted for three years ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Not for
three years. The sum has accumulated from the Motor Taxation Fund.
Another programme may be made next year.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Have the Government satisfied themselves
that the great delay made by the Local Boards last year in submitting their
schemes is not going to be repeated this year ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: We expect
that the Local Boards will expedite the matter this year.

Assam Civil Service Examination held in September 1940

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY
asked :

*10. Will Government be pleased to state

(a) Whether it is a fact that the questions of the Assam Civil Service Examination held in September, 1940, leaked out and a subsequent Examination was held?

(b) If so, will Government please state who was held responsible for the said leakage and the names of candidates who got the questions prior to the examination?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA
replied :

10. (a)—It is suspected that there was a leakage

(b)—The matter is still under enquiry

Realisation of subscriptions towards War Fund

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY
asked :

*11. Will Government be pleased to state the amount realized by each of the Subdivisional Officers of the district of Sylhet towards War Fund with the names and addresses of the donors and the amount contributed by each of the donors?

*12. Is it a fact that an understanding has been given to Subdivisional Officers that whoever would realise the highest amount would find his name in the next Honours List and as a result of this there is a hard competition amongst the Subdivisional Officers for topping the list?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA
replied :

11.—The particulars asked for are not available with Government, and they consider it to be for the Committee responsible for raising the fund to publish such particulars as they deem fit.

12.—Certainly not.

(Starred question No. 13 standing in the name of Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee was not put by the questioner.)

Next General election of the Assam Legislative Assembly

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*14. Will Government be pleased to state when the next General Election of the Assam Legislative Assembly will take place?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA
replied:

14.—In the normal course, during next cold weather, Government are however unable to make any definite statement at the present moment, as conditions are exceptional,

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

Debt Conciliation Boards of Surma Valley

Babu BALARAM SIRCAR asked :

25. Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a list showing the names of members of each Debt Conciliation Board of Surma Valley with their designations and professions? (To be shown subdivision by subdivision.)

26. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) If in any Board any member from the Krishak Party or Scheduled Caste has been appointed?

(b) If not, will Government be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

27. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether the members of a Debt Conciliation Board are changeable?

(b) If so, do Government propose to appoint some members, in every Board in the Surma Valley, from the Krishak Party and the Scheduled Castes?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

25.—A list is given below—

THE NAMES OF MEMBERS OF THE DEBT CONCILIATION BOARDS IN THE DISTRICT ARE GIVEN BELOW SUBDIVISION BY SUBDIVISION

North Sylhet subdivision

1. Maulavi Md. Abdul Latif, Sub-Deputy Collector	
2. Rai Bahadur Romesh Chandra Bhattacharjee (Zemindar).	Chairman.
3. Babu Hem Chandra Das	Member.
4. Babu Birendra Lal Das (Zemindar and Honorary Magistrate).	"
5. Maulavi Abdul Barkat Md. Israil (Zemindar and Honorary Magistrate).	"
6. Maulavi Akmal Hussain (Vice-Chairman, North Sylhet Local Board).	"
7. Maulavi Dewan Taimur Roza Chaudhury (Zemindar and Honorary Magistrate).	"

Karimganj subdivision

1. Maulavi Syed Aolad Hussain, Sub-Deputy Collector.	
2. Maulavi Hajee Abdul Karim Choudhury	Chairman.
3. Babu Bhupendra Mohan Deb (Zemindar)	Member.
4. Maulavi Manajir Ali	"
5. Maulavi Abdul Khalique Chaudhury	"
6. Rai Sahib Umesh Chandra Dutta (retired Head Master, Government High School).	"
7. Babu Suresh Chandra Das (Zemindar)	"

Samangaj sub-district

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| 1. Maulavi Md. Ali, Sub-Deputy Collector | Chairman |
| 2. Khan Bahadur Golam Mustafa Choudhury,
M.L.A. (Zemindar) (since resigned) | Member |
| 3. Allhaj Maulavi Dewan Md. Abbas Choudhury,
M.L.A. | " |
| 4. Maulavi Maqbul Husain Choudhury, M.L.A. | " |
| 5. Babu Mohini Mohan Choudhury (Zemindar,
Sukair). | " |
| 6. Maulavi Abdul Hannan Choudhury | " |
| 7. Babu Durga Prasad Das (in place of Babu ...
Mohan Choudhury resigned) | " |

South Sylhet sub-district

- | | |
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| 1. Maulavi Abdul Gani Choudhury (retired Inspector
of Police and Zemindar). | Chairman |
| 2. Babu Girindra Kumar Gupta (Choudhury Zemindar). | Member |
| 3. Maulavi Md. Idris of Padmapur | " |
| 4. Maulavi Mahiuddin Ahmed Choudhury of Chyaspur. | " |
| 5. Babu Nandalal Das of Karimpore | " |
| 6. Babu Raj Kishore Das, Manager, Narayan Press | " |
| 7. Maulavi Manwar Khan of Katnalganj Police Station. | " |

Habiganj Board

- | | |
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| 1. Maulavi Md. Abdul Gafur, Sub-Deputy Collector | Chairman |
| 2. Babu Shibendra Chandra Biswas, M.L.A. | Member |
| 3. Babu Joshoda Kumar Modak | " |
| 4. Babu Ram Lal Das Choudhury of Ajmiriganj | " |
| 5. Maulavi Abdul Gafur Choudhury (Mukhtar) | " |
| 6. Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed Choudhury | " |
| 7. Maulavi Md. Ashrafuddin (Merchant) | " |
- 26.(a)—Babu Ram Lal Das Choudhury of the Habiganj Board belongs to a Scheduled Caste. Government have no information and no concern with the representation of political parties on Debt Conciliation Boards.
- (b)—The hon. member is referred to the reply given to question 16 asked by Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy at the last session of the Assembly.
- 27.(a)—Yes, at the end of their period of office.
- (b)—Does not arise.

Deprovincialisation of Government High Schools

Babu LALIT MOHAN KAR asked :

28. Will Government be pleased to state —
- Whether they have examined the question of deprovincialisation of Government High English Schools ?
 - If so, with what results ?
 - If not, why not ?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

28. (a)—The reply is in the negative.
 (b)—Does not arise.
 (c)—Because of other pre-occupations.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: With regards to question 28(b) may I know when this question was first raised on the floor of this House?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: It may have been discussed before, Sir, but I do not exactly remember when.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Shall I be wrong if I say that as far back as 1938 this question was raised, and the Government then promised that they would consider the matter?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I am prepared to accept my hon. friend's statement, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I request that the Ministers can leave this matter to their worthy lieutenants, I mean the Parliamentary Secretaries?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Yes, Sir. We shall take up this question as soon as possible and also discuss with our Parliamentary Secretaries.

Director of Public Instruction

Babu LALIT MOHAN KAR asked :

29. Will Government be pleased to state—
 (a) When the present Director of Public Instruction is due to retire?
 (b) Whether Government intend to recruit one from outside the province for the post of the said Director of Public Instruction?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

29. (a)—On 31st August 1941.
 (b)—The question of selecting a successor has not been taken up.

Hon'ble Ministers' discretionary grants for the year 1940

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA asked :

30. Will Government be pleased to furnish detailed accounts of the allotments made by each of the Hon'ble Ministers from their discretionary grants for the year 1940?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

- 30.—Statements of the grants made are placed on the Library table.

Announcement of the result of election to the Central Text Book Committee

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: As a result of the voting to the Central Text Book Committee, Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Akhbar Chaudhury has secured the largest number of votes and he is declared elected to the said Committee. (Applause).

General discussion of the Budget, 1941-42 and discussion on charged expenditure

Mr. D. B. H. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not propose to deal with the entire budget, but to confine myself to certain aspects which call for constructive comment, and I would ask Government to accept any considered criticism or suggestion I may have to give in the spirit in which it is made.

Dealing firstly with Provincial Excise, we note, with satisfaction, that the revenue from this item for the current year shows an increase of Rs.2,36,000 on the budgeted figure, and that the total revenue from this source remains well up to the previous year, indicating, as Government point out, the general improvement in the economic condition of the people.

But any satisfaction we may feel on this point is tempered by the knowledge that Government contemplate the total prohibition of opium during the year 1941-42, for as to the success of such a scheme we must confess to having very serious doubts. We have always conceded that the practice of obtaining revenue from the consumption of opium was morally indefensible; but with the scheme for reducing consumption now entering its fourteenth year, is it not pertinent to ask ourselves what real advantage has been achieved to offset the huge loss in provincial revenue of no less than thirty-six lakhs of rupees since 1927-28?

Let me emphasize again that we are not concerned with the loss of revenue from this source, but as the largest employers of organised labour in the province, we are seriously, indeed primarily, concerned with the welfare and physical well-being of our labour forces, a portion of which, unhappily, are addicted to opium.

Before it can be claimed that the prohibition scheme has been a success, it must be proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the physical health and well-being of the addicts throughout the controlled areas are at least as good, if not improved, since the introduction of the scheme. The failure of the scheme in any of its many aspects must inevitably produce a deterioration in the health of the addicts, and at the same time bring increased suffering and impoverishment.

In this matter I can speak with personal knowledge, as I have seen for myself the cruel suffering experienced by addicts in their desperate but fruitless attempts to give up the drug. After a brave fight, in every case in my experience, resort has again been made to the drug, now obtained at a very high price illicitly or, where the high price cannot be afforded, resort is made to *ganja* and *bhang*, resulting in marked deterioration both morally and physically.

We ask ourselves, therefore, "can it be claimed that the scheme has been a success"? While the consumption of Government opium has undoubtedly dropped, can Government deny that the consumption of illicit opium has increased enormously? I submit, Sir, that Government cannot and indeed do not deny this fact as the Hon'ble Finance Minister admits in his Budget speech that smuggling is rampant and big cases have been successfully detected.

Members may recall the attitude which this Group adopted towards the scheme of opium prohibition during the last Budget Session, when Government expressed their intention of continuing the prohibition experiment in the Dibrugarh and Sibsagar subdivisions for a further year. This policy we supported as we had clear evidence that attempts to check the illicit trade had proved unsuccessful and expressed the view that until this trade had been stopped, further extension was useless and indeed dangerous. We also invited Government to publish a frank report on the working of the whole scheme. For this scheme to be successful it is essential that illicit supplies be totally stopped. No amount of propaganda, no amount of persuasion, no amount of ineffective medical treatment will induce the drug-soaked addicts to give up the habit so long as supplies are available to them. These supplies must be stopped, and to do this a huge preventive staff is necessary, requiring large sums of money. The present preventive staff is totally inadequate, and if Government are to carry out the scheme for total prohibition of the drug with any hope of success, it is essential that this staff be improved and heavily augmented.

There is another, and perhaps more serious aspect to this problem, to which Government are evidently not blind. In a considerable number of cases, the addicts deprived of their opium supplies either through shortage or exorbitant cost, are taking to *ganja* and *bhang* as substitutes. These drugs, as members are aware, are even more evil and dangerous in their effect than opium. Cases are coming to our notice where opium addicts have already taken to these dangerous substitutes with disastrous results. On many tea gardens where prohibition of opium has been enforced, opium addicts are taking to *ganja* and, as a result, have become mentally deranged and are now a dangerous menace to society.

With the introduction of total prohibition these cases will increase, and Government must be prepared to accept responsibility for the consequences. Accommodation for dangerous cases must be found in suitable institutions.

Government have allotted the large sum of Rs. 90,000 for prohibition propaganda. We question the value of this. It is useless to assume that addicts can be dissuaded from the drug habit after years of adherence by mere propaganda. We suggest in all seriousness that this money be utilised entirely for the increase in preventive staff which we have already advocated.

The Tea Industry can fairly claim to have done their utmost to co-operate with Government since the scheme of prohibition was introduced two years ago. This Industry is prepared to continue that co-operation, but we feel bound to issue a solemn warning that the extension of the scheme will inevitably produce serious problems which will be difficult of solution. Nevertheless, if the scheme is to be successful, on Government and on Government alone rests the responsibility for finding the solution. The failure of the scheme will not only render the efforts of the Tea Industry and others useless, but will result in the increased suffering and impoverishment of thousands of unhappy addicts and render their plight vastly worse than before the introduction of the scheme.

I cannot leave this subject without respectfully drawing the Hon'ble Finance Minister's attention to certain remarks of his in connection with tea drinking. Inadvertently, we hope, he has bracketted the habit of tea drinking with the injurious habits of taking liquor and *ganja*. We would have preferred to see the word 'non-injurious' in place of 'least injurious', (*Hear, hear*).

We note Government's reference to the new Publicity Department, started last June, and that the aim of the Department is to give prompt and accurate information firstly on the various activities of Government and secondly, on the progress of the war. We suggest to Government that the Department should be renamed as the War Publicity Department and that its object should be firstly war publicity and secondly more war publicity; in other words, the entire energies of the Department should be bent to this end only.

I need hardly remind the House of the serious situation developing in the Far East through Japan's insistence on the New Order in Asia. Repercussions of this policy are to be seen in Thailand and French Indo-China and in the rapid preparations being made at Singapore and throughout Burma and Malaya. The grim shadow of the war is expanding slowly but perceptibly and the North East Frontier and Assam are assuming a new importance in the scheme of things.

Events are moving fast and may move faster and it is imperative that the ignorant public should be enlightened by regular and authentic war news, as lack of information more than anything tends to breed panic, the dangers of which are too self-apparent to need elaboration.

As to how this vital information can best be transmitted to the public we must leave to the Department and the Publicity Officer, and would merely make the following suggestions:

- (1) The immediate launching of a large scale scheme of propaganda to encourage the rapid and continuous collection of funds, preferably in the form of loans to assist in carrying on the war.
- (2) Government should influence to obtain a regular supply of war news and war propaganda films for wide display at all public cinema-theatres and, if possible, elsewhere throughout the province.
- (3) Competent Government officers should tour the province and address public meetings regularly to acquaint the population with the progress of the war.

We consider the sum of Rs. 30,000 allotted to the Publicity Department inadequate and it compares unfavourably with the sum of Rs. 90,000 allotted to Prohibition propaganda. If our suggestion for the allocation of this sum to aids Excise Preventive staff does not meet with Government's approval, we would strongly urge that part, if not all, of this sum be diverted to War Publicity purposes.

There can be no question but that the spirit of the people of Assam is there. To galvanise this spirit into action which is vital for the carrying on of the war, propaganda and publicity are essential. It rests with Assam's War Publicity Department to give the lead.

(4) A campaign of War savings should be launched in which every one should loyally play their part, for, by such a system not only can much needed funds be raised for the prosecution of the war, but such savings will go far to offset the economic dislocation and depression which is bound to follow during the post-war period.

(5). Finally, I must congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister on the spirit manifested in the concluding paragraphs of his speech under the heading of "The War Effort in Assam".

Here I must make reference to the Assam Government's contribution to His Majesty's Treasury of one lakh of rupees. In a war effort costing the Mother country some 13 millions of pounds daily, the sum of one lakh may

seem small. The amount to us is immaterial ; what matters is the spirit which prompted that gift and to that spirit of the Government, we desire to pay sincere tribute.

The horrors of the bombing of civilian populations are known and have shocked the civilised people of the world ; yet the bombings continue, and who can say that the day is not approaching when the whistle of bombs dropping may be heard in Assam ? Need I remind the House that we in Assam, with the development of modern aircraft, are within 3 hours by air from Japanese bases ? Air raid precaution work is vital, the necessary fire-fighting and other equipment must be provided, and the responsibility for the provision of this equipment and protection of civil population lies with Government. Have funds for this purpose been included in the Budget ? I respectfully ask the Hon'ble Finance Minister to provide an answer to this question.

The war is rapidly approaching a critical stage and funds are urgently needed. It behoves every man and woman irrespective of class, nationality or creed, to prepare for a supreme effort to bring the war to a victorious conclusion.

Let us not forget that the victory of England, the British Empire and her gallant Allies and friends, in this struggle is the victory of Democracy, the right to live, speak and move freely, in short, is the preservation in the years to come, of the very ideals so treasured by all freedom-loving peoples ; and a victory which is the daily prayer of millions of people throughout the world, crushed and brutally oppressed by Nazism.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY:
Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has become the fashion to criticise the Budget as extremely re-actionary, disastrously, anti-national, self-condemned and hopeless.

No Government with limited resources could ever satisfy the people whose requirements are great and needs innumerable. Assam's Budget as presented by the Hon'ble Finance Minister also could not satisfy us. The Hon'ble Finance Minister deserves thanks as he has not come forward with any proposal of new taxation. The province of Assam is sick of chronic deficit and this year's Budget is also a deficit one. The Hon'ble Finance Minister admits that in the absence of any other means of new taxation, this deficit could be met by retrenchment which had been delayed on account of pre-occupation and mainly due to the unfortunate illness of the Hon'ble Premier. I am sorry, Sir, that I cannot concur with the Hon'ble Finance Minister, so far as this matter is concerned. The Retrenchment Committee was formed in the year 1937 and the report with the recommendation of the Committee was submitted to Government in due time. There was sufficient time between the submission of the report and the Hon'ble Premier falling unfortunately ill for giving effect to the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee. Government did not even think it worthwhile to place the report before the members in this House, though the gist could be published in some Calcutta Papers. I would say that it was only red-tapism that was responsible for the delay in considering the report of the Retrenchment Committee. I find that the Government was wanting in commendable promptitude and sincere desire.

What is the hopeful feature of the Budget ? The Hon'ble Finance Minister sickens us by his patent cry of "No money" and so the people cannot look forward to future with hope. We are aware of the limited resources and we believe that the Government could manage their affairs within their resources. They could not provide money for the establishment of the Medical Institution at Sylhet, but for the sake of prohibition

they could sacrifice revenue to the extent of Rs. 10 lakhs to provide money for prohibition propaganda. What is the Government's intention?

That the present Government are not in agreement with the Congress Government is obvious from the fact that they have taken up the prohibition scheme and the mass literacy campaign, the results of which will be seen next year, Sir, that hundreds of primary schools are being opened every year which Government ought to be bringing to the attention of the Government. In the Budget we find a repetition of the same demand for Rs. 10 lakhs, while they have provided one lakh for the same purpose in the mass literacy campaign, thus showing a great respect for the interests of our young generation. Although the Government are not in agreement with a supplementary demand adequate for the purpose of providing education for boys and girls.

The Hon'ble Finance Minister has mentioned in his budget speech that a scheme had been drawn up for the establishment of a University in the province of Assam and that a Bill is to be introduced before the House. As the Bill is silent about the location of the University, some hon. members suggested Coashate as the location of the University. We are informed that a general meeting of the Assam Valley has already made a declaration of a donation of Rs. 10 lakhs and if the University is located at Coashate. It is a matter to be decided forward with declaration of a donation of two lakhs at the discretion of the Government. But it will be simply to apply the same principle. We, as legislators, stand for the whole province, for all the people of the province, for looking after the interests of all the communities and groups. People of more than 50 nationalities live in Assam and 42 per cent of them speak Bengali while 21 per cent speak Assamese and the rest speak different languages. Before we come to the final decision about the establishment of a University in the province of Assam, we should consider all these facts thoroughly and unprejudicially.

Sir, among the people of Sylhet, I myself and Allah Dewan, Muhammad Ahabab Chaudhury are only two persons who gave out our views publicly through the columns of newspapers in favour of the establishment of a University in Assam. I hold the same view today also, but at the same time I do not hesitate to declare that the solution of the question of location will minimise our labour and troubles. Reasons should overcome sentiments.

Sir, now I come to the question of communication. I represent an area of 541 square miles which is backward in every respect. Modern system of communication is unknown to the people of my constituency. The position in communication remains the same as it was in the 15th Century. The entire attention of the communication department is centralized in some particular roads and the Hon'ble Minister of Public Works Department hardly finds any time to think of the people of the hitherto-neglected area. No light of modern days can reach those localities for want of communication. More than once I discussed this matter on the floor of this House, but up till now no improvement is made. Some parts of the Sunamganj subdivision still remain unconnected with the subdivisional town and it takes two days' time for the people to reach the town in these days of advancement and progress. My suggestion in this matter is that Government should provide more money for improving communication system in backward localities instead of centralizing their attention to some particular roads.

Except constructing a few bunds, the Government have not given the peasantry any hope of improving their economic condition. Appointment of a few demonstrators will not improve the condition of the peasantry. Protection of crops and better production are the main factors in the economic life of a peasant. I am sorry, Sir, that the attempts of the Ministry towards this are not up to our expectation.

Co-operative Societies were established only to help the peasants in time of need. But now the position of the co-operative societies is simply hopeless. Last year while presenting the Budget for 1940-41, the Hon'ble Premier informed the House that the conditions of the co-operative credit societies were moribund, but I am sorry to say, Sir, that during the last 12 months the popular Ministers did not make any attempt to improve the condition of the co-operative movement. This year also we do not find any hopeful sign in the attempts of the Council of Ministers that they will thoroughly overhaul the entire system and bring a regeneration in the economic life of peasants. The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Co-operative Department is quite unacquainted with the condition of the people of the plains of the Department. Until and unless the Co-operative Department is thoroughly overhauled, the economic condition of the peasantry cannot be improved.

The Hon'ble Finance Minister has said much about the Debt Conciliation Boards. But it seems that the Ministry is ignorant of the fact that owing to the defect of the Assam Debt Conciliation Act, desired results are not achieved. The Boards cannot pass any judgment, but settle results. If the creditor does not agree to the settlement proposed by the Board, the Board becomes helpless. The Board can give award or issue certificate but that is not absolute. The Civil Court may or may not accept it. In the event of non-acceptance of the award by the Civil Court, the position of the Board becomes embarrassing and the parties become loser. I bring this fact to the notice of the Government so that they may amend the Act as early as possible.

I criticised the Forest Department in my previous speeches, but the matters have not improved. The oppression and malpractices are still going on. However, Government have introduced a Bill with a view to amend the Forest Regulation and we are to see how matters stand.

Government opened the Department of Publicity with a view to acquaint public about what they do for the benefit of the people. But the manner in which the Publicity Officer is allowed to work is far from satisfactory. So far as my knowledge goes, the Officer was not provided with any office where he was to work. Except publishing some press notes he had acutally nothing to do. I want that the Officer would do more publicity; he would issue pamphlets giving first hand information to the people about the beneficial work undertaken by Government. The newspapers do not reach in all localities and it is only through the Publicity Department that the Government can make themselves popular to the people. The Bengal Publicity Department is publishing weekly newspapers while our Government is wanting in providing funds for the much-needed publicity. This Department will prove useless, unless matters improve to meet the requirements. I am entirely in one with Mr. D. B. H. Moore so far as the publicity of the authentic news is concerned.

I have already said that the present Ministers are following in the works of the Congress Ministry and I am surprised to find that a provision has been made for *Rashtriya* in the Budget. This is nothing but a Congress measure. The question of *Rashtriya* is not yet decided in an all-India basis. Administration of *Rashtriya* and incorrect Hindi constitutes the so-called Hindustani Language and we are not prepared to accept that undeveloped language as the *Rashtriya* of India. I sound a note of protest against that provision.

The Budget shows that the flow of money is going as it were the streamlets of Shilling towards the northern valley. A restriction is found in the provisions made for the four Government Colleges of the province which was not at all desirable.

I discussed only some of the points of the Budget and I do not like to make my speech lengthier. I hope the Government will give every point their due consideration. With these few words, I beg to resume my seat.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall try to avoid repetition of the arguments made by the various hon. members of this House in connection with the Budget. Sir, we are here as the representatives of our people, we are sent here to represent the masses and we have been granted an autonomous Government. We are responsible to our electorates for their good and in their good our welfare is also included. His Majesty's Government has granted this autonomy to make experiments of our qualifications whether we are responsible to our people, whether we know how to administer our affairs for ourselves. This is called the Government of the people, for the people, by the people.

Sir, there are already many changes in the Government Benches of this House. With changes we learn many things, we experience many circumstances, but in those changes our Budget remains as it is, I mean the figures. Though there is some increase here and there, deficit remains as it is. It may be small or large in amount. Only the Congress Coalition Government tried their level best to improve the financial exchequer and they have been successful to a certain extent although they could not show their activities to the extent they desired and left something to be done by the next Government. The present Government also have followed in their footsteps in some matters and if they do so in right earnest they will earn the reputation which they held before. Sir, it will not be superfluous to say that even now Hon'ble Sir Muhammad Saadulla is liked by one and all. In the days of Reformed Council, people prayed for him and now also they pray for him. As it is said "সেই বান রাজ্য ও নাই, সেই বান ও নাই", but "স্বাদুল্লা ও আছেন, স্বাদুল্লার রাজ্য ও অটুট" but their grievances remain as they are. So I request Hon'ble Sir Saadulla to keep his reputation as it is and as before.

Now I come to another point and it is this. Our needs and requirements are large and nobody can satisfy us in the present financial condition of our province. Sir, unless we improve and strengthen the financial

exchequer we have nothing to fall upon. But I am sorry that the present Government did not try to increase the revenues of the province. Here I may suggest that they can avoid taxation if they can do one thing. There are lands in the province which are now the abodes of the wild animals, such as tiger, elephant, etc., etc. This is a pitiable affair to allow the people to live without any land whereas these lands are being used as the abodes of wild animals. Earth has not been created by God for the abode of the wild animals alone.

Sir, we can only fetch revenue by giving settlement to landless people. We heard from Maulana Abdul Hamid Sahab yesterday that there are many landless people going from place to place and seeking redress but in vain. This is the only means, Sir, of increasing the revenue. Again, Sir, if they think that this is not sufficient they may tap the surplus of the rich people as the Congress Government did and now my Planter friends are satisfied how their money is being utilized by their own Government. Sir, one thing I may say, and though I may suggest this, I think the Government will not take it up because it is a party Government. In the past in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform days there were some defects. Those were the days of dyarchical system of Government and the Ministers had to face paucity of funds and the interference from His Excellency the Governor. Now, Sir, what is the defect? The defect is the helplessness of the Ministers in a party Government. But if they tried to satisfy the people they could avoid this difficulty easily. If they really take interest in the welfare of the people they may come forward to see the grievances of the people and know things for themselves and do what they can do. Well, Sir, unless and until we prove ourselves worthy and deserving how can we expect further flow or shower of Reforms from His Majesty's Government? If we are to do it, we are to do justice according to our capacity granted to us. Sir, if this Budget be the proof of our capacity, may we expect anything? Unless we know how to tax ourselves, unless we know how to spend our money, how His Majesty's Government can think of extending any further Reform? I do not venture to say anything about Congress attitude and activities here. Sir, the electorates are the best judges of the Budget, but unfortunately the Budget is written in English which is unknown to them. If the Budget would be written in their mother tongue then they would know it and criticise it. Our criticism will however be of no avail. The Publicity Department is not for them, I know.

Sir, now let me come to the Budget proper. I do not like to say anything about the new schemes except that they are insufficient for the purpose. We require more but they have budgeted less. They will say they have no money. Sir, I would have been satisfied, the electorate would have been satisfied also, if it was found that an attempt was made to increase the revenues of the province and also augment some of the new schemes. I say Sir, there are some schemes which could have been avoided easily and in their places some urgent schemes could be taken. Government have taken some schemes which could have been easily avoided. I will cite only one example, *i.e.*, halting allowances of Mandals. Sir, there are many items like this which could have been avoided.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:
On a point of information Sir. Does the hon. speaker who is speaking

know what is meant by this "halting allowance" of Mahanta :—What he read the remarks? Will he be able to tell us what it means and why it is that

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI :—I am not sure, but I know what is meant by it. So long as we are talking of the halting allowances and why in this critical moment they should be given, I do not know.

Sir, regarding the improvement of agriculture, I do not know what the Government have done. What we need is more efficient agriculture. The improvement of the condition of the farmers means the improvement of their intellectual, financial and physical condition. They are to get more produce, more harvest and more income. They are to be getting more return; but, Sir, every year there is flood and drought, and we are doing nothing to check that we are they are trying to improve the condition of the paddy lands.

Then every year there is cattle epidemic and we are doing nothing, and there some Field Assistants are appointed, some Veterinary Assistant Surgeons are appointed but these are not sufficient. I do not know what we are wanting. They do not get medicine for the epidemic diseases of the cattle.

Sir, the condition of the people should be improved. The Government should know it first and they know perhaps better than I do. But we know it in the field and they may think it only from the height of Shillong Hill. Sir, only the other day the drainage committees have been taken up by the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge, but the work done is quite insufficient and I think the Hon'ble Minister will admit that.

In some way or other the productivity of the land has to be increased. *khals* and canals have to be dug. Government should take up these works with right earnest.

Again, Sir, regarding industries, while people in other parts of the world run by aeroplanes we do not know how to make a bicycle. While people in other countries have radios and can learn what is going on in the world we get our news through peons of post offices, i.e., after considerable delay.

Sir, we may look at our kitchen, we may see our utensils, we may go to our drawing room and see how far we are successful there. We can also look to our dresses and see how far things made in Assam are used. I do not like to say anything more on this.

Sir, I have left out one thing, and that is about grazing land and fodder reserve land in every *pargana* of the Surma Valley for grazing purposes. This may also be done for every *mauza* of the Assam Valley.

Sir, I will now say something about *Rin Dan Samity* i.e., about the Co-operative Societies. Yesterday Mr. Sen revealed the pitiable condition of these societies. Moreover if we give more loan, people are more indebted and they do not know

how to get out of it. This is the trouble. Sir, in order to make this movement successful we should replace the *Ris Dan Samities* by some productive *Samities* *(laughter)*. We must also see that the people use money for their real benefit. For want of proper education these people mis-spend their money. The whole movement will be a failure if these people do not know how to utilise the money. Another thing, Sir. The post of the Chairman is honorary and we know that honorary activities are not doing well now-a-days. My suggestion during the regime of the Congress-Coalition Government was that the State should control the movement in consultation with the public. In our days of autonomous Government there is no distinction between official and non-officialism. So, if the Subdivisional Officers or Deputy Commissioners be the Chairman of Committees, I hope they will work well. Some time we find that retired Extra Assistant Commissioners or other retired big officers are there. But we must remember that Government have given them up as losses, and they cannot do any good to the public as their energy is spent up in majority of the cases. So, Sir, the activities of this Department should be guided by Government in right earnest. I appeal to the Hon'ble Premier, who knows it fully well, and better than anybody else here, as he was in charge of the Department for many years. I appeal to him to render all possible help to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of this Department.

Coming to Education I should like to say something. In these days of autonomy Government we should see whether the education that is now imparted does any real good to the people.

So far as the collegiate education is concerned, we find few students are educated there. But 93 per cent. of our masses remain illiterate. We find that the major portion of the Education Budget has been made for professors, lecturers, and so on, but only Rs.40,000 has been provided for primary education. I have not seen any provision for middle English education; only Rs.17,000 has been provided for Madrassa education, a little amount for *toll* education and some amount for industrial and technical education for present days. Calcutta University has made vernacular the medium of instruction. We should also make Bengali and Assamese the mediums of instruction in Assam. But I do not like to go so far, Sir, against the current of the Ganges, because we find now-a-days that so many schools and colleges are established here and there which, I think, after some time will be found unwieldy and unnecessary. This education is spoiling our life, energy and morality too *(hear hear)*, and bringing poverty into the family, into the community and society in general. We have to spend about 19 years of our life in getting a degree of Bachelor of Arts or Science, and what is the use of that to get the post of a clerk, Daroga or Extra Assistant Commissioner at the most. Thus far and no further. In consideration of our expenditure what are we gaining? Other branches are better off. I hope my hon. European friends will not mind if I ask how many of them are degree-holders, and how much money did they spend for education in England and how much they are earning. So, Sir, I say that vocational education should be imparted to our boys in an extensive way so that they may be able to earn more. To spend less and to earn more should be our motto in the education of our boys. Sir, provincial autonomy was different. Now we are responsible for education

and other activities which would contribute to the welfare of the society. The course must be changed and we should give more industrial and agricultural training in different lines and also for other types of training.

So, Sir, I suggest that there should be a committee consisting of outside experts, the Premier and some members of this House, headed by the Hon'ble Speaker. The committee should find out what subjects and languages we should impart to our children. This should include both primary and secondary courses. We should not allow our boys to go to schools to be sent to go beyond the matriculation standard. And whether or not the boys should be taught in some of the classes depending on the level of the schools they should be taught spinning, weaving, embroidery and other arts which are beneficial to girls. (A voice: "What about singing and dancing?") Sir, singing and dancing are from the West and do not suit us. I do not like that. We should not borrow anything from the others. We do not like even to borrow a thought from Bengal.

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI Will the hon. member please say whether the committee should be a standing committee or a general committee?

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI I do not know if there is a committee or not at present. There should be a conference or a committee to find out what kind of education should be given now a days to our school-going children.

Now I am coming to another point, Sir, viz., Madrasahs. I know there are some hon. members in this House who will laugh at Madrasahs, because they think that studying in the Madrasahs is a backward qualification. Religiosity is foreign to them and they do not like it. But I should say, religious education should be imparted to boys. I do not know anything regarding *tolls*. My Hindu friends know it and I leave it to them. As regards Madrasahs, there are many of them established in Assam Valley and Surma Valley and some of them are given grants-in-aid while others are not getting any aid from Government. Only a sum of Rs. 12,500 has been allotted to the Madrasahs and Rs. 5,000 for *tolls*. Whether the money allotted to *tolls* would suffice or not I do not know. But the money allotted to the Madrasahs in the present circumstances is not sufficient. I request the Hon'ble Education Minister, who has visited many Madrasahs and who knows their condition, to be a bit more liberal. In Karimganj Madrasah Maulvi is getting only Rs. 12 and a graduate and Madrasah-passed teacher is getting only Rs. 50 as Superintendent. In other Madrasahs also this is the state of affairs. Unless they are given more, we cannot get the requisite services from them.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, the hon. member will finish now.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: There is something more, Sir. There is a Board in Dacca which is administering the Madrasahs

education. I think we should also have a similar Board in Assam for administering these Madrasas. I request the Hon'ble Minister for Education to consider this question in consultation with the Hon'ble Premier and Khan Bahadur Maulavi Ataur Rahman, Assistant Director of Public Instruction. This will serve many purposes.

Again, Sir, the other day the Hon'ble Premier said that Khan Bahadur Maulavi Ataur Rahman has been appointed as Assistant Director of Public Instruction and his post as Assistant to the Director of Public Instruction for Muhammadan Education has been left unfilled.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The post has been advertised by the Public Service Commission, Sir.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: I want to know whether he will remain in charge of this Madrasa education or not.

Several voices: No.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: If the post of Khan Bahadur Maulavi Ataur Rahman has been advertised I have nothing more to say, otherwise I would have said that he may remain in charge of this in addition to his own duties till some better arrangement is made.

Sir, the students of Sylhet Madrasa have the following grievances which they submitted to the Government and to us for redress. I hope their grievances will be considered by the Government.

গনাজেৰ বেদ্দমতে আৱজ।

আজ প্ৰায় দুই বৎসৰ হয়, গিলেট মাদ্ৰাসায় ব্যাপক ছাত্ৰ ধৰ্মঘাট হইয়াছিল। তাহাৰ কাৰণ ছিল টাইটেল ও সিনিয়ৰ মাদ্ৰাসাৰ বিবিধ অভাৱ অভিযোগেৰ প্ৰতি কৰ্তৃপক্ষৰ উদাসীনতা। কৰ্তৃপক্ষৰ দুয়ানে বাৰবাব আবেদন নিবেদন জনাইয়াও যে দিন শুধু কাঁদাই সাৰ হইল, সেই দিন ছাত্ৰগণ ধৰ্মঘাট অনুষ্ঠানে বাধ্য হইল। তাৰপৰ কৰ্তৃপক্ষ নানাবিধ প্ৰতিশ্ৰুতি প্ৰদান পূৰ্বক ধৰ্মঘাট ভঙ্গ কৰাইলেন। তখন পৰ্যাপ্ত পৰিয়ালে টাইটেলৰ শিক্ষক, টাইটেলৰ ছাত্ৰগণেৰ কিতাবেৰ বন্দোবস্ত এবং পৰ্যাপ্ত কামৰা নিৰ্গানেৰ প্ৰতিশ্ৰুতি কৰ্তৃপক্ষ দিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু অতিব দুঃখেৰ বিষয় এই যে কৰ্তৃপক্ষ উপৰোক্ত প্ৰতিশ্ৰুতিৰ বিন্দু বিসৰ্গও পূৰ্ণ কৰেণ নাই।—

বিনীত—

শ্ৰীহট স্থানীয় মাদ্ৰাসা ছাত্ৰবৃন্দ।

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member may give a substance of the letter in English.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: On a point of order, Sir. May we have a translation of this because we cannot follow what the hon. member is driving at?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am asking the hon. member to give the substance of the letter in English.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI And they submitted it to the Government and also to the Congress Committee for comment, and these are the grievances of the post. *(Laughter.)* There are 21 members in all.

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI Sir, may I request the hon. member to be less humorous because he is making the whole House laugh? Thus his valuable suggestions are being spoiled.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE But he is responsible for the laughter. *(More laughter.)*

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Laughter is sometimes a mark of appreciation. *(Laughter.)*

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI If I may, Sir, I do not wish to take up any more valuable time of the House, and so I will resume my seat saying that the Government should take up the issue of the province in right earnest, honestly and sincerely.

Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AKBAB CHAUDHURY Mr. Speaker, Sir, according to the normal course it is perhaps the last Budget of the Assembly that has been presented before us. So I deem it my duty and a privilege to place the demands and grievances of our Muslim community regarding the educational problems of this province. In this age of ultra modernism when a section of our Indian political thought are determined to wipe out religion and so-called sectarian education from the surface of India, we are glad to find that the Hon'ble Finance Minister has made a special provision in his Budget for the spread of the Madrasa and Sanskrit education. In his words, "Lovers of ancient culture will find that both Islamic education and Sanskrit education have come in for an increased help". Education still forms the main factor of our national life. It has been found from experience of the last few years that the educational system in the garb of religion, is found to be most popular among the Muslims.

Now, I like to draw the kind attention of our Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Hon'ble Minister for Education to the grievances of our Muslim education in this province. Our first demand is to summon a Muslim Educational Conference consisting of representative Muslims who take a keen interest in our educational problems. Since 1914 no such conference was held in Assam. It has been urged on several occasions by the leading Muslims to hold such a conference and we earnestly hope that the Hon'ble Minister of Education will take a lead in the matter.

Since the establishment of the British Raj in Assam we have got no Muslim Inspector of Schools. The question of appointing a Muslim Inspector of Schools was discussed on several occasions on the floor of this House; so we earnestly urge upon the Government to appoint at least one Muslim Inspector and one Assistant Inspector of Schools.

The term "Assistant to the Director of Public Instruction for Muslim Education" is not a happy one. It has created a confusion. It may mean an Assistant or a Clerk. The post of an Assistant to the Director of Public Instruction should be raised to the status of the Assistant Director of Public Instruction for Muslim Education.

The status of the Special Deputy Inspector for Muslim Education should be raised to the status of Assistant Inspector of Muslim Education, so that he may be in a position to visit the High Madrasahs and High Schools. A

similar post—I mean the post of an Assistant Inspector of Schools for Muslim Education should be created for the Assam Valley, i.e., two posts of Assistant Inspector for Muslim Education should be created—one for the Surma Valley and one for the Assam Valley.

Muslim education may briefly be divided into three parts:—(1) University or high education ; (2) Secondary education ; (3) Primary education. Madrasa education should be included as the integral part of our Muslim education in the province.

Let us begin from the top. I mean University education. The question of the establishment of a University in Assam is the burning topic of the day. It has caught the imagination of the whole province. Assam is an autonomous province. The provincial autonomy will lose its significance if we are not autonomous and independent both educationally and political-ly. In the language of the Bill—“Further, the opportunities of advancement and progress created by the introduction of provincial autonomy and responsible Government can be fully utilised, as far as higher education is concerned, only by establishing a separate University in Assam capable of dealing with special requirements and problems of the province

Since 1934 it was the dream of the hon. Maulavi Munawwar Ali, then leader of the Independent Party, in the old Legislative Council, to establish a University in Assam. In his 1934 University Bill—he gave notice to introduce it as a private member as a result of which the report on Assam University Enquiry by Mr. J. R. Cunningham was published in 1936. Now it has fallen on the able shoulders of his Colleague—I mean the Hon'ble Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri—to bring into being the dream of a University in Assam. The Bill has already been introduced and so we have got an opportunity of analysing it from the different angles of vision. In the clause 28 of the Bill, we find the names of Islamic Board of Studies in the list of Boards of Studies, but in sub-clause (1) it has been defined that a department of studies may be constituted in all or any of the subjects. I draw the attention of the Hon'ble Prime Minister to the word “may”, Sir,.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. member is discussing the provisions of the University Bill. He should discuss the Budget now.

Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY : Sir, culture is the life blood of a nation. Muslims are a nation. We do not believe in one nation theory. We have separate culture, tradition and nationalism of our own. We go, if our culture goes.

We live under the jurisdiction of the Calcutta University. But, Sir, the history of the Calcutta University has taught us a bitter lesson. It has strangled our Muslim cultural life. You will be surprised to know, and my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhuri, who is now adorning the seat of the Fellow of the University will bear me out when I say that such innocent Islamic words such as *Allah Rasul*, *Namaj*, *Roza*, *Pani*, *Gosal* etc., are discouraged and in some cases disallowed by the University authorities. There can be no more *zulum* than this. So the Calcutta University has been rightly called the Kashi Vidyapith. So we want to escape from the *zulum* and tyranny of the Calcutta University as soon as possible. The sooner it is done the better it is for us.

Sir, in connection with the University Bill, the question of valley culture has been raised in the Press and the platform. We recognise only two cultures in India. One is the Islamic and other is the non-Islamic or the Hindu culture. The advent of provincial autonomy has created so many geographical and provincial cultures in India. It is a menace to our national life. We Muslims are never misled by the slogan of provincial and valley cultures. We Muslims are Muslims everywhere. We belong to

world fraternity. To us there is only one religion, that is the culture of Islam. We do not believe in the theory that the establishment of a University in Assam will snatch away the halo from the Prophet's tomb.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER The hon. member is reading a thesis on the subject of University education. The hon. member should remember that his speech should be relevant to the subject under discussion.

Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: I have tried so far to give my views regarding the education of Assam. Now, I come to secondary and primary education. High Madrasahs in our province are incomplete without the Higher Secondary and B. A. courses. So we strongly recommend for adding Islamic Intermediate classes in the Sylhet Government Ala Madrasah.

About the Maktab system. Maktab system is not a hopeful one. It is a defective system. We should make an attempt to make an improvement, so that it may remain a progressive regarding the Maktab system. A separate Maktab Board should be established for the proper guidance of the Maktabs.

Madrasah Education. The status of the Sylhet Ala Madrasah is placed in an anomalous position. The Sylhet Government Ala Madrasah was recognised and granted the status of a first grade college. But the post of the Principal of the Madrasah is placed in Class II of the Assam Education Service. May I request the Government to raise it to the status of Class I of Assam Education Service? The Hadis course in the Title class is incomplete without *fiqh*. So we urge upon the Government to open the *fiqh* course along with the Hadis course. Calcutta Madrasah has received a few posts of Class I for the great Maulanas of all India fame. We also urge upon the Government to create and reserve the two posts in Class I for the great Maulanas of all India fame so that they may inspire the ideals of *Umat Aam* of the holy prophet among the students of the Madrasah who will become the religious leaders of the Muslim community.

With these few words, I draw the kind attention of the Government to the grievances of the Muslims and beg to resume my seat.

✓ **Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, many members have congratulated the Hon'ble Finance Minister for the nice and elegant speech that he has delivered in presenting the Budget Estimates for the year 1941-42. I crave his forbearance, if I venture to strike a dissentient note to this general trend of panegyric. As for myself, I am not feeling happy over the Budget speech he has made. After four years of our chequered parliamentary career we would hardly like to be treated as beginners of political grammar-school. The speech is ample evidence of the profound scholarship of the Hon'ble Minister. But the historical genesis, over elaboration and unhappy digressions that he has indulged in, could easily await a better and fitter occasion. In the annual Budget speech we expect much more precise and concise statements from the Minister-in-charge of Provincial finance.

The Budget presented is a deficit one. But a deficit Budget by itself is not a national calamity, and it should not be allowed to stand on the way of the beneficial activities of a popular Government. The excess expenditure over the revenue receipts is more justified than a paper surplus Budget. I tried in vain to find such a relieving feature in this deficit Budget.

Sir, the year we are going to close has been a year of grace and prosperity. The collections under different heads have considerably improved. The revised estimates of the current year have exceeded the budgeted income. No large scale development scheme have been undertaken by the

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it. The people remain where they were a year ago. Still our deterioration has proceeded a step further. We know the Hon'ble Minister is not a conjuror. But we do hope that a little tact and in his part will work out the miracle of a balanced Budget. A sum of Rs.7 lacs has been provided for new schemes, which we see the outcome of an ardent desire on the part of the Government to bring about all-round improvement in the moral, intellectual, economic and national condition of the people of the country. But the manner in which the major portion of the amount has been frittered away will nullify the high ideology for which the amount is intended to be spent. Excepting one or two small items this long list of new measures will be of no avail to the poor masses. These small items have no bearing on their present condition or future prosperity. These shall hardly minimise the difficulties in their struggles for existence.

The Retrenchment Committee began its labour with the inauguration of the new constitution. It is as old as our life in Assembly. But its report has not as yet seen the light of the day. It is really good news that the Committee has at last come to its journey's end and the Hon'ble Finance Minister expects a good saving on the basis of its recommendations. The Land Revenue Policy of the Government, especially in the temporarily settled districts, has been in a fluid condition for the last few years.

The makeshift arrangement of remission and collection has adversely affected the provincial finance. It is time that this question be re-examined and the policy of the Government crystallised.

Sir, the Government Resolution on the Line System question is not a bold document. The impression is fast gaining ground that by allowing this artificial barrier to continue, the Government is blocking the tide of national wealth and prosperity. The Government has suffered from indecision in the past. The solution has been deferred and delayed. How we wish, that the Special Officer affords speedy relief to the thousands of unfortunate landless human beings! We have heard with rapt attention the wonderful speeches of our friend Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan. He has levelled very serious allegations against the Government. He has described in pathetic language, how houses are being burnt down and their women-folk humiliated. These are too staggering to believe. I suggest that Government should at once proceed to appoint an impartial committee to enquire into the truth or otherwise of these serious charges. If half of what he has said be true, we do not know where we stand.

The Government can deservedly claim our gratitude for the Debt Conciliation Boards set up in the different districts. These have gone a great way in reducing the indebtedness of the poor agriculturists of the land. But the Act under which these Boards are functioning is so imperfect that so often it defeats its own end. Practical experience gained from the working of the Boards has shown that it is essentially necessary to amend the Assam Debt Conciliation Act, 1936 in order to empower the Boards to effectively deal with the large number of cases coming before it. I would like to ask the Hon'ble Finance Minister, who is also in charge of this subject, to come forward with a suitable Bill in the next session of the Assembly. We are awaiting with eager expectation the assent of His Excellency to the Assam Money Lenders' (Amendment) Bill, 1937.

The Hon'ble Finance Minister has spent as many as 1,500 words in giving an elaborate sketch of the opium problem of Assam and the policy of the Government towards its total prohibition. An opium habit is hard to die, specially as contraband supply may be near at hand from the neighbouring province. Still this is a very bold experiment and time alone will justify the utility of this expensive venture.

It is a very welcome sign that attempts are being made to tap the immense resources of our forest reserves. There has already been an increase in the revised estimate. We share the optimism of the Hon'ble Prime Minister that the impoverished coffers of the province can be replenished by its forest wealth.

Sir, the usefulness of the Publicity Department cannot be overestimated. It establishes a cordial link between the people and the provincial Government. Alike other provinces, a department has been set up in Assam. But we are really in the darkness about its activities. Not to speak of the people at large, we, the members of the Assembly, have seldom seen the notes, communications and reports that the Department is said to have published from time to time. A proceeding to come even with the cinematograph will not bring it within easy reach of the common people. It is no use spending for mere show or pageantry. The Department should be fully equipped so that it may effectively function, or be discontinued altogether.

We are glad to note that the Government has at last tackled the thorny problem of the separation of the Executive from the Judiciary. The decision shall have very far-reaching consequences. May we hope that we shall have our own judicial service within the life-time of this Assembly?

Coming to the Medical budget, we are reminded once again to our utter dismay and shame that the prospect of starting the Medical School at Sylhet is as airy as before. It is too late to seek shelter under the commendation of the Medical School Education Committee or to advance the plea of rise of prices owing to war conditions. Successive Governments have not only flouted the decision of this House but have shown a cold neglect to the people of the Surma Valley which certainly does not go to pave the way for better understanding between the two Valleys.

The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge will earn the lasting blessing of the people of the province for taking this timely step for the establishment of a Tuberculosis Hospital and Clinic at Shillong. The Public Health Department has rendered useful work in combating successfully *kala-azar* all over the province. But Malaria is creating havoc in the rural areas. I am surprised to learn that the Public Health units at Dharampasa and Patharia have been withdrawn in spite of wide prevalence of Malaria in these two places.

It is encouraging to note that a small sum has been set apart for establishing the office of the Labour Commission. Here in Assam, by labour we mean, the immigrant labour engaged by the big tea industry of Assam. The Hon'ble Minister of Labour who comes from the district of Sylhet knows that thousands of maritime labour engaged in the ports of Calcutta, Chittagong and Bombay are inhabitants of his district. He had been in intimate touch with them in the past. The condition under which they serve and live is deplorable. May I hope that this big labour population will engage his attention and he would initiate means for ameliorating the condition of this labour population in these ports?

Coming to Education, the first thing that engages our attention, is the big scheme that has been launched under the name of the Mass Literacy Campaign. I may be excused, if I do not feel my enthusiasm over this enterprise. The scheme as it stands is ill-conceived, unsuited to local conditions and has hardly any logic behind it. What is the sense in literating our adults at this huge expenditure? Supposing for a moment that we are successful, what is the ultimate gain? How far this snatching in the first readers, which they are sure to forget in course of a few

months—will help them in their struggle for existence? How can we hope to have an increase of our literates when at least 90 per cent. of our children of the school-going age are being denied an opportunity of Primary Education? Will they not soon pass into adult illiterates and swell the number? Thus it is apparent that we have started from the wrong end.

I have read with interest the interim report published by the Mass Literacy Officer. I would ask the Hon'ble Education Minister to take it with pounds of salt. The figures are misleading, exaggerated and palpably incorrect. All the din and bustle of the inauguration ceremony palpated by Government has not been able to inject any life in it. It is already gasping for breath.

I have got practical experience of the scheme. One hundred schools were started in my subdivision (Sunamganj) and at the present moment not even five of them are properly functioning. There has been no dearth of enthusiasm on the part of our teachers who are eager for earning a little extra. But their best efforts have failed to ensure the attendance of their adult pupils. This is the natural sequence. Our masses have got little time to spend over this sort of luxury. Sitting on the olympic height of Shillong, we are apt to forget the stern realities of the life of those who have to toil from sun-rise to sun-down for a bare living.

I know the scheme was initiated by the Congress-Coalition Government of Assam. And perhaps the Education Minister was thinking more of the hostile paper propaganda than of the sound reasoning of the scheme when he gave his consent to its introduction even in a modified form. We expect better courage and foresight in our popular Education Minister.

This huge expenditure will bring us no-where in the realm of literature even in distant ages. The correct procedure would have been to amend and give effect to the Assam Primary Education Act, 1926 which would have afforded compulsory primary education to our children and trained them for the future struggles of life.

There are as yet hundreds of Venture Primary Schools in every district. This huge amount could better be utilised in helping these institutions.

I appeal to the Government to realise the futility and absurdity of the scheme and abandon it altogether. The big amount that will be available owing to the Agricultural Income-tax Act should be spent in introducing compulsory primary education throughout the province.

Sir, we are surprised to find that an amount has been provided as grant to the Assam Rastrabhasa Samity. The Samity to all intents and purposes is a Congress institution, established to carry out the behests of Wardah. What is this Rastrabhasa? Hindustani has never been accepted as Rastrabhasa. It is already dead and buried ten fathoms deep never to rise again. Why this resurrection on the part of the Education Minister who does not claim any affinity with the Congress? We are definitely opposed to the teaching of this artificial language in our schools. We would expect a statement from the Hon'ble Education Minister on this matter. With these words I beg to resume my seat.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur, the present Finance Minister of our province, at the time of presenting the Budget, has said in his lucid speech that he introduced the budget *as usual*. Then again he, in another paragraph of his speech, assures us that in presenting the Budget, he does not play the role of a conjuror or he does not entertain us with a bag of tricks. These are very frank and sincere confessions indeed on the part of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur who

is always known as a frank man. I feel, I may be disappointed, if I fail to congratulate him. His frank admissions alone deserve congratulation.

Now, Sir, let me come to the matter in charge of the Hon'ble Finance Minister—I mean the Budget which has been presented before us. On a careful search, one will be taken to despair to find that the Budget is full of tricks although the Hon'ble Finance Minister tells us that he does not entertain us with any. As usual, I shall try to make some comments and observations on the Budget now under discussion. I say as usual signifying thereby that on the floor of this House we in every such occasion make demonstrations of speeches in the way of getting vent to our needs and requirements. But, alas! everytime we are disappointed by the provisions made in the Budget by the Hon'ble Minister because we have found from our past experience that what we say in this House makes little impression on the Ministers. It is really disappointing that our Hon'ble Ministers are found always callous in the matter of giving careful consideration to the discussions which the hon members make on the floor of this House. We express the grievances of the people whom we represent with the hope of redress. It is not that we speak here to demonstrate our eloquence. The Hon'ble Ministers could show nothing new and they have proceeded in the stereotyped way.

Coming to the provisions made in the budget for taking up some new schemes in the next year, I crave the indulgence of the House to characterize it as step-motherly treatment to the people of our district. Seven lakhs of rupees have been provided for taking up new schemes and the allotments have been made in a manner which deserves serious criticism. I shall not dilate over details, but shall make a few observations on some serious omissions.

First of all I refer to page 7 of the Budget speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister where the list of departments are shown for which new allotments have been made. There we find that there is no provision for the Sylhet Medical School which is not only a standing disgrace but a standing monument of disgrace for the Government of Assam.

Then coming to the Co-operative Department which is styled as a nation-building department, we are taken to greater despair that the Hon'ble Finance Minister altogether forgot about the claims of the people at large, and he spoke a few words only at page 24 of his Budget speech which runs thus:—"A conference of certain selected members of the Legislature was convened in September 1940 to suggest ways and means for improving the condition of the Co-operative Societies. After careful deliberation, the Conference came to the following conclusions:—

- (1) To finance the Provincial Bank with a handsome loan if funds are available.
- (2) To increase the staff of the Co-operative Department.
- (3) To enquire into the assets and liabilities and also the repaying capacities of the individual debtors of rural societies through Government agency".

These are the three recommendations said to have been made by the so-called Conference which the Government formed in September last to find out ways and means to improve the condition of the Co-operative Societies.

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: May I draw the attention of the hon. member to the middle of page 5 of the Budget speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister where he mentions that there is provision of Trs.1,00 made for a loan to the Provincial Co-operative Bank?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: My attention has been drawn to page 5 of the Budget speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister where it is stated— "The estimates under most heads practically follow receipts heads, except that the head 'Loans and Advances' shows an increase of Trs. 70 mainly due to a provision of Trs. 1,00 for a loan to the Provincial Co-operative Bank". Sir, I am criticising the departments for which new schemes have been taken up. I find in the list the Departments of Education, Medical, Public Health, Agriculture, Veterinary and Industries are mentioned only. There is no mention of the Co-operative Department. It has been pointed out to me by the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Co-operative Department that a provision of Trs. 1,00 has been made for a loan to the Provincial Co-operative Bank. Now, what is the necessity for the co-operative movement? After the enactment of certain legislations, such as the Money-Lenders, (Amendment) Bill and the Temporary Postponement of the Execution of Decrees Act, it will seriously affect the co-operative movement; all these will hamper the agriculturists to get loan from private individuals. I think, it is high time for the Government to take seriously into consideration to find out some means so that the poor agriculturists may get loan whenever they require.

Now, Sir, how and why this movement is so essential can be described from a speech which the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Co-operative Department of Bengal made in 1939 in the Assembly. The Bengal Government along with other Provincial Governments finding the necessity of the movement have taken up the cause of the movement in right earnest and I can supply the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Co-operative Department with certain figures which the Bengal Government have provided for to keep the movement alive. Here I may say, Sir, that in Bengal the Government has taken up the question of rehabilitation of the co-operative movement and after strengthening of the staff sufficiently to meet the demand, sufficient beneficial help has already been rendered to the co-operative movement of the Bengal Government and as a result, the serious attention of the Government and an announcement was made to this effect by the Hon'ble Minister, Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department of the Bengal Legislative Assembly on the 15th March 1939. Among the forms of assistance given, the following deserve special mention:—

- (1) the Government besides making provision for the audit of the Bank by departmental agency free of charge also placed at the disposal of the Provincial Bank the free services of the Chief Auditor for a period of four years,
- (2) the Government has granted a subvention of Rs. 24 lakhs in annual instalments of Rs. 2 lakhs for 12 years,
- (3) the Government provided financial accommodation in the form of deposit of rupees 13.5 lakhs @ 3½ per cent. in the year 1938-39.

Far more improvement than these specific acts of assistance is the very definite assurance given by the Hon'ble Mr. Mullick, Minister-in-charge of Co-operation on the floor of Bengal Legislative Assembly to this effect "The Government fully intend to support the co-operative movement in this province and will not allow it to fall into any serious danger".

This assurance is alone responsible for the amelioration of the movement in Bengal, but there is no serious attempt to this account on the part of the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge or on the part of the Hon'ble Premier in our province. Government should come forward with a communiqué that they will be at the back of this movement. Of course, I have seen a

notification issued in the name of the Provincial Government is so far-fetched that nobody can understand it and it is a very serious blow at all at the back of this movement. As a result of this declaration all the Central Banks have at a time threatened the Government to withdraw money even before maturity and also the money which had been deposited which previously even after maturity were deposited in the Government and so asked for withdrawal. The responsibility of the Government and the Government do not take any responsibility for the withdrawal of money and so the depositors are turning to the Central Banks for withdrawal of their money and what is the result? Except the Central Government Bank at Silasagar, I think, all other banks in the province have been closed. I do not know the position of the Silasagar Bank which is in a very poor position. I do not know whether any other Central Bank in the province is in a sound condition. I know most of the banks are not in a position to repay the depositors which have already matured.

Now, what would be my suggestion to take up the department in that Government may not help these banks with any money. Simply if they can issue a communiqué—a declaration—that they will not allow that movement to die out and that they will take the responsibility for financing the Central Banks through the Provincial Bank, then I am sure the depositors will again come forward with their money to deposit.

Then again, Sir, I may tell the Government that they may take up other methods. In a resolution, probably towards the end of 1938 at Karimganj, and also in the Conference of the All Assam Co-operative Central Banks in last January at Strongang the attention of the Government was drawn to this fact as follows:

"In view of the critical position of the co-operative movement in Assam resulting from the non-payment of dues by the debtors of rural societies, the Central Banks and the Provincial Bank are not in a position to meet the persistent demand of the creditors many of whom are widows and minors and to issue new loans to deserving ones to help the organisation of the new type of services, this conference strongly demands that Government should come forward immediately to render all possible help to the credit institutions by taking up a comprehensive scheme for rehabilitation of the entire co-operative movement and provide necessary funds either I put stress on this in form of subsidy or loan or both or by authorising the Provincial Bank to raise such funds by floating debentures, the principal and interest being guaranteed by the Government on the security of lands of members who will get the benefit under the scheme."

If this is done by the Government, they need not come forward with any cash money. This is essential and this is not a new thing which has been urged upon the Government of Assam. This thing was first adopted probably in the later part of 1937 by Bihar and in Orissa, so far my information goes, in 1939. By making this declaration or giving the Provincial Bank authority to take money by floating debenture and Government giving the assurance that they stand surety for the principal and interest, the movement can be saved in the province. As to this movement, I may say that this is the only means which can alone save the agriculturists of the province. If after the passing of the new legislations our agriculturists do not find any loan, what will be their condition? After enacting these legislations it will be our bounden duty to find out some new means so that they may get loans. It is reported that even now people do not get sufficient amount of credit whenever they are in dire necessity and what is the result? If they take Rs.15 as loan, they have got to execute a bond for Rs.30. The creditor at the very beginning take document for double the amount

of money which he gives actually. If we could provide in every village some credit societies then the villagers would be much benefited.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: How long more will the hon member speak?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I am finishing within two minutes, Sir.

Sir, I think more propaganda work should be taken up at once. I understand there are organisers appointed by Government. Government also contribute some money for the organisation work, but the amount Government provides is scanty. I would urge on the Government to see that more money be provided for propaganda.

Sir, one minute more and I will finish. My hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury has given a lucid and vivid description of the mass literacy campaign which has been taken in hand by Government. Sir, this is a controversial matter and I would reiterate the views which he has expressed because we have got experience by this time that this money will not be of great use towards spreading primary education. I have seen some schools which have been recently opened. Pupils seldom attend, but the teachers have got to be paid. My idea is that more money should be spent for taking up more venture schools. We know that during the last three years Government have taken up many venture schools and the distribution of money has been such that every subdivision has got good relief. This policy of Government has been very successful, and has yielded very good results.

With these few words, Sir, I resume my seat.

Adjournment

The Assembly then adjourned for lunch till 2 p.m.

After lunch

The Assembly re-assembled after lunch with the Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy, a member of the Panel of Chairmen, in the Chair.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: On a point of order, Sir. The majority of the Government members are absent. I want to know who is going to hear the speeches.

The CHAIRMAN (Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY): Perhaps the Ministers present will take note of the speeches made.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: Sir, I must at the outset congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister for giving us the derivative meaning of the word 'budget'. He has told us that the origin of the word is from the French, the language of a people who are not now in a position to present their own independent budget. In any case, we are all very thankful to the Finance Minister for explaining the word. But at the same time, I must say, Sir, that the Budget he has presented is not to the satisfaction of the House at all.

First as regards Education. The figures given for primary education are not at all satisfactory. Education, Sir, is the most important subject ranking as the first among the nation-building departments. Education is the crying need of the people of the province, as Assam is very backward in education. Among the communities living in Assam there are some who are in the darkness still. One of them is my community, the scheduled caste community. The Hon'ble Education Minister has provided only Rs.3,000 for the expansion of primary education among the scheduled caste children. But he has provided Rs. 40,000 for the mass literacy campaign. Sir, if the children are not taught, what is the necessity of imparting education to the men who will die sooner or later within a few years? The children are the future builders of the nation, and if they are not taught, I do not see what necessity there is for teaching old men.

As regards Provincial Finance, I am very glad to see that the present Government have taken up the policy of the Government of about their predecessor, i.e. the Congress Government, and have not put a bill about the success of the scheme. They are trying to do it for the whole province at one and the same time. I am not sure whether it is a good idea. Moreover they have left out the parts which are the most important, i.e. the Khasi and the Jaintia Hills which will require a special scheme for the supply of opium. If these areas are not included in the scheme, the prohibition, I say, will be unsuccessful. I am glad to hear that the Government have a suggestion to substitute tea in place of opium. But will it be a substitute for an opium-eater? I do not think that the suggestion is a good one. It will not break the habit by drinking tea. It may be a pleasant idea, but it will not break the habit. Some group of the House, but as a member of the House, I do not think it is a good idea.

As regards the Agriculture Department, I have a few things to say. This country, Sir, is a purely agricultural country. A large part of the population are agriculturists. I am sure that the members who sit here perhaps forget that they are agriculturists. They have got their seats here. The agriculturists are the backbone of the country. The Government have started the mass literacy campaign.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY : Will the hon. member give some indication as to what was the question should have been made?

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS : I am not going to give any indication now. Provision should have been made in the Budget. But I believe the Hon'ble Medical Minister is not competent to do it.

Sir, we have first of all to look to the cultivators and whose cultivation should be done in an improved way. They should be taught the modern and scientific methods of improving their cultivation. It is possible some supporters of the Cabinet only some 34 men have been taken to make propaganda for the future election. But have they taken the real grievances of the agriculturists into account?

Now, I should like to say a few words about the Hon'ble Minister who is taking a keen interest, I mean the Hon'ble Medical Minister, Mr. Chakravarty. I will tell the House what he has done. He has taken *kala-azar* and malaria centres in his own district. That is all that he has done.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY : On a point of fact, Sir. It is entirely incorrect to say that I have taken a malaria centre in my own district.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS : If he has not done this year, it will be done next year. (Laughter.) The most gladdening thing that he has done is that he has started a tuberculosis centre in Shillong. But what has he done in Sylhet? He has taken away a *kala-azar* centre from Sunamganj where doctors are not easily available and which place is very backward in communications.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Charity begins at home.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS : But whatever they may do, it is certain that this sort of placating, this sort of taking away centres and locating them here and there will not help them in their future election.

As regards the Industries Department, I have very little to say because we have seen the Hon'ble Minister of Industries, touring in collaboration with the Hon'ble Prime Minister. It is of the utmost importance that the work of cottage industries may be encouraged in the province, but we have seen in the Budget that there is hardly any provision for this nation-building department.

As regards Education, I should speak a few words more. I think a sum of Rs. 50,000 has been earmarked for the expansion of education of children in rural and urban areas, but the allotment of money for the future year is not encouraging. The Hon'ble Education Minister has, I think, in his own centre at Palashan given a sum of Rs. 1,740 and at Nalbari Rs. 1,680, but in all other places the allotment has not exceeded Rs. 400 or Rs. 500. And what is the figure he has provided for the Surma Valley? Here at Sibsagar we get Rs. 2,340 and for Hailakandi Rs. 1,134 but as for Sylhet, the most important town in the province, he has given only Rs. 1,100. Are we to understand that those who are at the helm of the administration are taking all the money for their own constituencies and starving the other parts of the province?

I think my hon. friend Mr. Ahir has something to say about this and I think he should be given the next chance. As all the points have been exhausted in the discussion of the budget, it is useless for me to add anything more, and so I resume my seat.

The CHAIRMAN (rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY): Before any other hon. member speaks, I should like to know how many members will speak, because the Hon'ble Finance Minister will speak from 3 to 4 p. m., and it will be necessary to regulate the time.

Several voices: There are several members yet to speak.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I will give them five minutes each.

Srijut KHORSING TERANG: মহাপিতৃ মহোদয়, আজি বাজেট আবেদনৰ জনিত্বত ময়ো মিকিব হিবৰ দুখ দুখিত জনানলৈ আৰু বাঢ়িছোঁ। মিকিব জাতি বৃষ্টিৰ গড়ন বেচৰিৰ অধীনত একা পুৰি ১২৩ বছৰ হৈ গল। এই জাতিটো শিৰসাগৰ, নগাওঁ, দৰা, কামৰূপ আৰু উত্তৰ কাছাৰ জিলাৰ আদি বাসীন্দা। আৰু শিৰসাগৰ জিলাৰ ভিতৰত মিকিব জাতিয়েই ৪,৩৮৬ বৰ্গমাইল জুৰি ঠাইত বাস কৰি আছে। ১৯৩১ চনৰ census বিপোর্ট মতে জনা মাগ মে মিকিব জাতিৰ লোকসংখ্যা ১৩৫,১১২ জন। ইয়াৰ ভিতৰত ১০৪ জনে কোনোবাকমে নাম লিখিব আৰু পঢ়িব পাৰে। বাকী লোকে বিয়া পাতা বধটো কৰা কি হ'ব নাম গোন্ধেই নানানে। ইয়াৰ কাৰণ সেই অঞ্চলত স্কুল গ'বলা কৰা। এই ৪,৩৮৬ বৰ্গমাইলৰ ভিতৰত মিকিব জাতিৰ বাসিন্দা বৰ্গমাইলকে মাত্ৰ ৪০ জন পুৰিমাৰী স্কুল আৰু এখন এম্. ই স্কুল দিয়া হৈছে। মহাপিতৃমহোদয় আৰু এখন এম্. ই স্কুল দিয়াৰ বন্দবস্ত হৈছে; কিন্তু তাকো প্ৰত্যক্ষকৈ লব মে নৰা প্রতিষ্ঠানক সম্পূৰ্ণ ভাবে বিশ্বাস কৰিব পৰা নাই। কাৰণ সেই জন স্কুলৰ কাৰণে বাজেটত টকা বৰা নাই। অনাৰেবল ফাইনাংস মিনিষ্টাৰে তেখেতৰ বাজেট বক্তৃতাত উল্লেখ কৰি কৈছে যে মহাপিতৃমহোদয় এম্. ই স্কুল খনৰ কাৰণে বাজেটত টকা বৰিবলৈ পাছনিলে। অহা বছৰ Supplementary Demand বৰি বা অইন scheme ৰ পৰা টকা আনিব বুলি কৈছে। কিন্তু সেইটো বিশ্বাস কৰাৰ সোপা বুলি বৰিব নোৱাৰি। তেখেতে বক্তৃতাত কৈছে—“ I might mention an omission inadvertently made in the list of new schemes under this head. A scheme for a sum of Rs. 2,000 (recurring Rs. 1,500 and Rs. 500 non-recurring) prepared and submitted for establishing a Government Middle English School at Mohendijura in Sibsagar district for the education

of the Mikirs was omitted through oversight. I can assure the hon. members that the scheme will be taken up next year and its cost will be met either by the Government or from some other heads in the budget. The Government will be in a demand in due course." অসমৰ বৰ কাউন্সিলৰ মিনিস্টাৰে কৈছে যে কিছু সেইটো যে চৰকাৰে তীব্র ধৰে অৰ্থাৎ বৰিমাৰ অৰ্থাৎ

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI (সৰ্বমুখী)

কব পাৰে। যে সেইটো নিশ্চয় চৰ

Srijut KHORSING TERANG (সৰ্বমুখী)

কিছু তেনেকুৱা বহুত কথা হোৱা দেখা গৈছে। অসমৰ বৰ কাউন্সিলৰ মিনিস্টাৰে কৈছে যে সেইটো নিশ্চয় চৰকাৰে তীব্র ধৰে অৰ্থাৎ বৰিমাৰ অৰ্থাৎ

এই মিকিৰ জাতিয়ে বৰ নিৰীচ অৰ্থাৎ অসমৰ বৰ কাউন্সিলৰ মিনিস্টাৰে কৈছে যে সেইটো নিশ্চয় চৰকাৰে তীব্র ধৰে অৰ্থাৎ বৰিমাৰ অৰ্থাৎ

শিবসাগৰ আৰু নগাওঁ জিলাৰ ৪, ৫৮৬ বৰ্গ মাইলৰ ভিতৰত মাত্ৰ ১০ জন প্ৰাইমাৰী স্কুল আৰু এখন এম. ই স্কুল ১৯১৯ চনৰ গোৰ্ণামেণ্টৰ নিৰ্দেশেৰে নিৰ্মিত হৈছে। এই দুই বছৰৰ ভিতৰত লোকসংখ্যা নিশ্চয় বাঢ়িছে। ইমান লোকসংখ্যাৰ মাজত ওপৰত উল্লেখ কৰা যাবলী স্কুল নিৰ্মিত কৰা হৈছে। যোৱা বাজেট চেছনত অনাৰেবল এডুকেচন মিনিস্টাৰে মোৰ constituency ৰ ভিতৰত ১৩ জন প্ৰাইমাৰী স্কুল লম বুলি আৰু ১ প্ৰাইমাৰী ডি. এম. স্কুলৰ প্ৰতিশ্ৰুতি দিয়া হৈছিল। সেই তথ্যে venture স্কুলৰ লিষ্টৰ পৰা প্ৰধান প্ৰধান স্কুল কেইখন চিন দিয়াৰ। কিন্তু দুখৰ বিষয় অলপতে এডুকেচন ডিপাৰ্টমেণ্টৰ স্থানীয় অফিচাৰৰ পৰা জানিব পাৰিলোঁ যে নগাওঁ আৰু শিবসাগৰ জিলাৰ ভিতৰত মাত্ৰ ৬ জন প্ৰাইমাৰী স্কুল হৈ লোৱা হৈছে। মহেন্দ্ৰজুয়া এম. ই স্কুল যদ্বন্ধে গৰণ মেণ্টে লোৱা উচিত বুলি অনাৰেবল এডুকেচন মিনিস্টাৰে নিজেই নোট কৰি Director of Public Instruction লৈ লিখিছে। দুখৰ বিষয় তাকো বাজেটত ধৰিবলৈ পাহৰিলে বুলি অনাৰেবল কাউন্সিল মিনিস্টাৰে

তেওঁৰেই নাজেট বন্ধ হ'ল উল্লেখ কৰিছে। নিম্নতক অনানেল এডুকেচন মিনিষ্টাৰক অনুৰোধ কৰি জনাওঁ যে এই নিম্নতক মিকিব জাতিৰো অইন অইন জাতিৰ দৰে উচ্চ শিক্ষা লাভ কৰিবলৈ অৰ্থে যথেষ্ট পুৰণি পুৰণি স্থানৰ ব্যৱস্থা যেন বৰ্তায় আৰু মহংদিজুয়া এম, ই স্থানখন সোণকালে পৰম মেন্টে হাতত লয়। আৰু বকলিয়া ঘাটত বৰ্তমান চলি থকা গৰ্ভ মেন্টে এইবোৰ এম, ডি, স্থানখনো যেন গৰ্ভ মেন্টে সোণকালে লয়।

গৰ্ভ মেন্টে স্থানখনৰ পৰা জানিব পৰা গৈছে যে মিকিব হিলত অৰ্থাৎ মিকিব জাতিৰ বাসস্থান অফলত নতুন ডেভেলপ্‌মেন্ট কৰি বিদেশী পন্থা সকলক মাটি দিবলৈ দিয়া হ'ব বুলি ক'ৰিছে। এই ব্যৱস্থাৰ বিৰুদ্ধে জিলাৰ তিসুটি কমিশ্যনাৰৰ ওচৰত দৰ্খাস্ত দিয়া হ'ব বুলি জনাওঁ কৈছে। জানালোকৰ মিকিব মানুহ পাহাৰত থাকে, পাহাৰলৈ তেওঁলোকে যোৱাৰ পৰম মেন্টে চকা বাগে, গতিকে জানালোকৰ কাৰণে মাটি বাধিব নোৱাৰে। যদি এইটো সচী হয়, তেওঁলকৰ দুখ লগী কথা কৈছে। মিকিব জাতি তোলা আৰু দুখীয়া হোৱাৰ মূল কাৰণ হৈছে পাহাৰত বাস কৰা। সেই কাৰণে মই গৰ্ভ মেন্টে অনুৰোধ কৰি জনাওঁ যে মিকিব জাতিয়ে বাস কৰা অফলত নতুন ডেভেলপ্‌মেন্ট কৰি বিদেশী পন্থাক সেই অফলত মাটি নিদি মিকিব জাতিৰ কাৰণে যথেষ্ট মাটি বিলাতি কৰি বাধি তেওঁলোককো অইন জাতিৰ দৰে মাটি বাৰী লৈ স্বাধী ভাবে থাকিবলৈ সুবিধা দিয়া উচিত।

গোটেই মিকিব হিলত তিতৰত মহংদিজুয়াত এখন মাত্ৰ ডিচ্পেন্সেৰী আছে। তাতো সকলো বন্ধমত দৰম পোৱা নাযায় আৰু বেমাৰী থাকিবলৈ কোনো সুবিধা নাই। সেইখন ডিচ্পেন্সেৰীত কনাকৰ, নেপ্ৰুচা, আদি বেমাৰ হোৱা বেমাৰী সকলে চিকিৎসা কৰাবলৈ আহি থাকিবলৈ দৰম অফলত পঢ়ন তলত থাকি চিকিৎসা কৰাৰ লগীয়া হৈছে। ইমান ডাঙৰ এটা অফলত মুঠেই এখন ডিচ্পেন্সেৰী আৰু মাত্ৰ এজন ডাক্তৰ যে এই মিকিব জাতিক গৰু মই মৰাৰ দৰে মৰাৰ পৰা বন্ধা কৰিবলৈ গোটেই মিকিব ব্যৱস্থা কৰক। প্ৰথমতে মহংদিজুয়া ডিচ্পেন্সেৰীত এজন কম্পাউণ্ডাৰ আৰু চিকিৎসাৰ patient থাকিবলৈ কাৰণে ঘৰ কৰি দিয়াৰ আৰু ডিচ্পেন্সেৰীৰ আৰু indoor ভেটি পকা কৰাৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰক। উক্ত ডিচ্পেন্সেৰীত গৰ্ভ মেন্টে বাহাদুৰে মিকিব হিলত চফৰ ফুৰিবলৈ যাওঁতে কম্পাউণ্ডাৰ এজন দকাৰ আৰু ডিচ্পেন্সেৰী ঘৰটোৰ ভেটি পকা আৰু ছাৰী নিম দিয়া উচিত বুলি পৰিদৰ্শনত লিখি থৈ গৈছে।

The CHAIRMAN (Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY): The hon. member has exceeded his time limit by two minutes. He is allowed one minute more.

Srijut KHORSING TERANG: Please allow me three minutes more, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: Please try to finish in one minute.

মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ের প্রতি যথেষ্ট শ্রদ্ধা ব্যক্তিগত আনন্দে অতিশয় দুঃখের সহিত এই কথা বলিতে চাইতেছে যে তিনি যে বাজেট আমাদের সম্মুখে উপস্থিত করিয়াছেন তাহা অতীত প্রতিক্রিয়াশীল এবং গ্রহণের অযোগ্য। প্রাদেশিক শাসনের ক্ষমতা পাওয়ার পরম বৎসরের বাজেটেও যদি এক্ষণ হস্তশাপূর্ণ হিসাবে উপস্থিত করা হয় তবে জনসাধারণের মনে উপস্থিত মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলের প্রতি কি ধারণা জন্মিলে তাহা আমি ভাষা দ্বারা প্রকাশ না করিলেও মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয়গণ নিজেদের অন্তরে সম্পূর্ণ উপলব্ধি করিতে পারিতেন। তাঁহারা কিচিৎ বোম্বেন না একথা কেহই বলিবেন না তবে বৃষ্টিয়া সুষ্টিয়াও কেন যে তাঁহারা এক্ষণ হস্তশাপূর্ণ বাজেট উপস্থাপিত করিয়াছেন তাহাই এখন আমাদের আলোচনা করিবার বিষয়। ভারতের অন্যান্য প্রদেশের সহিত তুলনা করিলে দেখি যে আমরা আসামে সেই মাত্রার আনন্দেই পড়িয়া আছি।

মহাশয়, আমি পূর্বেই বলিয়াছি যে অর্থনীতির জটিল কুটিল ব্যাহের তিতব প্রবেশ করিবার ক্ষমতা আমার নাই। কিন্তু দেশের কৃষক ও শ্রমিককুলের উন্নতির জন্য গভর্ণমেন্ট কি ব্যবস্থা করিয়াছেন তাহা আমি যতটুকু বুঝিতে পারিয়াছি তাহাই বলিব। কৃষিনির্ভাগের উন্নতির জন্য গভর্ণমেন্ট যাহা করিয়াছেন তাহা আমার পক্ষে যে সমস্ত মাননীয় সুবক্তারা আলোচনা করিয়াছেন তাঁহারা এই বাজেটের অসারতা সুন্দর ভাবেই প্রতিপন্ন করিয়াছেন। যে দেশ কৃষককুলের তিতব উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত সেই দেশের কর্ম্মকর্তারা যদি কৃষককুলের উপর উপযুক্ত দৃষ্টি না দেন, তবে তাঁহাদিগকে অনেক কিছু এবং সব কিছু বলিবার যোগ্য হইলেও আমি অপরিণামদর্শী, অবিবেচক, শিথিলকর্ম্মীবৃন্দ বলিয়াই প্রস্তুত হইলাম। যাক, এই দুঃস্থ কৃষকগণের জন্য দুই চারিজন বক্তা বিশেষ ভাবে গভর্ণমেন্টের উদাসীনতার কথা আলোচনা করিয়াছেন। কৃষি আয়কর আইন পাশ করিয়া গভর্ণমেন্ট অনেক টাকা পাইতেছেন। কিন্তু যাহাদের রক্ত ঘনীভূত হইয়া এই সাদা টাকা তৈয়ারী হইয়া রাতকোমে আসিতেছে, তাঁহাদের দুঃখ দূর করিবার জন্য গভর্ণমেন্ট কি করিয়াছেন বিশেষ ভাবে সেই বিষয় আলোচনা করাই আমার প্রধান কত্তব্য।

গভর্ণমেন্ট আগামী বৎসরে ১৫,০০০ টাকা Labour Welfare এর জন্য বরাদ্দ করিয়াছেন। ইহার দ্বারা শ্রমিকদের কি সুবিধা হইবে? না, এক জন বৃহৎ কর্ম্মচারী ও তাঁহার অফিসের অন্যান্য আবশ্যকীয় খরচের জন্য বায় হইবে। ইহাতে শ্রমিককুলের কি উপকার হইবে? না, তাঁহাদের অবস্থা সম্বন্ধে নানাবিধ তথ্য সংগ্রহ করা হইবে। অতি চমৎকার কথা! শ্রমিকেরা যে কি ভাবে কালান্তিপাত করে তাহা এই দেশে জন্মিয়া, অনেকেই তিন কাল শেষ করিয়া শেষ কালে আসিয়াও যদি অবগত না থাকেন, তবে যতই তথ্য আবিষ্কার বা সংগ্রহ করুন না কেন তাহা আর এজীবনে কাজে লাগাইতে পারিবেন না।

সুমন্ত মানুষের ঘুম ভাঙ্গান যায়, কিন্তু যে জাগিয়া ঘুমায় তাঁহার ঘুম ভাঙ্গান মহাদায়। তাঁহারা কি বলিতে চান যে শ্রমিকদের জন্য কি করিতে হইবে তাহা তাঁহাদের জানা নাই? নিশ্চয় তাঁহারা একথা বলিতে পারেন না। সব দুঃখ জানা না থাকিলেও, ষোটুকু জানা আছে, তাহা আগে দয়া করিয়া যেন তাঁহারা সেই টুকুই দূর করিয়া দেন। তাহা হইলেও জীবনে অনেক শান্তি পাইবেন এবং বহু সাধ্য সাধনা করিয়া নিদ্রাদেবীর আশ্রয় পাইয়া সেই নিদ্রিত অবস্থায় শিহরণের দায় হইতে কতকটা নিষ্কৃতি পাইবেন।

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Mr Chairman, it is a normal Budget. I say normal because Assam has become accustomed to deficit budgets and this one, at this time of war, not being abnormal nor sub-normal, is surely a normal one and therefore nothing to be surprised at.

Though this is a deficit budget, if the provisions made in the new schemes proposed came up to 11 lakhs then it could be said for practical purposes a balanced budget. But the new schemes with the one lakh grant for war effort are only responsible for about 5½ lakhs.

Relying on the assurance of the Finance Minister we must expect something from Retrenchment, but still some other sources must be tapped to balance the Budget.

To judge a Budget, the best way is to see whether nation-building projects and schemes are properly formulated and carried out. To build a nation like building up the mind and body of the child should take into account first of all the primary needs—they are food, clothing, housing and proper training of body, mind and soul of the growing generation.

When the present budget is studied from this standpoint we naturally feel inclined to severely criticise it and find fault with this omission and that commission, but the Government can challenge anybody present in the House or outside the House to do the best that should be done. There will be variations here and there by some other Government, but as the present House is constituted, none can do the best that this province should do. This is only possible where all parties in this House, as representatives of the province as a whole, get together as one body and forge out a plan and scheme and put their heart and soul to carry it out. Until this is done, there is no use to discuss the Budget generally and pass remarks as "too optimistic" or "too courageous" "amount to recklessness", or even to suggest that Government is dishonest.

Self-interest, petty party politics, party orthodoxy and stubbornness are the root causes of the deplorable condition of the present state of affairs and the successive deficit budget proposals.

Courting imprisonment and being inside the prison bars by some members when duty lies here in the House and some others only offering lip sympathy to those in Jails and not co-operating fully in the House, only aggravate the present difficulties and give no solution to our problems. Till an all party co-operation is achieved, all general sweeping criticisms are out of place and they take us nowhere. Therefore, for my part, I refrain from making such criticisms but make certain observations on few items.

The CHAIRMAN (Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY): Order, order, five minutes have passed. The hon. member should sit down.

Srijut RAMNATH DAS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think I shall be failing in my duty if I do not take part in this discussion when most of the members on this side of the House are absent and many of them are behind the prison bars. Although our present Finance Minister, Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman, as being the new Finance Minister of the Province, deserves our congratulations for his presenting a Budget before us, yet I cannot congratulate him for the Budget he has presented and the way in which he has presented it. The Budget, except in few items, namely, the University Bill, the extension of the prohibition scheme and the establishment of a Tuberculosis Clinic at Shillong, as it has been pointed out by many hon. members, is a disappointing one and the Hon'ble Finance Minister has lamentably failed to acquit himself well just as a true and good financier would have done in presenting a deficit Budget before us. In the way in which he has presented the Budget before the House he has unnecessarily tried his best to hoodwink us and the public at large to meet

the wishes of his party at the cost of the members of the Opposition specially at the time when many of them are behind the prison bars.

At page 10 of his Budget speech under the head "Finance", in going to deal with the fall of Excise revenue due to the extension of Prohibition, the Hon'ble Finance Minister has unnecessarily passed a remark against the members of the Opposition describing them as having a certain amount of misgiving natural to them. I would presently show that that remark made in his speech is unwarranted.

The CHAIRMAN (Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY): The hon. member has only two minutes.

Srijut RAMNATH DAS: I hope, Sir, I may be given a few minutes more because only few members on this side of the House have got the chance to speak as most of them are absent.

The CHAIRMAN: Alright, I give two minutes' grace.

Srijut RAMNATH DAS: I will presently show that the remark he has made is unwarranted. The Hon'ble Finance Minister in his Budget speech stated as follows:—"When the Hon'ble Premier made the statement in the course of his last Budget speech that, with the introduction of the accelerated reduction of rations the province should be free of registered addicts in about two years' time and that the desideratum of an opium-free Assam can be achieved without a costly prohibition scheme, my friends of the Opposition received that statement with a certain amount of misgiving natural to them. But I am in a position to tell the House to-day that that statement, having proceeded from a man who had all along been consistently and sincerely advocating the abolition of opium revenue from 1912 onwards, was only too true." But again at the same breath in another passage of his speech the Hon'ble Finance Minister says:—"The experiment that was started in the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur by the last Congress-Coalition Ministry was continued this year. There may be dispute about the exact degree of success achieved in that experiment. But that the success achieved reached a substantial degree, there is no reason to doubt. We believe that the public welfare lies in a courageous extension of the experiment and in harnessing and utilising the imagination, sympathy and effort of all well-wishers of the addicts and their dependants." When the Hon'ble Finance Minister admits that the public welfare lies in a courageous extension of the experiment and when he has taken into his Budget the extension of the prohibition scheme, I wonder how he believes the statement made by the Hon'ble Premier to be too true. If he can do that, I cannot think for a single moment how he can again believe that the public welfare lies in a courageous extension of the experiment. Therefore I say that the remark which he has passed against the members of the Opposition is unwarranted. The Hon'ble Premier made the statement to support his last year's budget which did not contain the scheme of extension of prohibition; the Hon'ble Finance Minister is not right in describing the members of the Opposition for their refusal to accept the Premier's statement as having misgivings natural to them after he has included the scheme in his Budget.

Then again, at page 20 of his Budget speech, the Hon'ble Finance Minister says, "special care has been taken to see that tribal classes, scheduled castes and immigrants receive their due consideration" I can say that the Hon'ble Finance Minister is not correct in making such a statement with regard to Scheduled castes.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has exceeded his time.

Srijut RAM NATH DAS: One minute more for me to finish, Sir. Does not the Hon'ble Finance Minister think that the giving of only Rs.3,000 for the primary education of the Scheduled castes and the giving of Rs.300 for sinking a tube-well in a Harijan Hostel would mean giving due consideration to the Scheduled castes? Again he says, "In rural areas the taking over of venture schools is calculated to stimulate private effort to start new venture schools elsewhere." Sir, this principle has not been applied to the venture schools of the Scheduled castes and specially in the Jorhat subdivision. I say that this principle is not applicable in the Jorhat subdivision because not a single venture school from the Scheduled castes has been taken up by this Government even from the amount that was budgeted for the current year and meant for the scheduled castes, tribal classes and immigrants only, although, Sir, the local committee recommended for taking certain schools from the Scheduled castes.

The CHAIRMAN (Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY): Order, order, the hon. member's time is up.

Srijut RAM NATH DAS: I hope, you will kindly grant me a few minutes more, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: Alright, I give one minute more.

Srijut RAMNATH DAS: Again at page 7 of the Budget speech, the Hon'ble Finance Minister tried to justify himself for the deficit budget by saying that he had budgeted only for the nation building activities. But may I draw his attention to the amount budgeted for the Parliamentary Secretaries? Is the amount budgeted for the Parliamentary Secretaries meant for nation building activity? Are Parliamentary Secretaries necessary?

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order. The hon. member has already exceeded the time limit, I cannot give him any more time.

Rev. L. GATPHOH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think we all expect too much from the Finance Minister. We expect him to perform the tricks of a conjuror. We expect him to show a surplus budget, or at least to balance the budget for the coming year 1941-42, in spite of the fact that the amount of revenue lost to Government owing to remission of land revenue and for adopting the schemes of total prohibition of opium by far or nearly doubly exceeded the amount of loans floated in the current financial year. And on top of it, the new financial obligations owing to the new schemes for which seven lakhs of rupees have been budgeted in the current year's budget. These schemes represent the wishes of all the members expressed on the floor of this House, time and again, in the previous sessions during the last four years.

I do not honestly think the Finance Minister possesses the tact and skill to treat us to a jugglery of figures; on the other hand, he lays before us bare facts and figures, the causes and results of the deliberations of this Legislature and its predecessor and call upon the hon. members of this the situation and to tell him what is the next step to take.

The fear and suspicion entertained even by some of the hon. members who spoke yesterday contributing very valuable and constructive criticisms to the budget that the Finance Minister may go on increasing the deficit is baseless, if we bear in mind what the Hon'ble Finance Minister said in his speech. He said:

"We have sacrificed a very big portion of our revenue for the benefit of our people, the question that arises in my mind as the custodian of public finance, is whether we should leave this loss uncovered or resort to some other taxation to recoup this loss."

And he nervously threw a hint in these words, "in other provinces they have resorted to new taxation measures." I take this as a call to halt on his part, if circumstances do not alter.

Government have been forced to borrow money. Government have implemented their promises to the people. And when they have done all that, they are accused of being indolent, reckless, and irresponsible. They are accused of making the financial position of the province unworkable and unstable and thereby losing its credit in the markets of the world.

But the extent of the liability of the Province, which is the measure of its credit is a truism not to be forgotten. It is true that the sources of revenue are limited, but the resources of the Province are rich and abundant. And the Government would do well, in the interests of the Province as a whole, to take up the suggestions thrown yesterday by the hon. Mr. Whittaker to tap and develop the resources of the province to the full by further borrowing money to that end and, if practicable, to subsidise private enterprises also.

Let me come back to the question put to the House by the Hon'ble Finance Minister. Permit me to put it in my language, that when Government have borrowed money to make up losses in revenue, when Government have sacrificed upon revenue a big portion of it in order to save the country from plunging into further fiscal deterioration, when Government have spent money in nation building activities, is it not right for the people of the province to bear the brunt of new taxation measures to devise ways and means by which losses may be made up? There cannot be a difference of opinion on this matter. The only difference that may arise is as to the ways of raising revenue or the nature of taxation. The hon. Mr. Whittaker suggested yesterday in his speech, that the remission of land revenue be withheld rather than resort to new taxation measures. Personally I am fully in agreement with him for two reasons: firstly, the money lost to Government and saved by taxpayers from remission, could be better spent by Government than by individual taxpayers and secondly, most of the tax-payers have not been the recipients of the remissions, which only go to swell up the pocket of local collectors of revenue, and that is the grievance of simple and ignorant tax-payers in my constituency, especially in the first two years of the remission of land revenue.

The Chairman (Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY): The time is over, please.

Rev. L. GATPHOH: One minute more, Sir, and I finish.

I should like to point out that grave wrong and injury is being done to the people of the partially excluded areas in making the partially excluded areas the "opium addicts' preserves". The question that naturally arises from this act of Government in putting a label of "opium addicts' preserves" to the partially excluded areas is far reaching and very significant. If Government knew the opinion of the people, for their representatives were no less vocal, if not foremost in their advocacy for total prohibition, I am sure Government would immediately bring the partially excluded areas within the scheme of total prohibition.

One word more, Sir. I shall be failing in my duty if I forget to mention what attitude the people of my constituency have taken as regards the prosecution of the present war. I may say in this connection that all the people in my constituency have generously contributed to the war fund in the address of welcome presented to the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble the Minister in charge of Industry at Jowai, they expressed their willingness not only to help the British by means of money contribution but also by giving their sons and daughters to serve in any capacity to defend Britain, India and every part of the British Empire (cheers from the European group).

Srijut KARKA DALAY MIRI : সভাপতি ডাঃবীয়া, বোধকৰো সময় আৰু বেচি নাই। সেই কাৰণে মই কেইটা মান point হে উল্লেখ কৰিম।

নৰ্থলক্ষীমপুৰ চৰ্ভাতিভিজনত যাতে immigrant সোমাব নোৱাৰে সেই বিষয়ে পুৰান মন্ত্রী ডাঃবীয়াই নিজে প্ৰতিশ্ৰুতি দিছিল। কিন্তু এতিয়া দেখা গৈছে যে নৰ্থলক্ষীমপুৰ চৰ্ভাতিভিজনত immigrant বিলাকেৰে ভৰি পৰিছে। নৰ্থলক্ষীমপুৰৰ মিত্ৰি areaৰ পৰা immigrant বিলাকক উঠাই দিব বুলি প্ৰতিশ্ৰুতি দিছিল। আজি এবচৰ হ'ল, কিমান আবেদন নিবেদনো কৰা হ'ল, কিন্তু তাৰপৰা একো উপকাৰ হোৱা নাই। অনাৰেবল বেতিনিউ মিনিষ্ট্ৰেও নিজে এই বিষয়ে assurance দিছিল কিন্তু আজিলৈকে এই বিষয়ে একো কৰা নাই।

ট্ৰাইবেল কন্ফাৰেন্স যেতিয়া হৈছিল, তেতিয়া ট্ৰাইবেল বিলাকৰ নিমিত্তে কিছুমান স্কুল দিব বুলি কৈছিল। তাৰ তিতৰত এটা নে দুটা স্কুল দিলেই আমি সেইমতে বিশেষ কিবা কৰিছে বুলি ধৰি ল'ব নোৱাৰো; আমি ভাবিছিলো যে ট্ৰাইবেলৰ সুবিধাৰ কাৰণে scholarship, free-studentship ইত্যাদি সকলো বিষয়ে বাজেট অধিবেশনৰ আগেয়ে মেনুয়েলত সন্মুখাই দিব। কিন্তু, গবৰ্ণমেণ্টে এতিয়াও সেই বিলাক বিষয়ে একো সুবিধা কৰি নিদিলে। কি মতলব লৈ এই কাম কৰিছে বুজিব নোৱাৰিলো। যি বিলাক অফিচাৰ আছে বা যি বিলাক গবৰ্ণমেণ্ট হাই স্কুলৰ হেডমাষ্টাৰ আছে, তেওঁবিলাকক শুধিলে কয় যে মেনুয়েলত তেনেকুৱা rule নাই আৰু তেওঁলোকে সেই বিষয়ে একো নাজানে আৰু সেই কাৰণে তেওঁলোকে একো সুবিধা দিব নোৱাৰে। ট্ৰাইবেলৰ নিমিত্তে হোষ্টেলৰ বন্দবস্ত কৰিবৰ কাৰণে ট্ৰাইবেল কন্ফাৰেন্স গবৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ দৃষ্টি আকৰ্ষণ কৰিছিল, কিন্তু গবৰ্ণমেণ্টে এই বিষয়েও একো কৰা নাই। জোবহাট মহকুমাৰ মাজুলী অঞ্চলৰ কৰতিপাৰ আৰু গেজেৰা গাঁৱত এম, ই স্কুল দুখন দিবৰ কাৰণে ট্ৰাইবেল কন্ফাৰেন্সত আলোচনা কৰা হৈছিল আৰু Director of Public Instruction এ নিজে এই বিষয়ে লেখি লৈছিল। কিন্তু এই দুই ঠাইত স্কুল নিদি অইন কৰে এটা আৰু তেওঁবিলাকে কৰে অইন এটা! (At this stage the Hon'ble the Speaker resumed his seat and the Chairman, Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy vacated the Chair).

কিছুমান immigrant মেন্সবে কয় যে ইয়াত তেওঁলোকক মাটি লাগে। অসমীয়া আদিবাসী মানুহ বিলাকে যাতে প্ৰথমে মাটি পায় তাৰ নিমিত্তেহে গবৰ্ণমেণ্টে আগেয়ে ব্যৱস্থা কৰিব লাগে। তাৰ পিচতহে immigrant বিলাকক মাটি দিয়া উচিত হ'ব। যদি আগতে immigrant বিলাকৰ নিমিত্তেহে বন্দবস্ত কৰে তেন্তে অসমীয়া বাইজৰ প্ৰতি যোৰ অন্যায কৰা হ'ব। বৰ্ত্তমানে ডেভেলপ্‌মেণ্ট স্কীম কৰি আগলৈ মাটি নাৰাখি সকলো মাটি immigrant বিলাকক দিবলৈ গলে অসমীয়া বায়তৰ বৰ বেচি ক্ষতি হ'ব বুলি মোৰ বিশ্বাস।

কুটুম্বোৰ আনাম হতুলীৰ বিংশতীৰ পূৰ্বৰ আনামৰ বৰতনক হৰণকাণ্ডত সেই কাৰণে
নেভিকেল ডিপাৰ্টমেণ্টৰ মহী ভূমিহীৰক বৃত্ত বৰীক জাৰাজন কৰিব হুইক colony
টিক কৰি বেমাৰী বিলাকক বৰীৰ বৰতন বৰি হৈবহাৰুপৰ হৰণক বৰতন কৰিবৰ
কাৰণে অনুবোধ কৰিলে। ইংলীক বৰ বৰ বৰি কৰি কৰি

Government reply on Budget Discussion

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER I think the Hon'ble Finance Minister may begin his reply now.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in rising to reply to the Budget I feel a bit diffident to meet all the points that have been raised, when I find that as many as 27 members of the House have taken part in the discussion. I have to thank all the hon. members for offering criticisms to the Budget which I had the pleasure to present to the House.

The critics, as far as I know, may be grouped under three heads. To the first class belong the carrying critics who indulged to indulge in invectives, innuendoes and expressions which it must be beneath the dignity of any sound parliamentarian to use in the House. It is regrettable that the appeal which was made by my chief last year in the following words, viz., "I appeal to all hon. members to keep the dignity of the proceedings and not use terms which will show that we do not know what are manners and we are not up to parliamentary standard of discussion"

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER May I intervene and say that when these expressions were used, I think, it was the duty of the Hon'ble Finance Minister to draw the attention of the Chair to those expressions. If my attention had been drawn to any unparliamentary expressions I would have taken steps at once. But I do not remember to have heard any unparliamentary expressions.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI, Sir, Is it also not the duty of the Hon'ble Speaker to see that no unparliamentary terms are used?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, it is the duty of the Speaker, but the Speaker is not always infallible and sometimes improper expressions used might escape his attention.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: If the Hon'ble Speaker wants me to refer to those expressions I can do so, but I think it will be better for me to refrain from naming hon. members specifically with the expressions they used because that will create unpleasantness.

As I was saying, Sir, that appeal of my chief last year fell flat on these critics.

Secondly, we have those contentious critics who have not spared us, who have indeed criticised us vigorously though in a manner worthy of the House.

And thirdly, there are those constructive critics who have criticised us only with a view to enable us to carry on the administration on sounder lines. I am obliged to the last two classes of critics from whom, if I may use an expression which was used by the Finance Member of the Central Government, 'I have received bouquets with and without thorns'. I am obliged to those critics for the valuable contribution to the debate. I give an assurance, on behalf of the Government, that we shall try to profit by these valuable suggestions and shape ourselves accordingly.

Sir, the task of budgeting is a difficult one, and to me, who is new to the job, it is extremely difficult. As I said at the close of my speech no Budget is supposed to give universal satisfaction, but I can boldly say that the Budget I have produced was the best that could be framed under the existing circumstances. One of the hon. members, Mr. Goldsmith, has already referred to this. He has said that Government can challenge others to produce a better budget.

Sir, I have been mercilessly criticised for holding the view that the finances of the province are in a fairly sound position now. If the hon. members only go back to the Budget Memorandum of 1937 they will find that this province inherited a debt legacy of Rs 46,78,000, which the Memorandum at page 8 of that Budget showed would have to be covered by a loan in the open market as the provincial loan account had been dissolved with effect from the date of the inauguration of Provincial Autonomy. Another result of Provincial Autonomy was that Government had to take over the liability of all provident funds of officers serving under their control. This liability was estimated at 90 lakhs on the 1st of April 1937. In order to remove this burden of debt from our head we had to borrow 50 lakhs, payment of which has now been ensured by the creation of a Sinking Fund. We have improved our financial position by liquidating the debt. There will be no more treasury bills; only ways and means advances to the extent of 15 lakhs will be required to keep the administration going during the leaner months. That is why I say that our financial position is fairly sound at present. Much has been made about the deficit of approximately 12 lakhs, but we have nothing to be alarmed about it. Even this year, a sum of 3 lakhs of rupees on account of agricultural income-tax is said to be lying with the Reserve Bank. On account of some technical difficulty it has not been credited to Assam. If this amount is credited within the current year there will be no deficit so far as revised estimates for 1940-41 are concerned. We are still to get 20 lakhs as arrears on the total assessment of 1940-41 and 25 lakhs as due for the year 1941-42. If we get the full demand for these two years—and there is no reason why this should be surrendered by us—there will be a surplus instead of a deficit. So, Sir, there is no Hitlerism in this Budget, as has been remarked by my friend over there in the Independent Bench, or shall I say dependent on the Congress Bench.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: The Hon'ble Finance Minister should give us details, Sir.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Balancing of the budget is not difficult to achieve. It could be done by one stroke of the pen by cutting down expenditure on new schemes. But no member of the House I think desires such a course. In this connection, Sir, I am grateful to Mr. Whittaker for suggesting three different ways of balancing the budget. (Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee:—It is his master's voice.) We are not prepared to accept his well-meaning proposal for a partial withdrawal of the land revenue remission. As was explained by the Hon'ble Chief the other day in the Council, this land revenue remission has been continued this year on account of the economic condition of the people. At a time when the price of jute had fallen from Rs.16 to Rs.2-8-0 per maund, the economic condition of the people of the three districts, Kamrup, Nowgong and Goalpara, who depend for their livelihood on this money crop can be better imagined than described. At a time when, due to the war, the prices of sugar, oil and other necessaries of life have gone up, when the price of building materials has gone up and when money has become scarce, the withdrawal or even partial withdrawal of this remission of revenue is unthinkable.

As regards retrenchment, Government will be glad to consider it. But as has been pointed out by hon. Mr. Kaminu Kumar, substantial retrenchment can be made, as the reduction of the number of posts in different services will not produce any saving so long as the present incumbents continue in service.

As regards new taxation measures, although a new taxation measure affecting the masses of the people is possible at present and I do not see the necessity of any such taxation now, but should the necessity arise in future for any taxation, we shall be very glad to examine the possibility of devising a measure like the Bengal Sales Tax Bill which was passed only recently.

Messrs. Mookerjee and Kaminu Kumar have wanted to make out that the expenditure on nation-building departments had taken a downward course. This is not so. The decrease in the revised estimate in the case of Public Health was due to the absence of any serious epidemic that time. I can quote figures to show that the expenditure on these nation-building departments has been gradually on the increase year after year. In Education in the year 1937-38 it was Trs. 34,74, in 1938-39 it was Trs. 35,25 in 1939-40 it was 37,83 and in 1941-42 it was 43,14. In Medical it was Trs. 14,48 in 1937-38, Trs. 14,54 in 1938-39, Trs. 14,40 in 1939-40 and Trs. 15,30 in 1941-42. In Public Health it was Trs. 6,73 in 1937-38, Trs. 7,96 in 1938-39, Trs. 7,22 in 1939-40 and Trs. 8,30 in 1941-42.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN On a point of explanation, Sir, I did not say that the expenditure on the nation-building departments is decreasing. What I said was that the allotment made in the last year's budget was not spent. That was actually my grievance. If that becomes the case this year also, it is no use allotting money this year.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: But the decrease in last year's revised estimate has been fully explained in the Memorandum. As I said, in Public Health it was due to the absence of any epidemic.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What about Industries, Sir?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: The expenditure on Veterinary was Trs. 1,22 in 1937-38, Trs. 1,25 in 1938-39, Trs. 1,60 in 1939-40 and Trs. 2,17 in 1941-42. The expenditure on Co-operative was Trs. 96 in 1937-38, Trs. 86 in 1938-39, Trs. 92 in 1939-40 and Trs. 1,75 in 1941-42. In Industries it was Trs. 2,30 in 1937-38, Trs. 2,37 in 1938-39, Trs. 2,43 in 1939-40 and Trs. 2,30 in 1941-42.

Messrs. Mookerjee and Sen have fallen foul of me for making a statement about Mr. Ahmed in the Budget Memorandum, viz., "that the expectation of the optimistic Minister is still in the air." That was merely a statement of fact. I did not intend to cast any fling on him and particularly when he was absent. But as he is represented in this House by two stout champions of his cause, I do not mind telling the House that Mr. Ahmed budgeted a deficit of Trs. 17,39 and proposed taxation measures to the extent of 30 lakhs and expected a revenue surplus of 12 lakhs; but during the year before he vacated office, he gave a revenue remission of 12 lakhs and wiped off the expected surplus. The estimate of 25 lakhs did not allow for refund which in 1941-42 was put up at 6 lakhs, of which at least 4 lakhs will be on a normal year income. This converted the estimated surplus of 12 lakhs into a deficit of 4 lakhs. This is the actual doing of Mr. Ahmed, of whose fair name my hon. critics are so jealous.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: During the last 13 years that was the only surplus budget. He has admitted that.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Now, Sir, those people who have characterised the budget as disappointing and depressing and who have charged us with bankruptcy, not only of finance but also of ideas and programme underlying new schemes, are not worthy of my serious notice, for I know full well that to a jaundiced eye everything looks yellow.

I will now deal, Sir, with the criticisms, department by department. This Government has been congratulated from different quarters for taking up the prohibition of opium. But some of the criticisms have, however, sounded a discordant note. The hon. Mr. Nichols-Roy, while expressing great appreciation for the propaganda of health was disappointed when he saw that the opium rules published in the *Assam Gazette* related to the partially excluded areas, but that total prohibition had not been introduced in the partially excluded areas. I think the hon. member is very well aware of the fact that accelerated reduction of opium ration in the partially excluded areas also was started from the 1st of September 1939, and that it was an experimental measure adopted which required review because of representations received from the opium addicts of the Nongpoh area, and also various other Mikir consumers of the hills stating that because of the accelerated cut of ration they were unable to follow their daily pursuits, and that no medical facilities are available in these hill areas. As a result of these representations made, Government had to make enquiries about their condition and call for reports from the District Officers. In the meantime, the accelerated cut of ration has been stopped since that time, pending review of the whole situation. Facts and figures have been called for in this connection. So the matter as regards introduction of total prohibition of opium in the partially excluded areas is under consideration.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Will not the opium addicts suffer a great deal if opium is taken away from them all at once?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: If we stop opium suddenly in places where there are no medical facilities available then the people will be put to great hardship; but at present, as there are no medical facilities available, the matter is under enquiry with a view to rendering medical aid, but it has not been finally decided that total prohibition will not be finally introduced.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: May I ask whether the Hon'ble Minister means that they will carry on this work, and that only two cuts remain?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: The cut has been stopped till the whole situation has been reviewed.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Does the Hon'ble Minister mean to say that after that there will be medical help?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: What possible arrangements can be made to facilitate introduction of total prohibition in partially excluded areas is under consideration, but the whole matter will be decided after all the facts and figures that have been called for are received. But I can assure the hon. member that if the Government are satisfied with the result of their enquiries then necessary steps will be taken to extend this total prohibition to the partially excluded areas also.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: It is true that the idea of gradual reduction of opium in the province originated years before, and in course of reduction effected during these years, per-

sons of and above 50 years were exempted and registers of consumers were reopened in order to bring under control all the unregistered opium addicts. But since first March, 1941 total prohibition has been enforced irrespective of age. Even panics are not now grown on ordinary lands as generally.

Now, turning to rules, I may point out that the opium rules were amended to give legal effect to the prohibition of opium in the included areas, and for this purpose the revised rules were published. In fact, the rules so far as relating to the hill districts are not new and have not been changed at all, but simply reproduced along with the amended rules for the included areas as the rules for all the areas of the province were hitherto combined.

Mr. Nichols-Roy has said that as an effect of these rules [Rule 6(3)] the opium in the hands of druggists and permit holders in the hill areas will be liable to abuse. Indeed, that is not a new rule and that has been in force for many years even when the hon. member was the Minister for Excise, but no such abuse, so far as I am aware, has ever been found. I may inform the hon. member that there are no licenses for druggists or permit holders in any hill districts, including Khasi and Jaintia Hills or Frontier Tracts; so there is no fear of such abuse. However, the hon. member will remain satisfied when I say that the matter of introduction of total prohibition of opium in the partially excluded areas is under consideration of Government.

We are glad to find that we are receiving public response for co-operation in the total opium prohibition campaign and appreciation from the general public for the noble cause we have taken up in the interest of the people of the province. But from the speech of the hon. Mr. Moore I understand that he is very much in doubt as regards the success of the campaign achieved up till now. But it has been admitted by all sections of the people that the opium habit has got a very great evil effect—moral, physical and economic—on the poor addicts, and also every one desires that this opium evil should be got rid of as early as possible. Hon. members are aware that various successive measures have been adopted from time to time to eradicate this opium habit, the logical outcome of which is the present total prohibition campaign. We have not left any measure that is possible unadopted to make it a success. Mr. Moore says that most of the money allotted in the budget should be spent for maintaining a vigilance staff. I am glad to inform that we have already advertised for additional staff and for patrol parties for vigilance and detection work. As the hon. member must have been aware that there are thousand and one ways of carrying this nefarious trade, which unless the public co-operate, we cannot expect success to that extent as we desire. So, for seeking public co-operation and for organizing non-official activities, we have formed mixed committees including both officials and non-official only one Prohibition Commissioner and also for vigilance. There was Dibrugarh and Sibsagar prohibition area during the Congress Government time, but now we have appointed 9 Prohibition Supervisors with Rs.75 as allowance each to cover the travelling expense per month one for each subdivision where the opium problem is comparatively more acute and we are glad to inform the House that we sought co-operation of the Congress Organization in the province and that they have intimated us stating that they would give their whole-hearted support and co-operation in the matter. Similarly, we also requested the Planting Community to co-operate with us in the same way, and there being a larger number of opium addicts in the tea garden areas, we hope the Planting Community will render every

possible help and co-operation in our prohibition campaign. If the public co-operate with us in right earnest our success is as sure as anything. There is no doubt that smuggling is rampant, and every endeavour has been made by the Department to bring to book the offenders, and as a result of their activities, big seizures have been successfully detected, and to strengthen their staff, as I have already said, we are going to increase the Excise staff. There is no doubt that no medical treatment can cure one of his craving for opium. So the craving for opium in the case of veteran addicts is likely to remain for life, and naturally there will be smuggling activities to meet their demand. But as the addicts, because of official and non-official vigilance cannot be expected to get smuggled opium regularly on demand, and that the price is very high, their craving will gradually die out. New converts will be rare because of closing down the opium shops, the scarcity of opium and high price of the smuggled opium. I understand the present addicts of the province are almost all near about the age of 50 years. Mortality amongst them is also very great. So far as I remember, in the year before last in the Dibrugarh subdivision the number of deaths amongst the opium addicts was above 400. According to my calculation within 10 to 15 years the present addicts will die out. And by that time we may expect to see smuggling activities cease or decrease to a great extent as there will be no or little demand for opium in the province. So, in spite of all possible vigilant activities if we get reports of smuggling of opium, there is nothing to be discouraged.

Though some of the opium addicts, after sudden stoppage of opium in the prohibition area, took to liquor and *ganja*, it is reported now that many of them have already given up taking liquor and *ganja* as they did not find them to be good substitutes for opium. There is no doubt that the sufferings of the opium addicts for want of opium, as stated by Mr. Moore, are very great, yet we have introduced total prohibition of opium with all the good intention to save them from the clutches of the evil habit of this drug, as no injury to the nation can be greater than the injury caused by this evil habit of opium. As such, though the province is undergoing heavy loss of revenue from this source, yet we do not consider it to be so great an injury as the evil habit of opium is.

Next I come to Education. Now, as regards Education, many of the hon. members have criticised this Government for sponsoring a Bill for the formation of a university in Assam. Many of the hon. members have not hesitated to go to the length of saying that this is only an election propaganda. Hon. members who have heard the Hon'ble Minister for Education the other day must have noticed that this proposal for the establishment of a university is as old as the Reforms. It is only the legitimate desire of all the people that there should be a university for Assam:—not only for this generation, but for future generations also. So this move for a university should have been appreciated without any dissentient voice by one and all. What I suspect is this, that behind this opposition there is a marked suspicion about the seat of the university; that the seat might not be at Sylhet or at Shillong. Now, as the Hon'ble Leader said the other day in the Upper House that we are going to have, not a residential or teaching university, but only an affiliating university, and the question of seat should not bother us so much now. Let us first decide whether Assam is to have a university or not. If we decide to have a university, the question of seat may well be left to be decided afterwards either by the Government or by the Senate or by Legislature (Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee—a sound proposal). Sir, as the Bill is coming up, I do not think, I need say anything more about this university now.

The next point is the Mass Literacy Campaign. Now, my friend Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury was very nice about this Mass Literacy Campaign. He not only doubted the success of the scheme, but also doubted the utility of the scheme. Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury was, I believe, in this House when the supplementary demand was placed before the House last year for extension of this mass literacy campaign. At that time he did not dare say anything derogatory of the scheme (Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury did not like) probably because Congress members were here. Now, he has come to criticise it as an undesirable scheme not worthy of being supported by Government. As regards the success of the scheme I might inform the House that, only the other day, there was a meeting of the Provincial Mass Literacy Committee. It was disclosed that the total number of mass literacy centres opened up-to-date (The Hon'ble Maulavi Sayid Sir Muhammad Saadik Ali Up to 31st December) is 1,587 in the 19 plants subdivisions of the province, and the total enrolment up-to-date is 31,855, and the first literacy test was held during January last and total number of pupils who appeared was 18,916, out of which 15,019 passed the test and obtained literacy certificates. *Here, Sir!* Over and above these there are a number of private centres organised by tea gardens, students and public associations. The exact number of the enrolment is not available just at present. But all agree that this Mass Literacy Campaign has been a great success, particularly when we find that the time at which it was started was not very opportune for the peasants. After the harvesting is over during the rains we will expect to have more literates in the coming year.

Now, several members criticised us that we are giving more importance to the mass literacy campaign than the primary education. But this is not so. For primary education we allotted last year and in this year also a sum of Rs.50,000 for its extension, and our policy is that we are taking venture schools which were in existence and over which the public have already shown not only enthusiasm but spent money also for running these schools. We have taken over these venture schools in places where the people are so backward as not to be able to start these schools. We have also started new schools. That is why I stated in my Budget speech that we have given aid to these venture schools only with a view to stimulate private effort on the part of those who start new schools. So, this is the policy behind our new scheme on primary education.

Srijut RAM NATH DAS: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. What I said was that the policy adopted by the Government would not apply in the case of scheduled castes venture schools at Jorhat, because in the list of venture schools of Jorhat not a single school of the scheduled castes has been taken up by Government. Therefore, this principle is not meant for scheduled castes schools with regard to the Jorhat subdivision.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: Is it not a fact that Local Boards were asked to suggest which venture schools should be taken up?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Yes, that is so.

Srijut RAM NATH DAS: On a point of information, Sir. Is it not a fact that the Local Board has submitted the names of a certain number of schools of the Scheduled castes?

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Will the Hon'ble Minister be allowed to finish his speech in peace?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Sir, connected with this is the demand from the representatives of the tribal and scheduled castes people for more liberal grants to their schools and provision for more scholarships. The Government had a conference very recently and they have got the recommendations of the conference, and the recommendations are still under the consideration of the Government. I can assure the representatives of the tribal and scheduled castes here that everything will be done, because it is the policy of the Government to provide more and more facilities for the education of these people and probably it is not unknown to them that one-sixth of the money that is provided for primary education is supposed to be spent for the benefit of the tribal and scheduled castes people.

Srijut KARKA DALAY MIRI: পাইকারী বৃত্তি, হাই স্কুলৰ বৃত্তি আৰু কলেজৰ free studentshipৰ কাৰণে যি বিনাক Tribal conferenceত আলোচনা হৈছিল সেইবিনাক বেনুযেনত কেতিয়া সুমুৱাই দিয়া হৈছে ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think this is not in order now to put in question. The Hon'ble Finance Minister should be allowed to finish his speech.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Now as regards the point that has been raised by Mr. Karka Dalay Miri, I am to inform him that these scholarship rules are being revised now and the recommendations of the Tribal Conference will be taken into account in framing these rules.

Now, Sir, there is a desire of some of the hon. members of this House for making provision for the teaching of Hindi and giving grants to Hindi Schools. But this is again opposed by some members coming from this side of the House. Government have been accused by them for spending money on Rastrabhasa Prachar. Sir, in these democratic days Government have to cater to the needs of all particularly when the medium of instruction through one's own vernacular satisfies the needs and so the people must be given facilities to learn through the medium of their own mother tongue. In that view of the matter, it is the policy of the Government to give aid to all such schools which are trying to impart education in the mother tongue of the community. In this view of the matter also Government have been giving grants for the establishment and towards the upkeep of Bengali Schools. My hon. friend Mr. Vashani (he is not here now) raised the question that Government has refused to recognise the school which imparted instruction in Bengali.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Whom does the Hon'ble Minister mean by "Mr. Vashani" ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: I mean Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan of Vashanirchar. I did not mean anything else. I used an abridged form.

As I was saying, Sir, it is the policy of the Government to give grants to all such schools and I can assure all the hon. members of this House that this will be done in future. Now there have been other suggestions from many quarters about the local grievances in the Department of Education and I leave it to my Hon'ble Colleague the Education Minister to look into these matters. I can assure the House that all the suggestions will receive sympathetic consideration.

Sir, much have been said about the intention of the Government to provide for the Medical School at Sylhet. This question was brought to the notice of the Government by the members of the Upper House in the budget discussion and my Hon'ble Chief had the opportunity of replying to that criticism. So, I think, I would do well if I only repeat what he said there in connection with the establishment of the Medical School at Sylhet. "The Sylhet Medical School was planned and programmed to start about 1931. Up till the year 1928, everyone knew that Assam had a fairly good exchequer, but that since 1929 the world wide depression started and the condition of the provincial finances went from bad to worse every year. Although according to the original programme the buildings for the school were started and completed by about 1931, it was found that there was no money left to start the hospital buildings. I need hardly point out that a condition precedent for the opening of a Medical School is that there must be a big hospital attached to it where patients suffering from all kinds of diseases are being treated so that the students from the Medical School may go there and have their practical training. Without these clinical subjects of study, theoretical classes will not be worth having. Unfortunately, at Sylhet, there was no hospital. The Local Board Hospital was at a place called Sheikhhat and the building was at the point of collapse. Government proposed to have an up-to-date hospital at a cost of about four lakhs, but on account of the depression, not only in the country side but also of the Government finances, they could not undertake to build a hospital. As the school buildings were ready and unutilised, Government took over the Local Board Dispensary, converted it into a hospital, and housed it in the school buildings making some alterations in the buildings by converting the school lecture theatre into an operation theatre, dispensing room and lying in rooms, etc. Now on account of the insistence of hon. members from the Surma Valley, and also on account of the desire of the Ministry to see that the institution comes into being, we have been proposing to have the buildings again utilised as a Medical School by converting the operation theatre, etc., where galleries have been built, gas has been laid out, into buildings suitable for a school, and if we have to utilise these buildings for school purposes, the hospital will have to be shifted elsewhere. The original estimate was four lakhs, but now on account of the war every building material steel, iron, corrugated iron sheets—all have gone up so much that the cost will exceed the original estimate by at least fifty per cent, if not more. You have all criticised the Government for producing a deficit budget. I would ask whether you ask the Government to incur a heavier expenditure in order to start the Medical School at this juncture; but as custodian of the finances, or as the late existing buildings utilised so that money may not be spent on brick and mortar, but for the purpose of appointing Lecturers. It is with a view to an early start of the Medical School that Government have enquired from the head of the Medical Department whether the hostel buildings could be utilised for hospital purposes and to sound public opinion whether the school should be opened without any hostel accommodation for students. From this fact my hon. friends who have urged the opening of the Medical School will see that every step that is possible at this juncture has already been taken by the Ministry. They should wait for a year and we will see whether the school could not be opened from the 1942-43 session."

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I take it that the buildings have recently been vacated and will not be used for this purpose?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Well, this is a matter of detail. This may be considered by the Department. Now, I have said enough on the subject to remove the misunderstanding that is lurking in the minds of some hon. members that the intention of the Ministry is not to open the school at all.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: May I intervene Sir? My hon. friend has read that incorrect copy of my speech. What I said in the Upper House is that the Head of the Medical Department has been asked to report whether the hostel buildings originally meant for accommodating students, could be utilised for the hospital (the Reporter made a confusion between hostel and hospital), and if those hostel buildings can be utilised for the hospital, to sound public opinion whether they would like to have the school opened without any hostel accommodation for the students.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Sir, much has been said about the subsidised dispensaries. As I said in my budget speech, the success of these dispensaries depends upon the spirit of self-help that is shown by the people in the country side. A suggestion has been made by one hon. member that instead of having costly medicines and a costly doctor we could try Homeopathic treatment in those dispensaries. Well, that is a point which will be borne in mind and will be considered.

Hon. Mr. Nichols-Roy mentioned about the site of the Tuberculosis Clinic at Shillong. Well, nothing has been decided about the site, but I understand that the Municipal Board of Shillong has sent up their recommendation for a site near the *Barabazar*.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Is the Hon'ble Minister sure about that? I understand the Municipal Board has strongly objected to a site near the *Barabazar*.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: May I explain this? Our experts in this matter have advised us to select a site for the Clinic near the *Barabazar*. I understand there are certain objections from certain local public in having the site near the *Barabazar*. The Civil Surgeon considered this matter and he is now trying to remove that fear from the heart of the people by convincing them that there is no danger in having the Clinic there. Recently he issued a statement stating that there is no apprehension of any injury to the people if the Clinic is located near the *Barabazar*. It is the opinion of the experts that the Clinic should be located in the most congested part of the town.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: I want to know whether the Municipal Board actually recommended for a site. I understand the Municipal Board, Shillong, is strongly against the location of a Clinic near the *Barabazar*.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I cannot say what is the final decision of the Municipal Board, but I know there are certain objections from the Municipality regarding the location of the site.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Yes, there is strong objection.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I notice that frequent interruptions are being made when the Hon'ble Finance Minister is delivering his speech. Of course, interruptions for eliciting informations can be made and I cannot say that these interruptions are very unreasonable. But what appears to me is this that as the Hon'ble Finance Minister is replying on behalf of the whole Ministry, other Hon'ble Ministers should not come forward to give replies to these interruptions. Now, if there is anything which should be said in connection with some criticisms urged by the hon. members in regard to a particular

matter of a particular Department, the procedure would be that the Hon'ble Ministers concerned may take note of these criticisms and when moving the demands to which the criticisms relate, they should make a speech giving replies to those criticisms. That will be a better procedure.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:
With regard to this point, Sir, may I make a submission? Of all the criticisms which have been offered during these days, the Hon'ble Ministers have taken notes and had supplied materials to the Hon'ble Finance Minister to reply. Now I have seen this new procedure from different members starting interruptions and delivering supplementary speeches, by way of seeking information. Off hand the Finance Minister cannot reply to that. The Hon'ble Minister's dealing with those subjects have some information, therefore those Hon'ble Ministers have risen to reply.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I quite understand the position. If the Hon'ble Finance Minister has been supplied with all the necessary informations, he can reply to these criticisms. But the other Hon'ble Ministers should not rise and answer those criticisms.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:
I suppose it should be the other way and that will be the best, i.e., if any hon. members are not satisfied with the reply given by the Government during the course of general discussion of the Budget, it is for those gentlemen to ventilate their grievances by way of a cut motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think that would be better. Now why should not the Hon'ble Minister in charge of a particular department make a speech while moving a demand? That is done elsewhere. When a demand is moved, the salient features of the demand may be put forward by the Minister moving the demand.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:
Very well, we shall see to that.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN:
Then I come to Agriculture. I find the hon. members of this House have criticised this Department generally saying that nothing has been done to improve the condition of the mass people and nothing has been done for the improvement of the agriculturists. If the hon. members take the trouble of going through the Agriculture Report, even the report that was out yesterday, they will find what actions have been taken by the Agriculture Department to improve the condition of the agriculturists. Now I may inform the hon. members of this House that the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, who is unfortunately lying ill now, took the trouble of inviting an informal conference of the officers of the Agriculture and Veterinary Departments in May last and that conference deliberated over all matters for a period extending over 3 to 4 days and after a long deliberation they have come to certain conclusions and I have taken steps on every matter relating to Agriculture and Veterinary Departments. Now two matters have been particularly referred to in this House, namely, about fodder supply and about cinchona cultivation in Assam. Well, I can assure the hon. members of this House that the Department is going to take steps so that the supply of fodder and grazing might be improved. They have reconstituted the Provincial Fodder and Grazing Committee and they are thinking of providing double grazing grounds in villages and they are also going to induce villagers to reserve an appropriate fraction of their land for growing grass and they are also trying to check the evil of over-stocking of cattle, improvement of cow-sheds, etc.

Then about the possibility of cinchona cultivation in Assam. In pursuance of the assurance given by my Hon'ble Colleague in the last budget discussion, the Department is going to appoint a Special Officer to go to Bengal for obtaining first hand knowledge and to explore the possibility for cinchona cultivation in Assam.

There is one small matter which has been pointed out by Mr. Dutta that the 'C' Division prisoners are not allowed mosquito nets. It is not true, Sir. All the 'C' Division prisoners are allowed to bring their own nets and the facilities are given by the authorities to use those.

Then about Navigation and Embankment. I think, Mr. Dawson mentioned that the Steamer Company is going to restrict the Tezpur-Kakilamukh Service. Well, Government have not got any definite information about that, but I can assure him that the matter will be looked into. Now I entirely agree with him as to what he has said about the necessity for maintaining the present roads instead of having new roads. I think my Hon'ble Colleague the Minister for Public Works Department will bear this in mind.

Then the Department of Industries has been much criticized for not being able to do anything this year, at least for not initiating any new scheme, but I may draw the attention of the hon. members to the Budget Memorandum where they will find that the Hon'ble Minister for Industries has been liberally treated in the matter of new schemes. A sum of about Rs.50,000 recurring and non-recurring is going to be given to the Hon'ble Minister for the introduction of tanning industry in the province. This is a new industry unknown to the people of Assam. But recently, probably many of the hon. members are aware that one of the retired high officials of this Government has taken interest in this matter and has started a tannery of his own at Gauhati and which I understand is a success. So the Hon'ble Minister for Industries is going to introduce tanning industry and also she is going to start a mulberry plantation in the province. Every Assamese knows that *Pat* rearing is a profitable industry and there is enough scope for the development of this industry in the province, if pursued in the right direction. Over and above all these, she is going to do another thing which will be appreciated, I hope, by the members of this House. Many of the students are sent with scholarships for training in various industrial subjects, but after completion of the training they come here and for want of funds they cannot start any industry. Government is coming to the help of the unemployed youths by going to grant subsidy of Rs.6,000 to such new industrialists. If on the top of all these, hon. members say that the Hon'ble Minister for Industries has done nothing about industry then surely this is not a statement of fact.

Then the Department of Co-operative has come in for a large share of criticism. This matter also was brought to the notice of the Government in the Upper House and the Hon'ble Premier who ran this Department for many years and who has perfect knowledge of the Department replied to that criticism and I would like to read what he said about co-operative movement.

He said :—

“Every well-wisher of peasantry must be alarmed at the state of the co-operative movement in the province, and one or two hon. members have made reference to it. I had the fortune, or shall I say misfortune, of presiding over a Co-operative Conference last year and it was found that in order to rehabilitate the movement on a sound basis about a quarter of a crore of rupees is necessary.

Probably my hon. friends know the structure of the co-operative movement. First, there is a Provincial Bank at New Bongaigaon. It has many branches to the Central Bank, who as a consequence, has a branch in every head-quarter town of the district. Probably there is a Central Bank in some big subdivisions also. It is the Central Banks, which are the first point of contact to the Co-operative Rural Societies. It has been found that the Central Banks are in need of some 23 lakhs of rupees in deposits from the Central Banks, which people have put therein. Now, hon. members will have to consider whether Assam is in a position to back out that big sum. In the first place, an intensive enquiry will be needed in order to find out the realisable assets to the debtors, viz., Rural Banks or village Co-operative Societies.

The Central Banks have lent money on the assumption that a valuation of the assets was made at some time or other. If they had had some kind of enquiries made as to the paying capacity of the members of the village societies. Everyone knows that the value of land and immovable properties of the peasantry are always subject to fluctuation. I may cite one example that a Land Mortgage Bank had advanced Rs.10,000 to a member on a valuation of the property in question put at Rs.25,000 but within the course of 4 years it was found that the property in the open market (the landed property) would be sold for only Rs.4,000. Such cases of tremendous fluctuation of the land valuations are known to almost every member of this august House. Therefore, if they want that the co-operative movement must be kept alive, money should be found. I will request them to consider whether it will not be necessary first to find out what amount could be recovered from the members of the village co-operative societies, who are the ultimate debtors. The conference which sat towards the end of last year recommended that the procedure adopted in the Province of Bihar to make such an enquiry should be adopted first before tax-payers' money is spent in order to pay off the debtors of the Central Banks as a measure of our sympathy and support for the movement. Hon. members must have noticed that we have provided lakhs of rupees to the Provincial Banks as loans so that they in their turn can pay off some of the money to the Central Banks just to keep them afloat. In the meantime, if the two Houses of the Legislature agree, we will have to have a separate set of officers to enquire into the realisable assets of the individual members in the rural societies."

My hon. friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman advocated that there should be a communicate from the Government to the effect that this Government is going to help this Department. I think no communicate is necessary because here we have made a statement in the Legislature, which will be sufficient and will serve the purpose of a communicate.

Then I come to the Department of Land Revenue. On this Department many of my hon. friends have spoken about the development scheme. This development scheme has been conceived in a spirit of helping the landless people of all classes. But there is a shrewd suspicion in the minds of many that this scheme has been launched only with a view to bring in more immigrants to this province with the ultimate object of swelling the number of Muhammadans. Nothing can be further from the truth. Our Special Officer appointed for the purpose has already toured round the province and has submitted his preliminary report. From the report that has come to my hand for the district of Nowgong I can inform the hon. members that about 65,000 *bighas* of land are available in that district and the Development Officer has suggested formation of blocks. What I find is this: that most of these blocks have been proposed for the settlement of the indigenous people, the tribal and the scheduled castes people. Out of

this whole area of 65,000 *bighas* only a minor portion will be available for the immigrants. So, I can assure the hon. members from the tribal and scheduled castes communities that there is no room for any apprehension in this matter; that the Government has been inspired by the very sincere desire to help the indigenous people and also to help those people who have come to this country to make it their own home.

As regards the payment of premium, Government have received objections that it will not be possible for all people to pay the premium at the rate of Rs. 5 per *bigha*. I can inform the hon. members of this House that this premium is levied only for the development of that area. It will be spent for providing the settlers with all the amenities—*viz.*, roads, schools, dispensaries, etc. Government do not propose to deduct anything from this receipt, but want to divide the entire amount of premium for the development of those areas. So, there can be no possible objection to the development of premium. But if there be circumstances for reduction of the rate of premium, well Government have already issued a communique that this question of premium will be reviewed after the receipt of all the applications from the intending settlement-holders.

Now, as regards the Debt Conciliation Boards, I do not know how my hon. friends have received the astounding remarks that were made by my hon. friend Mr. Mookerjee. He said that Government should have felt ashamed to mention about the formation of Debt Conciliation Boards and debt legislations. Many of the hon. members have appreciated this move on the part of Government, and only one point has been raised that the present Debt Conciliation Act should be amended. This matter will be looked into.

Sir, there are many other criticisms which cannot be answered by me now within this short space of time at my disposal. But I can assure all the hon. members of this House that as soon as the proceedings are published, those criticisms which have not been touched upon by me, will be examined very closely and Government will take all possible action on them.

There is only one more point which I would like to refer to, and that is with regard to the speech of Mr. Moore who has very kindly mentioned one thing, *viz.*, about the possible danger that awaits us owing to the proximity of the Japanese bases to Digboi, Tinsukia and other places. He has asked the question whether we have provided any money in the Budget for taking up Air Raid Precautions, etc. The answer is in the negative, but I thank him for he has given me an opportunity of informing the House that the Ministry will probably be under the necessity of bringing forward a motion soon for making a provision under that head. I can assure the hon. member that every possible step will be taken so that it may not be said of Assam that while other parts of India were wide awake, Assam was sleeping (*applause*).

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 a.m., on Monday, the 10th March 1941.

SHILLONG,
The 23rd April, 1941.

A. K. BARUA,
Secretary, Assam Legislative Assembly.