



The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 11 A.M., on Thursday, the 16th March, 1944.

PRESENT :

The Hon'ble Mr. Basanta Kumar Das, Speaker, in the Chair, the ten Hon'ble Ministers and fifty-two hon. Members.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

#### Trainees for Civil Defence Service

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

\*51. (a) Is it a fact that the seven gentlemen who were deputed for training at Hyderabad for Civil Defence Service have all failed ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state who made the selection when they were deputed ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI replied :

51. (a) --Yes.

(b) --The selections were made by Government who, in the case of those who were already employed in the Department, were mainly guided by the advice of the Director of Civil Defence.

† Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Was any application called for from among the incumbents, or was it done arbitrarily ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Applications were received by the Director of Civil Defence and interviews were granted by him from time to time ; from these applications selections were made.

#### Paddy shortage

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

\*52. Are Government aware that shortage of cattle and man-power and prevalence of epidemic diseases are responsible for the decrease in area under paddy ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied :

52.—No. There is no decrease in area under paddy.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK : May I know from the hon. Questioner, if he can enlighten the House in what particular localities, areas under paddy have been decreased in the Province and by how much ? We would like to know, in which particular places, decrease has been affected and how and by how much ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Government answer is "No. There is no decrease in area under paddy" and the hon. Member wanted to know whether there was any decrease or not.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK : He may have personal knowledge, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Personal knowledge is of no value in view of Government reply.

#### Personal Assistants and Stenographers to the Hon'ble Ministers

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

\*53. Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing the names of Personal Assistants and Stenographers to the Hon'ble Ministers showing their (i) qualifications (ii) length of service (iii) present pay (iv) scale of pay (v) age (vi) the name of the Hon'ble Ministers to whom attached (vii) the minimum qualifications required for such posts (viii) how many of these persons possess the minimum qualifications of Personal Assistant and Stenographer to the Hon'ble Ministers ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

53.—A statement is laid on the table.



No.	Names	Age	Qualifications	Present pay	Scale of pay	To which Hon'ble Minister attached	The minimum qualification required	Length of service	No. of persons with minimum qualification required	Remarks
		Yrs. ms.						Yrs. ms.		
	Mr. A. S. Chakrabarty Ayyanger.	50	Matric and Stenography.	Rs.400 and P.A. Rs.40 per mensem.	Rs.250—10—400 per mensem (scale personal)	..		31	10	On deputation with National War Front.
1	Srijut Hem Kanta Barua.	41	B.A. and Stenography.	Rs.290 per mensem.	Rs.200—10—340 (scale personal). Ditto ..	Hon'ble Minister, Genl and Judl.		15	2	
	Maulavi A. Madasir Chaudhury.	34	Ditto ..	Rs.260 per mensem.	..	..		13	9	
2	Babu Nadiya Behari Deb.	32	Ditto ..	Rs.155 per mensem.	Rs 140—5—230—10—280 per mensem.	Hon'ble Minister, Rev. and Forests.		8	3	On deputation as Rice Control Officer.
3	Maulavi Azizul Haque.	32	Matric and Stenography.	Rs.145 per mensem.	Ditto ..	Hon'ble Prime Minister.		8	4	
4	Maulavi Israil Ali Choudhury.	42	Ditto ..	Rs.150 per mensem.	Ditto ..	Hon'ble Minister, Civil Defence.		20	2	
5	Srijut Satyendra Nath Das.	48	I. A. and Stenography.	Rs 230 per mensem.	Scale Rs.100—5—200 per mensem. Personal scale Rs.100—5—200—10—300 per mensem.	Hon'ble Minister, Agriculture and Veterinary.		25	6	
6	Srijut Rajani Lal Bora.	45	Matric and Stenography.	Rs.210 per mensem.	Ditto ..	Hon'ble Minister, Industry and Co-operative.		22	11	
7	Babu Chitratosh Gupta Roy.	28	I.Sc. and Stenography.	Rs.140 per mensem.	Rs.140—5—200—10—280 per mensem.	Hon'ble Minister, Finance.		5	2	Working against a deputation vacancy.
8	Srijut Satya Ranjan Upadhyaya.	46	I.A. and Stenography.	Rs.200 per mensem.	Rs.100—5—200 per mensem.	Hon'ble Minister, L.S.-G., Excise and Labour.		23	0	Working temporarily against a temporary post.
9	Maulavi Mostaq Ahmed.	30	Matric and Stenography.	Rs.100 per mensem.	Ditto ..	Hon'ble Minister, Education and P. W. D.		8	10	Ditto.
10	Mrs. K. Iver	32	Ditto ..	Rs.100 per mensem.	Ditto ..	Hon'ble Minister, Medical.		0	3	Ditto (appointed under regulation 33 of the Public Service Commission).

Speed required—150 words per minute. Other Stenographers to Personal Assistant and Stenographer to Hon'ble Minister, P. S. G. Matriculation and a P. S. G.—pass in Stenography—Hon'ble Ministers—from 100 to 150 words per minute.

4 with 100-150 speed.  
5 with 150 speed.



†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: The number given is ten. Out of twelve only nine have got the requisite qualification. May I know from the Hon'ble Prime Minister why the other three were taken in without having the minimum qualification?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: There is no minimum qualification as regards stenographers for being Personal Assistants to Hon'ble Ministers. It is only when their services are utilised to report the proceedings of the House of Legislature that a minimum qualification of 150 words per minute is required. Now, as nine such qualified stenographers are available, as a matter of courtesy to individual Hon'ble Ministers, we have allowed them to keep as their Personal Assistants those who are persons of their choice though they have not passed 150 words test.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: To become the stenographer of an Hon'ble Minister then no qualification is required?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: 150 words is not required which is the requisite qualification of being a Reporter.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Whether any minimum qualification is required for being a stenographer to an Hon'ble Minister?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: 100 words per minute is required for being a Secretariat Stenographer.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Am I to understand that all these twelve have got this qualification?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Excepting one. It is already mentioned in the list.

#### Applications from Secretariat Assistants for better jobs

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

\*54. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have refused to forward applications from the Secretariat Assistants for applying for jobs on higher initial pay such as Assistant Controller of Rationing, Assistant A.R.P. Officers, Textile Inspectors, etc.?

(b) If so, why and under what rule?

(c) Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing how many of such applications have so far been refused? (To be shown community by community.)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

54. (a)—Yes

(b)—Government recently decided that the Central Government's rules about applications of Government servants for other posts must be adopted in Assam.

(c)—Surma Valley Hindus	...	...	...	...	3
Surma Valley Muslims	...	...	...	...	4
Assam Valley Hindus	...	...	...	...	9
Assam Valley Muslims	...	...	...	...	4
Tribal Hills	...	...	...	...	2

A statement is laid on the table.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO STARRED QUESTION No.54  
ASKED BY MR. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE AT THE BUDGET SESSION  
OF THE ASSEMBLY, 1944.

#### Surma Valley Hindus

1. Babu Provash Chandra Das.
2. Babu Amrit Lal Ghauthury.
3. Babu Nagarbasi Deb Mahara.



*Surma Valley Muslims*

1. Maulavi Harisur Rahman Chaudhury.
2. „ Abdul Bais Chaudhury.
3. „ Muffassir Ali Majumder.
4. „ Ataur Rahman Chaudhury.

*Assam Valley Hindus*

1. Srijut Nagendra Nath Chaudhury.
2. „ Ramesh Chandra Das.
3. „ Kanuram Deka.
4. „ Anil Kumar Barman.
5. „ Promode Kumar Das.
6. „ Ugrakanta Kakati.
7. „ Krishna Prasad Barua.
8. „ Sarat Chandra Barua.
9. „ Umesh Chandra Talukdar.

*Assam Valley Muslims*

1. Maulavi Md. Sahar Ali.
2. „ Syed Ataur Rahman.
3. „ Md. Hussain Ali.
4. „ Syed Ataur Rahman.

*Tribal Hills*

1. U Mespot Rani.
2. „ Timolin Diengdoh.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is the same rule applied in all cases or only in cases of junior Assistants who are serving in the Secretariat ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: In all cases.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Since when ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: About six weeks ago.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Am I to understand that before that all applications were forwarded ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Almost all. In some cases, Heads of Departments refused to part with particular Assistants as he was or they were deemed irreplaceable in the Department.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: In that case, do Government propose to improve their lot where they are at present ; I mean when they are standing in their way of better prospects, do Government propose to improve the lot of those who were refused when others were allowed to take advantage of going to other Departments ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We have adopted a rule which is being followed. It is unfortunate that some applications were forwarded before that rule had been promulgated while others came late. We are not responsible for the delay in submitting applications by the Assistants.

†Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Is it a fact that after this rule, some applications were forwarded and others refused ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: May be.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it only applicable to Assistants of the Secretariat ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We want to apply it in all offices at Shillong.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know whether it is applicable in Education service ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: This rule is applied in the case of Assistants in the offices of the Secretariat and Heads of the Departments in Shillong.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Is it not better to state the rule ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am afraid, Sir,



I have not got the rule with me now. I can briefly say from memory that permanent holders of posts should not be allowed to leave their present posts and apply for higher posts. If anyone insists on applying, he must first resign.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Then am I to understand that those who are temporarily appointed are allowed?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes. If I remember aright, if his service is of less than one year.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I request the Hon'ble Prime Minister to place a copy of the rule so that we may be enlightened about the real position?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Very well, Sir, I will do that.

#### Holding of a meeting in connection with Security prisoners

Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS asked:

\*55. (a) Is it a fact that Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri, M. L. A., approached the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup in the month of December, 1943 for permission to hold a meeting for discussing the desirability of raising fund to help the dependents of the Security prisoners?

(b) Is it a fact that Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri assured the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup that the meeting would not be largely of public character and that only a few influential men of the district would be invited to give their deliberate opinion and help in the meeting?

(c) Is it a fact that Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri had a discussion about the said contemplated meeting with the Hon'ble Premier of Assam?

(d) Is it a fact that the Hon'ble Prime Minister assured Mr. Chaudhuri that such a meeting for discussion of the matter would not be illegal?

(e) If the answers to Questions (a) to (d) above be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state why no permission was granted to hold the meeting?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

55. (a)—Mr. Chaudhuri's request was dated the 5th January, 1944.

(b)—The Deputy Commissioner understood Mr. Chaudhuri to opine that the general public might not be interested and the audience would therefore probably be small, but the petition to the Deputy Commissioner was "to convene a public meeting to discuss about the desirability of constituting a committee for raising funds in order to give some aid to the dependents of those political prisoners".

(c) & (d)—Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri, in one of his frequent interviews with Hon'ble Prime Minister, asked his opinion whether raising of subscription for and payment of funds raised to the dependents of political prisoners would be objected to by Government. The Premier replied that private help to dependents of such prisoners cannot be illegal. No question of holding a meeting or constituting a public committee was mentioned by Mr. Chaudhuri, and therefore, no such matter was discussed in that interview.

(e)—The Deputy Commissioner refused permission in the view that such a meeting was not in the public interest.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Have Government any objection, Sir, if now any meeting is held—a small meeting—consisting of representatives of the people of that district to discuss this matter?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Probably there will be no objection if friends and supporters of such people meet privately to raise funds.

#### Distribution of Kerosene in Habiganj

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked:

\*56. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The number of kerosene tins allotted to Habiganj Subdivision each month?



(b) What procedure has been adopted for distribution of kerosene in the villages ?

(c) Who selects the wholesale and retail dealers and on what basis ?

(d) How consumers are allotted to each retailer ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

56. (a)—6,287 tins allotted per month.

(b)—Kerosene is supplied through wholesalers selected by the oil companies.

The retailers or each Choukidari circle are pegged to them. These retailers are allowed kerosene at four tins per 100 families per month. Individual cards have been issued to each family to ensure supply of his share (minimum 1 pawa and 1½ seers maximum per month) from the allotted kerosene in his circle. Tea gardens are also supplied on this basis but the retailers, permit for tea gardens are issued generally to Managers. Priority consumers, e.g., Offices, Thanas, Dispensaries, etc., also get kerosene direct from wholesalers. In the town, ration cards were issued and supplies made by approved retailers accordingly. For special purpose, namely marriage, Sraddha, etc. special permits are issued on a fixed scale. Supply for one week's additional ration are also issued for religious functions. e.g., *Id-uz-Zuha*, *Durgapuja*, etc.

(c)—Wholesalers are selected by respective oil companies and retailers by the Subdivisional Officer.

(d)—Retailers are generally selected for each choukidari beat and people of the beat are allotted to the retailer.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, with regard to reply to Question No.56 (a), the number is given at 6,287 tins per month. May I know from the Hon'ble Premier whether it is a fact that out of this allotment a percentage is kept reserved by the Subdivisional Authorities in their hands ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am not aware of that, Sir.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, do Government consider that the maximum allotment of 1½ seers of kerosene per month for each of the big families is quite inadequate ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I admit that, Sir.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Is it a fact, Sir, that the students—boarders of the hostels, even including the examinees are allowed only half a seer of kerosene oil for a whole month ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am not aware of what exact quantity each student receives in the hostels, but I have already admitted, Sir, that the rations are very inadequate not only for the students but also for individual families. We are helpless, in this matter, for the quota of kerosene that has been allotted to Assam, has been made by the Central Government and not by the Government of Assam.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, in view of the fact that University Examinations are going on, will Government be pleased to order for giving increased quota to the students this month and also up to the middle of the next month ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If we are to increase the quota to students, there will be proportionate decrease in the ration issued to ordinary ratepayers and if my hon. Friend wants that the families should be starved in order to help the students, I will consider the matter.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I have heard the Hon'ble Premier saying that the wholesalers are appointed by the companies ; may I know why the companies have been allowed to appoint the wholesalers, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The Surma Valley is supplied by the Indo-Burma Petrol Company whose headquarters are beyond the jurisdiction of the Assam Government. When the rationing of kerosene was started, they pointed out to the higher authorities that present distribution scheme should be worked out in such a way that they may not lose their retailers or their sub-agents who were working for them in normal times. Superior Government, after considering everything, agreed to make these agents of the company as wholesalers.



Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, do not Government realise the difficulties that because these wholesalers are not within their control, they may appoint their sub-agents as they like?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir, wholesalers cannot appoint any sub-agent. The retailers are appointed by the District Authorities.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know, Sir, whether this Government have any control over these wholesalers or sub-agents?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Well, Sir, to the extent they have to issue number of tins to the retailers according to the orders of the Subdivisional Officer or the Deputy Commissioner, as the case may be.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: But is it not a fact that these sub-agents are the sole authorities to submit to the District Authorities list of retailers who carry on the kerosene business with them? I want to know, Sir, whether it is the duty of these sub-agents or the wholesalers to send list of persons as their dealers?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It may be correct, Sir, that the District Authorities or the Subdivisional Authorities make enquiry of these wholesalers with whom they are to deal but it is not correct to say that those alone who are recommended by the wholesalers get retailers' permit from the District Authorities.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: In view of the fact that the electrified area in this Province is so small and in view of the fact that in some towns the electric light has practically been denied to the civil population, will Government make a further representation to the Government of India to increase our quota?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have replied to this in connection with another Question and I shall repeat it now that I have already made a vigorous representation to increase our quota.

#### Srimangal-Teliapara-Tripura State Boundary Road

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked:

\*57. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether it is a fact that private lands were acquired by Government some time back for the extension of the Srimangal-Teliapara-Tripura State boundary road?
- (b) Whether the lands from Shaistaganj to Teliapara for the said purpose were taken possession of by Government before the ripened crops on those lands could be harvested?
- (c) If so, whether the people were assured of their due compensation for the crop as well as the land?
- (d) Whether any compensation has been paid for the purpose up till now?
- (e) If not, why not?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied:

57. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Some portion of lands were taken possession of by Government before the ripened crops could be harvested.

(c)—Yes.

(d) & (e)—No compensation has as yet been paid, as the preliminaries necessary before payment is made have not been completed.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know from the Hon'ble Minister when the acquisition took place?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: I cannot tell the hon. Member off-hand, Sir.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: If I say that it took place about two years ago, will the Hon'ble Minister take it from me?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: I will take it from the hon. Member, if his information has been a verified one—verified by himself.



†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know why such a long delay has occurred, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Before I could reply to the present Question, Sir, I would ask whether he verified it. Sometimes, Questions are put on rumours.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: While Mr. Marar was in charge of Sylhet district as Deputy Commissioner, the possession was taken over and the people were assured that they would be paid compensation for their crops and then they would be paid their compensation for the land, but up till now not even a *couri* has been paid.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: It is not two years since when Mr. Marar has taken over here at Shillong.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Why there is such a delay in making payment to the people whose lands were acquired?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: If the hon. Member is desirous, Sir, I shall enquire into the matter as quickly as possible.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know when the Hon'ble Minister received my Question?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: I say here, Sir, that my Department received a letter from the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet on the 28th February 1944 in connection with this Question, and to-day is the 16th day of March.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Was it not desirable on the part of the Hon'ble Minister to make an enquiry why people had not been paid so long?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: That was not insinuated in this Question, Sir. As the hon. Member brings it to my notice and as I have already assured him, I shall look into it as quickly as possible.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know the usual period of payment for such acquisition of land?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: The usual period is laid down under the law.

#### Appointment of Mr. Surya Kanta Das as Lecturer in Zoology of Murari-chand College

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY asked:

\*58. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether Mr. Surya Kanta Das, M.Sc., a non-native of the Province, is going to be confirmed in his post as Lecturer in Zoology of Murari-chand College, Sylhet?
- (b) Whether it is a fact that the said Mr. S. K. Das was brought to this service on contract basis?
- (c) Whether they are aware that there are some students of the Province appearing in the ensuing M.Sc. Examination in Zoology?
- (d) If so, whether Government propose to make any provision for them?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied:

58.(a)—The matter is under the consideration of Government.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Government have no definite information.

(d)—Does not arise.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know, Sir, for how long Mr. S. K. Das has been in service?

†The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Nearly four years.

#### Charge allowance to the Heads of the Departments of Zoology and Botany

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY asked:

\*59. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether it is a fact that no charge allowance is given to the Heads of the Department of Zoology of the two Government Colleges of the Province and also of the Department of Botany in the Murarichand College?

†Speech not corrected.



- (b) Whether it is a fact that in other Departments of the two Colleges a Professor is placed in-charge ?
- (c) Whether it is a fact that a Lecturer has been placed in-charge of Zoology Department ?
- (d) If so, why ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

59. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—The Murarichand College and Cotton College have been affiliated in Zoology up to the I.A., and I.Sc. Standard only. Unless and until both the Colleges are affiliated in Zoology upto the B.A. (Pass and Honours) Standard it is not necessary to create a post in Class I, Assam Educational Service.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Is it a fact that Botany Department in the Cotton College was placed in charge of a lecturer for twelve years ?

\*The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Yes Sir.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

*Re Externee Nilmony Barthakur*

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

40. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether one Nilmony Barthakur of Dibrugarh externed from the Assam Valley applied to the Hon'ble Premier in the 1st week of December, 1943 for the withdrawal of his externment order ?

(b) If so, what steps have been taken by Government on the said application ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

40. (a)—No application has been received by Government since July 1942, but he saw the Prime Minister twice since, and the last time was about a fortnight ago.

(b)—In view of his past activities, he was told by the Prime Minister that he cannot be allowed access to the Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts.

*Re Security Prisoners Radharanjan De and Chanchal Sarma*

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

41. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether the allowance given to the mother of Radharanjan De, a security prisoner in the Sylhet jail, has been renewed now ?

(b) Whether she is very ill at home ?

(c) Whether they propose to increase her allowance for her treatment ?

42. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether they are aware that the creditors of Chanchal Sarma, a security prisoner, have sued him and obtained decrees against him ?

(b) Whether they propose to release him on parole to make settlement with his creditors ?

(c) If not, do they propose to mediate with the following Banks for settlement (i) Calcutta Commercial Bank, (ii) Surma Valley Bank and (iii) Sylhet Banking Trading Company ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

41. (a)—The allowance is being paid.

(b)—She was ill, and her son received parole release to visit her. Government have enquired about her present health.



(c)—Government have consulted the Deputy Commissioner as to whether this would be justified.

42. (a)—Government are aware that this security prisoner is in debt. They have no information of decrees passed.

(b) & (c)—No. He will be allowed interviews, if necessary, in order to arrange a settlement of his financial disputes: but it is not for Government to undertake the disputes on his behalf, nor can they release him merely because he is in debt.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: With regard to Question No.42 (b) & (c)—can extra interviews be allowed for the purpose? I mean to say, interviews other than those sanctioned?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I will consider each application on its merit.

### Report of the Indian Jails Committee

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI asked:

43. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether their attention has been drawn to paragraph 52 of the Report of the Indian Jails Committee 1919-20?
- (b) Whether it is a fact that in 1889 Drs. Walker and Lethbridge recommended a scale of pay for Jailors rising to Rs.350?
- (c) Whether in the Jail Committee Report of 1919-20 the recommendation was that their pay should not be less than Rs.200 and the maximum should be Rs.450?
- (d) If so, whether any steps were taken by them to give effect to these recommendations?
- (e) What are the scales of pay of an Inspector of Police and that of a Jailor?
- (f) Whether Police Inspectors, Local Auditors, Stenographers, Sergeants, Special Sub-Registrars, Auditors of the Co-operative Societies and Jailors are treated as second grade Gazetted Officers?
- (g) If so, why Jailors are not treated as second grade Officers for the purpose of travelling allowance?
- (h) Whether the Officers mentioned in Question (f) above are allowed to draw second grade Officers' travelling allowance?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA replied:

43. (a)—Yes, Government are aware of this Report and its contents.
- (b)—The fact is cited in the Report quoted by the hon. Member.
- (c)—Yes.

(d)—The hon. Member is aware that the recommendation mentioned was made long ago, and there have been several reviews since, as reports of Retrenchment Committees appointed at the instance of the Assam Legislature.

(e)—Inspector of Police:—

Rs.175—25/2—300 (old).

Rs.150—25/2—275 (new).

Jailor:—

Special Grade Rs.275—25/2—300 (old).

Rs.225—25/2—250 (new).

Ordinary Grade Rs.175—25/2—250 (old).

Rs.150—25/2—225 (new).

(f) and (h)—None of the classes mentioned are in the fullest sense Gazetted Officers, but they draw their salary on Gazetted Officers' bill forms. All expert Jailors are in the second grade for travelling allowance.

(g)—There are a number of other officers of approximately similar pay and status, who are not in the second grade and Government are reluctant to make any upward revision.



### Prices of daily necessities of life

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

44.(a) Will Government be pleased to state whether there has been a rise in prices of daily necessities of life compared to the pre-war price level ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to lay on the table a comparative statement showing the rise of prices of various articles of daily necessities of life, year by year, since 1939, onwards up to 1943 ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

44.(a)—Yes, as can be seen from the statement of Index Numbers of wholesale prices shown below.

*Yearly Index Numbers of wholesale prices of the daily necessities of life in India.*  
(Base : 19th August, 1939=100.)

	Rice	Wheat	Tea	Sugar	Coal	Leather	Kerosene	Cotton manufac- tures
1939								
December	114	156	122	124	103	146	111	126
1940								
December	140	160	136	90	98	107	124	118
1941								
December	172	212	122	114	115	117	140	199
1942								
December	218	232	163	120	158	141	194	424
1943								
December	512	379	260	151	226	171	178	381

(b)—Does not arise.

\*Mr. R. A. PALMER : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the list of Index for tea, I see that the figure for December 1942 is given as 163, whereas the figure given for 1943 is 260. Will the Hon'ble Minister please confirm whether this is correct ? According to my information the wholesale price of tea has increased since 1942.

\*The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Sir, I was asked to state whether there was any comparative statement in the Province and to lay that. Office suggested that as we have got no statement we should simply say that we have got no statement. But I suggested to the office that the figures which are published by the Government of India as Index number of wholesale prices should be copied. I think it has been copied from that. I cannot vouchsafe for the accuracy of the figure, for, I myself have found that for December 1943 the Index price has risen from 1942. I have kept, Sir, the figure that has been issued by the Government of India. Assam Government have no Index prices.

### DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

#### GRANT No.34.

(85-A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with war)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.46,60,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head "Capital outlay on Provincial schemes connected with war".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.46,60,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head "Capital outlay on Provincial schemes connected with war".

\*Speech not corrected.



There are as many as 38 Cut Motions tabled, and it appears that three schemes of Government are to be discussed in connection with this Demand and the time allotted for this is 1½ hours. Questions have taken half an hour only. So, from the Question hour we get half an hour's time for the Demands for Grants. Is it the desire of the House that extra time should be entirely devoted to this Demand only?

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Sir, it will be sufficient if 45 minutes have been allotted to "Transfer to Revenue Reserve Fund" and half an hour for "Civil Defence."

\*Mr. D. B. H. MOORE: Sir, another fifteen minutes may be allowed for "Civil Defence."

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to have a fair time on the subject of "Post-war Reconstruction", as this bench wants to talk about hydro-electricity this morning.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: With regard to that Demand—Grant No.32.—although, I find that there are six Cut Motions tabled, I think, if one Cut Motion is taken up, the whole matter can be discussed. So, I think, 45 minutes will be sufficient.

Under this Demand—Grant No.34—we have three very important schemes to be dealt with, and they are (1) Grain Storage Scheme, (2) Provincial Motor Transport Organisation Scheme and (3) Standard Cloth Scheme and for each of these subjects it would be desirable to have a separate allotment of time within the time allotted for the entire Demand.

With regard to the scheme for Provincial Motor Transport Organisation, the hon. Members will remember that a very important aspect of that scheme was discussed in connection with the Resolution which was moved by the Hon'ble Premier the other day, and the matters which were discussed then should not, I think, now come up for re-discussion in connection with this Demand. But there are other aspects of the question relating to Provincial Motor Transport which may be discussed now. So, half an hour's time will be quite sufficient, I think, for this subject. The rest of the time allotted for this Demand will be given to schemes Nos. (1) and (3.) Now I want that the first scheme be taken up for discussion.

Of the various Cut Motions there are some which want to raise the question of policy under this Grant and there are some also which want to raise discussions about some particular points coming under that scheme. So, it would not be proper to take up those Cut Motions which would give an opportunity to the hon. Members to discuss the various important points which would naturally come under the question of "policy". Now I find that the Cut Motion No.1 standing in the name of Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury wants to raise a discussion for devising a well planned scheme as per recommendation of the Long-term Planning Committee for procurement of food-grains in Assam. There is another Cut Motion standing in the name of Mr. B. Mookerjee and this is No.15 which is much wider in scope than the Cut Motion tabled by Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury. I would therefore like that the Cut Motion standing in the name of Mr. Mookerjee be moved, if Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury has no objection.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: I have no objection, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Mr. Mookerjee may then commence the discussion. I request the hon. Members to be brief in their speeches, because there are so many other Cut Motions which are important and which the hon. Members would like to discuss.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.3,88,19,688 under Grant No.34, Major head—85A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War, Minor head—A.—Grain Storage Scheme (total) at page 153 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.46,60,500 do stand reduced by Rs.100

I have, Sir, tabled this Motion to censure Government for their inability to cope with the demand of the Province. Such a large sum has been allotted for this



purpose, but it is impossible for any hon. Member to understand how this money was spent in the past and will be spent in future. Only a lump sum provision has been made which is lacking in details. In all fairness, such a huge amount, which is equal to almost normal total expenditure of the Province in a year, or even more than that, ought to have been placed with fuller details. Now, Sir, in the Budget Memorandum, it will be found that the Government want to make a reserve for three months' requirement for the Province. The lag at the end of 1943-44, is 1,35,35,000. Now, if 3,88,19,000 is required to meet the demand of the whole year; I cannot understand why such a huge amount will be required for three months reserve; the lag shown to exist at the end of the year is much more than required for a reserve of three months. Over and above that, Sir, I can boldly ask, and I wish that the hon. Members will kindly make a note of it and will touch on this point, whether the Hon'ble Premier has got in his store any commodity imported from outside, to meet the demand for three months. I am definite, Sir, he has not got it. Ultimately, a time will come when we shall find that this amount which is being interpreted and explained in the Budget Memorandum as a lag will be found quite otherwise and this lag will turn into a *loss*. Sir, Government is importing several articles, but there is no denying the fact that they are far short of our requirements. It may be that in some areas they are supplying those articles to some extent, but there is the general complaint and I do not think there is any hon. Member in this House who will deny the fact that we do not get our requirements even to meet our most pressing demand. It has so happened that the Government has got some stock, somewhere, but the way it is being distributed and the deplorable callousness on the part of the officers, who are in charge of distribution, do not at all go to help the people to their present difficulty and sometimes the people go without some of the most important and vital necessities of life.

As regards purchase of rice and paddy in the Province, during the last session, I asked a Question requesting the Hon'ble Minister to lay on the table all the tenders received and a copy of the agreement made with Messrs. Steel Brothers and Company, but the reply was that they were confidential documents. Sir, it is very difficult for me to understand this kind of reply, I do not know whether it is easy for any other hon. Member or not. Why should these be kept concealed, specially the terms of agreement with some company who are purchasing rice and paddy on behalf of this Government? How is it that hon. Members have not even got the right to know the terms of the agreement? However, I understand that there are some terms which are most objectionable as well as most objectionable. For the benefit of the hon. Members present here, I may mention a few of them. If I am wrong, I hope, the Hon'ble Minister will correct me.

Sir, as regards responsibilities of the agent, I understand that the agent shall be responsible for the purchase of the types, qualities and quantities of rice and paddy, he shall be called upon to purchase by the Director and shall be responsible for buying such quantities and qualities if available at prices specified by the Director and in the absence thereof, at such prices as the Agent shall consider reasonable and proper as being the most economic prices in the best interest of the Government. Sir, a blank cheque has been given here. Then another point regarding finance, I understand that the term is as follows:—

“From time to time as and when required on the application of the Agent's Manager at Shillong, Government will pay such Manager on behalf of the Agent, such funds as shall be required by such Manager to enable him to purchase commodities or to meet expenses in connection with the carrying out of this agreement. The Agent will authorise the said Manager and each Assistant in charge of various branches individually to represent the Agent and to grant receipts for all moneys so paid..... The Government shall bear the expenses incurred by the Agent for the rent on land and building required for stocking commodities and also, if necessary, the cost of construction of godowns and other buildings required for the purpose”. In this also they can spend as much as they like. There is nothing in the agreement to bind them to get the approval of the Government before spending any money. Government shall also pay all expenses of and incidental to cost of delivery to storage godowns and also of delivery from



storage godown to rail or boat and all expenses of packing and repairing bags and shall not require the agents to incur any expense in addition to their office expense and salaries and wages of their staff necessary to perform those duties. Government shall moreover indemnify the agents against all trading risk and also against all claims actions and proceedings whether by buyers or sellers and also bad debts, the intention being that the Government will assume all risks involved in the business and will bear all losses arising therefrom, provided that such loss is not occasioned by any act of negligence on the part of the agent or his servants in the performance of their duties. Then, Sir, the Government will bear also all losses of, or damages to, commodities whilst stores awaiting despatch or during transits provided such losses or damages are not caused by any act or omission on the part of the agent and or his servants. The inspection and acceptance of the rice and paddy shall be made by the agent at the time of delivery by the seller thereof.

So everything will be done by the agent. I do not know as yet, if there is any Government officer entirely responsible for the checking of the stock and money that will be advanced to the agents by the Government.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I hope the hon. Member will finish.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Then as regards commission. The commission shall be calculated on the weight delivered by the seller to the agent whether to godown or at a railway station or river ghat for rail or shipment and no deduction shall be made in respect of loss in weight after such delivery whether during storage and or transit. The rate will be as follows:—on all purchases of rice and paddy upto 95000 maunds in a monthly accounting period, the agent shall be paid a commission of 3 annas per maund and on all purchases in a monthly accounting period in excess of 95000 maunds a commission of 1 anna and 6 pies per maund. The commission will be paid on the weight of the seller and not on the weight which will be found at the time when the actual delivery will be made by the agent either to the Government or to any other party on behalf of the Government.

Sir, such are the terms and under these conditions our Government is proceeding. I appeal to the Hon'ble Premier to take up a bold stand and to chalk out a well thought plan so that he can save the people of the Province both from ruin and starvation. His present policy will lead the Province to destruction. Ours is a poor Province, we cannot afford such looting.

With these words, Sir, I commend my Motion to the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: As the allotted time for this discussion is to be up to 12.50 only, I will ask those hon. Members who want to speak on this to be as brief as possible so that I may give some time to the Hon'ble Premier to reply.

Cut Motion moved:

“That the provision of Rs.3,88,19,688 under Grant No.34, Major head—85A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War, Minor head—A.—Grain Storage Scheme (total) at page 153 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.46,60,500 do stand reduced by Rs.100”

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the food-grains procurement policies of the Provincial Governments are not an isolated affair. These were mainly based on the recommendations of the Food-Grains Policy Committee which were placed before the Fourth All-India Food Conference held at Delhi in which the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Assam was also present. The policy of the Government of Assam is supposed to be based on their recommendations. We will try to see how far it has worked in this Province.

The Government of Assam decided as per recommendations of the committee to purchase all surplus rice and paddy in the Province. The object of this purchase was never explained to the public. But from the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Supply in the Food Conference held at Shillong and from the speeches made by him from time to time, we could gather that the Government intended to purchase for supplying a portion of the needs of Bengal under the Basic Plan; for supplying the requirements of the Indian Tea Association and other industrial concerns without allowing them to purchase for themselves, to avoid competition, to introduce rationing in the big towns and lastly to establish a Provincial reserve to serve in



times of need the requirements of the deficit areas. With these objects in view the Government appointed Purchasing Agencies for procurement of paddy and rice in both the Valleys. During the last four months, a period which may be considered as very strategic, we have noticed no other activity on the part of Government towards procurement and control of food-grains in the Province, excepting the appointment of Government agents.

The Government of India, in announcing their policy on the matter of procurement stated that they favoured a single procurement agency in a Province, which should be essentially a Government procuring agency but which associated with itself and utilised to the fullest extent possible existing trade organisations. I doubt very much whether the arrangement made in Assam fulfils these conditions. The Government of Bengal have given wide publicity to their Food Plan for the year 1944. I read from an announcement made by the Department of Civil Supplies, Bengal. It states: "All purchases of rice and paddy on behalf of Government are entrusted to a Purchasing Board consisting of four firms of very high standing with experience of the rice trade in Bengal, one representative of the Railways and two representatives of the Chambers of Commerce. The Food and Civil Supplies Commissioner is the Chairman. These firms, designated Chief Agents, are to buy in specific districts principally through Agents appointed from amongst rice and paddy dealers. The Chief Agents are not to purchase any rice or paddy in Bengal on their own account."

Then, again "Purchase may be made in deficit as well as *surplus* districts ; in the former for the creation of local reserves ; in the latter for the creation of local reserves as well as for supplies to deficit districts and rationed areas...."

Sir, I do not know how far the purchasing scheme in Bengal is operating. But from what I have quoted, it appears that they have at least tried to follow the recommendations of the Government of India. In Assam, it appears that the appointment of the agents was the last word in our Food Policy and the Government considered that they had no further responsibility to discharge. Mr. R. H. Hutchings, Secretary of the Food Department of the Government of India, in announcing the decision of the Government of India said "if procurement is to be successful, the provinces must bring to bear upon it the whole resources of their administrations and it is upon the determination of the administrations that ultimate success depends." Evidently these words of the Government of India had no effect on the Government of Assam—where the agents were allowed to depend on their own resources for procurement of food-grains in their respective zones.

The greatest tragedy of the whole affair is that the Government have never taken the public into their confidence and they have maintained an ominous secrecy about the whole purchasing scheme as if they were operating in the black market (*hear, hear.*) This attitude on the part of the Government is mainly responsible for the wide clamouring against the Government agents.

The growers do not know to whom they are selling—the difference between a Government agent and a speculator has never been explained to them. The purchasers themselves do not know for whom they are buying. The secrecy that is being maintained about the rates allowed to the Government agents has had a very bad effect on the main procurement plan. It is responsible for shooting up of the market wherever the agents began their operations. It has given a very long rope to the sub-agents who generally work in the markets and is responsible for depriving the people of a fair price of their hard-earned paddy. We do not know what is the sense behind this plan of secrecy. I do not for a moment believe that Government had adopted this course for the benefit of the agents. Is it for profiteering on the Government of India? Government have not succeeded in reducing the field of competition even by the appointment of the agents—price being an unknown factor, the sub-agents are competing amongst themselves. The poor cultivators are being fleeced and the middleman's profit, which the Government wanted to avoid, has remained in tact.

It is a pity, Sir, that the Supply Department of the Government of Assam did not think it necessary to regulate and direct the purchasing operation on a planned



basis. They did not afford enough facilities to the agents so that they could procure enough stock to meet the requirements of the Government.

On another occasion too, much heat was generated on the question of appointment of the Government agents. I submit that it is not the personnel which matters but it is the policy involved in the purchase which should engage our most serious consideration.

The hon. Members are well aware that the aman and sali crops have been very bounteous in the current year. The Government forecast placed them at more than four crores of maunds. Out of it there would be not less than one crore maunds of marketable surplus, which the agriculturists would be compelled to bring to the open market. What amount out of this huge quantity have the Government agents been able to procure? Where has the rest gone? Certainly to the hoarders and speculators, who, we fear, will be able to dictate their own terms within a short while and torpedo the whole Price-Control Scheme of the Government. Are the Government in a position to meet the obligations stated by them from time to time? I think not.

Government may not admit, but we know for certain, that they have not been able to introduce rationing in the towns as yet in spite of their repeated assurances, as they had no sufficient stock of food-grains at their disposal.

Government have already been compelled to concede the right of purchase to the industrial concerns, as they had not sufficient machinery to supply it themselves. They could not compel the Indian Tea Association to take their requirements from the Government agents—firstly, because the agents had no sufficient stock in hand and secondly, because the Association refused to purchase at the high rate Government was allowing to their agents. So apart from the competition between the sub-agents, there is sufficient scope for competition between the Government agents in the one hand and the industrial concerns, including the tea industry on the other. Thus the pious intentions of the Provincial Government have been frustrated.

I do not intend to dilate at length on the practical operation of the agencies. Suffice it to say that it did not work properly for want of supervision on the part of the administration, for want of proper facilities afforded to the agents, for want of popular support and for the questionable tactics of the sub-agents in many places.

I feel, Sir, that it is not too late to constitute a Board as has been done in Bengal. For the successful operation of the procurement scheme, I submit the following suggestions and I do hope that these will receive due consideration in the hands of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Supply and the Supply Secretary.

(1) The agents should be directed to purchase at a specified fixed rate either directly or through the sub-agents.

(2) They shall operate at specified areas, and the same shall be notified to the Government, Subdivisional Officers and the Food Committees.

(3) No person who is suspected to be a hoarder or speculator shall be appointed a sub-agent. As far as practicable the agents shall establish their contact with the actual producers.

(4) Government shall bear the reasonable cost of carriage, baggage, godown and other incidental charges.

(5) The purchase shall be made under the supervision of the administration as per direction of the Government of India.

(6) The agents shall be directed to seek the active co-operation of the Food Committees, which may be vested with sufficient powers as stated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in the Food Conference.

(7) Wide publicity should be given to Government policy and the rates of price circulated to the area of purchase through the Sarpanches and the important markets.

(8) Transport facility should be afforded for the movement of the foodgrains published.

If these suggestions are given effect to, I am sure, the scope for corruption and complaints will be minimised and a fair price assured to the agriculturists.



A few words more, Sir, and I finish. It is a matter of deep regret that Government have not taken adequate steps to control the hoarders. Until this is done black market and smuggling will not be stopped. During the last two weeks, there has been a noticeable excitement in the Bengal Markets and the sharp difference in prices in Bengal and Assam will be a big incentive for exporting outside. This shall have to be stopped at any cost.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister assured the big gathering at the Sunamganj Rally that the Government agents had not been granted any monopoly. As Government is not buying for the consumers, the small traders should not be gagged. The circular issued by the Supply Secretary should be withdrawn. But it must be impressed upon the authority granting private licenses, the necessity of segregating the speculators or hoarders from the *bonafide* traders.

As regards the Food Committees, these will be an effective weapon to check profiteering, hoarding and export. Sufficient powers should be delegated to the committees. In this connection I beg to suggest that the committees should be allowed to appoint their own president and secretary. The Subdivisional Officers who are not even members of these committees should not be allowed to preside.

Lastly, I submit that Government should make no further delay in fixing the floor price of paddy and rice if they want to save the peasantry.

The other day, Sir, there was a discussion about the rate of rice and paddy prevailing at Sunamganj and I stated that I myself purchased rice at the rate of Rs.9 per maund. I received a telegram only yesterday on the point. It reads as follows:—

“Paddy Pagla five Sunamganj six Rice Pagla eight Sunamganj ten”.

I have received a similar telegram from Babu Gopendra Lal Chaudhury, Habiganj where it is stated:—

“Rice 11-8-0, 12-8-0, Paddy 6-0-0, 6-8-0”.

In the circumstances, I hope, Sir, that the Hon'ble Prime Minister will see his way to fix a minimum price, without further delay.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, whatever may be the experience of my Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury in the Surma Valley, I state most definitely that so far as the Assam Valley is concerned the Indian Tea Association is not competing for rice or paddy with anybody.

Sometime ago we entered into an agreement with Government, at Government's instigation, to cease any form of competitive buying and to that end Government made it impossible for us to buy in any circle save within the circle area and through one man appointed for the purpose of buying in in that area at prices not in excess of the prices being paid by Messrs. Steel Bros. in the area or at Government controlled prices which ever was lowest at the time of purchase. Failing ability of circle Grain Purchase officers to obtain their requirements, it became essential for them to send their requirements in the form of an indent through me to Messrs. Steel Brothers. It is my responsibility to allocate priority for transport, to receive bills, to generally administer the scheme. But I can say most definitely that because most circles found it impossible to buy their own requirements on the term laid down by Government, they have accepted Government's other alternative, that is, to buy from Messrs. Steel Bros. and all orders were placed on behalf of the Industry by me to Messrs. Steel Bros. and for the privilege of ceasing to be competitive buyers in the market; the privilege of playing Government's game, we pay Government 6¼% cess as Government's insurance against trading losses. Realising as we do, that because of market fluctuations Messrs. Steel Bros.'s prices must vary and, in fact, cannot always close up at the time of a Government control coming into force.

Let us take the example of some purchases made by Messrs. Steel Bros. which are not altogether exhausted. Let us take those purchases at Rs. 16 a maund for rice. This stock not having been exhausted, when Government control makes the price, say, 8 annas or even Re.1 lower, it follows that if Government agents are to distribute those stock to buyers at the then obtaining controlled rate Government must suffer a loss. We are quite prepared to admit in this regard that there must



be some time lag. But, Sir, I hold in my hand, now, bills submitted by Messrs. Steel Bros. to me for rice; this bill is dated 10th March 1944—when the controlled price for rice is Rs. 16 the bill says Rs. 17-9-0 in single packing to which is to be added 6½% Govt. cess. Another example here of 10th March when the price for rice was controlled at Rs. 16-0-0 the bill says Rs. 18-1-0. Now to take a few examples of paddy. When, up to yesterday, the controlled price was Rs. 8-12-0 on the 13th March this bill says Rs. 9-9-0 and so on.

Now, Sir, I talked to my friend, the Supply Secretary on the subject. His reply was not in the opinion of my Industry altogether satisfactory, and so I regretfully have been forced to bring the subject to the notice of Government in this form and I trust, Government will give us a fair deal. I think, we are giving Government a fair show and all we ask for is mere reciprocity.

What I want to say now is on a rather different subject but that does not mean that the subject is not of first rate importance—it is. In these days of relative scarcity, it is criminal to allow one ounce of foodgrain to be wasted. There is no reason to suppose that considerable quantities, specially of wheat and dal, have been allowed to go bad in storage and ceased to have any value as human food. I am not satisfied that sufficient attention is being paid to the matter of storage and correct handling. These grains must be stored under a dry roof on a perfectly dry floor. Stock must be handled so that the grain longest in stock leaves the godown first.

What I am about to refer to, Sir,— I know it is a subject not entirely belonging to the Provincial Government though they cannot be absolved from responsibility entirely even though it is a central subject—for I think, the Provincial Government knowing, as they must, what is happening to the Province, should represent the matter to the Central Government in the strongest terms. I refer to the repeated cases of deterioration of rice stored in the various camps under the Civil Population Movement Organisation. I know of instances of appalling waste in these places. Any way, Sir, some of us are watching these matters and I give notice that they will always form the subject of criticism from these benches unless proper attention is paid to them.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the procurement policy as adopted and so far pursued by Assam Government is an utter failure, and if allowed to run its own course it will end in transforming the fate of our Province into that of last year's Bengal.

Sir, aims of Assam Government's procurement policy were, as declared in last November Session to feed the deficit areas in the Province, to introduce rationing in all towns of Assam, to ensure supply of rice to labourers of tea and other essential industries, to send rice and paddy to Bengal and to supply the military at economic rates. The Government also aimed at stopping all competitive purchases in the market through appointment of purchasing agents for carrying on the entire procurement plan. The crux of this whole policy, if really put into practice, is cornering the hoarder and stabilising the prices of rice and paddy to a reasonable level through fixation of floor and ceiling prices to the interest of both cultivators and non-cultivating consumers.

Sir, let us now examine briefly how far these aims have been achieved till now. According to Government declaration Assam has produced this year about 4 crores and 60 lakh maunds of rice in Amon and Sali crop. Of this amount one crore and 30 lakhs maunds are likely to be marketable surplus while the peasantry have to sell about 60 lakhs maunds of rice out of this marketable surplus alone, leaving aside the purchases to be made out of Boro and Aus crop in future. But so far as our informations go, Assam Government till February last have not been able to procure more than 10 lakh maunds of rice since the new crops have been harvested, that is, since last week of November, 1943 for all supplies including Bengal, Military and internal requirements.

According to Hon'ble Finance Minister's Budget speech, the money already invested in all foodgrains stocked by Government amounts to about Rs. 1 crore



and 40 lakhs. This indicates that the stock of rice in the hands of the Government really does not exceed 5 to 6 lakhs maunds at the most liberal calculation. This is a miserable failure of the procurement policy of the Government; and it is no accident.

But why this failure? Sir, it was inherent in the very method of procurement pursued by the Government. The Steel Brothers of last year's ill-fame have been appointed as Government agents for Assam Valley, while in Surma Valley some fire-eaters from behind the Treasury Benches and kinsmen of some of the Ministers themselves have been grafted into Government's agencies. They in their turn have appointed whole gang of last year's rice hoarders as sub-agents in both the Valleys. Many war-profiteers fattened by inflationed war contracts have also joined this gang. And they are the organs of Government procurement in Assam.

Any amount of commonsense Sir, may convince any one why they have jumped into this business. Is it for a share in the small commission that the Government have allowed to their agencies? Not at all. Extra-profit is their sole motive force. Moreover, the Assam Government also gave them an unbridled scope of fleecing the cultivators and the Public Exchequer at the same time. Government secretly allowed them to purchase at higher rate than the ceiling price fixed by the Government themselves, and also kept silent over the bottom price of rice and paddy.

As a result, Sir, these sub-agents and the Government agents in their turn have hitherto pursued an unchecked course of blacktrade under the garb of procurement for Government.

Pursuance of these methods of procurement means minimum stock for the Government and maximum hoard in the secret dens of these and other hoarders. This will lead to complete blowing up of the procurement scheme itself including price control, and result in abject failure of redeeming all the commitments of the Government. Is this anything but complete surrender to hoarders and profiteers and toying with people's food?

Sir, such methods can ill-afford to command confidence from any part of this House and this is why the planters, the erstwhile supporters of the Ministry, naturally anxious to feed their vast labour population, and having no reliance on these methods of procurements, have been purchasing independently in the market. The Government also, contrary to their declared policy, have been compelled to come to an agreement recognising their right to purchase 75 per cent. of their requirements independently while only retaining the scope of supplying 25 per cent. through channels of Government. This already set in competitive purchases in the markets in spite of all pious wishes and devices to avoid such competitions. Ask the Steel Brothers and they will bear me out. Through all these big loopholes the Shillong black-marketeers are buying at Gauhati and Sylhet markets, whereas, the speculative buyers are losing no time in Sibsagar, Tezpur, Nowgong and Surma Valley districts also.

Interplay of these forces, Sir, shot up the rice markets in Assam in the last few months. This factor and the congestion in Government godowns due to transport difficulties led to the recent stoppage of Government purchases for the time being. This stoppage indeed led to fall in prices. But who profited at this fall? Not the Government. Some of the Government agents and sub-agents and also the independent speculators found their life's chance and dragged rice in their own dens. Such market led the poor cultivators to a considerable loss as they were left to the complete mercy of these murderous gang. The recent fall has gone below the economic level of price of rice and paddy in some areas of the Province, e. g., Sunamganj. It is quite obvious from all these events that such methods of procurement in no way ensured economic price to cultivators and supply to consumers in towns and Tea and other industrial areas at reasonable prices.

And again, Bengal's rising market in deficit districts bordering our Province has begun to hit our market. At Bhairab rice sells at Rs. 20 to Rs. 22 per maund. As a result, border-smuggling in Habiganj Subdivision is already causing rise in prices



in some areas. With present procurement policy of the Government and the deepening Bengal crisis again, we can only imagine what is in store for us in the coming months—not one Baniyachong but scores of them.

But we have to avert by all means such a gloomy prospect. And how? Is it by pursuing a policy which leaves the market at the mercy of profiteers as at present? Not at all. It is only by a vigorous procurement policy pursued by the Government in co-operation with the people and not relying on the profiteers that can save the situation.

Sir, for implementing such a policy the Ministry will have to adopt the following measures. The Ministry should immediately:—

Fix up bottom and ceiling prices of rice at Rs. 10 and Rs. 13 per maund respectively to safeguard peasants and consumers from the mercy of profiteers.

Ensure supply of essential commodities to villagers at economic prices so that they are saved from the black-market and thus help stabilising the prices of rice at reasonable level.

Set up a Provincial Food Board consisting of representatives of all the parties inside and outside the Legislatures, whose advice the Government should follow in procurement.

Activise the Subdivisional Food Committees that exist as yet on the pages of the *Assam Gazette* only; strengthen them with representatives recommended by these Committees. These Committees should be allowed to elect their own office bearers and no officials should be thrust on them, though they may be in them as members of the committees. These Subdivisional Committees should also be empowered to form Chowkidari or Mandal's Circle Committees.

Procurement of rice and paddy by Government agents should be carried on through and in co-operation with these Food Committees. In course of procurement Government should constantly bring out hoarders and profiteers through anti-hoarding drives in co-operation with these Food Committees.

Through such a procurement policy alone Government can fulfil its duties and commitments and save our Province from the fate of last year's Bengal.

With these words, Sir, I support the cut Motion moved by my Friend hon. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I entirely agree with the hon. Member who has spoken before me that the food purchase as well as the supply scheme of the Government has failed for two reasons as far as I can see, one that the Government persist in sticking to their mistakes, and secondly, for want of efficiency or honesty on the part of Government servants. I will state the instances of some of the commodities. Firstly, salt which is a commodity almost universally wanted and which has now practically disappeared in the country side. In villages salt is selling now at a price varying from Re. 1 to Re. 1 annas 8 per seer. In the town of Gauhati, Sir, I learnt yesterday, it was selling at 8 annas per seer and that also you can get only after making personal appeal and requests. I know of my own brother, who is a lecturer in the Cotton College, that he could not get salt for one full day either on loan or for money. Afterwards he got from a grocer only half a powa of salt at a price which I need not mention now. Sir, what is the reason for this? The reason is that Government has failed to get their supplies. I understand that even in the beginning of this month or sometimes at the end of February the total Government stock in the Assam Valley was not more than 10,000 maunds and that stock was held up in reserve so that in times of scarcity it may be distributed. Furthermore, Sir, I understand that, not to speak of transport difficulties, even Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co. have not been able to make purchase of salt. That is the reason why the limited stock of Government in reserve is held up and that also is the reason for this high price of salt and its unavailability in the villages. Now, Sir, I have heard yesterday—I do not know how far it is true—in the Bar Library that one Pearuddin, who is a very rich trader, said that he could bring three flats of salt provided he was granted a license and that he was in a position



to sell this salt at one rupee less than the controlled price. I do not know how far this promise will be carried out but he is a rich trader originally traded in Burma side and I believe that he is in a position to implement it.

Then, Sir, as regards mustard oil. Government has appointed agents for its purchase. My information is that although these agents are working from the beginning of this year, the total produce they have been able to make up till now does not exceed 30,000 maunds, and even these quantities, the Government have not yet been able to bring to the town of Gauhati for distribution among the mill-owners on account of transport difficulties and these are lying at the Sorbhog Railway Station. In the upper districts the demands are still more great where, I learnt this morning, some mills in Dibrugarh and Jorhat had to be closed down for want of mustard seeds. Government has not been able to arrange transport, moreover they have put obstacle in the way of making purchases. I have represented to the Hon'ble the Prime Minister about the difficulties of the Sualkuchi traders who bring mustard seeds from villages and I think that matter is under consideration and I do not wish to bring it before the House. But I can say this much that on account of Government's policy of fixing the margin of price between purchasers from the producers, and the sale which is so small, that nobody will feel encouraged to make indent for it or sell it to the mill-owners and if this apathy or indifference on the part of Government is not removed we will find that mustard oil will be completely unavailable, mills will be closed down and there will be no mustard oil in the Province.

Then, I come to Gur. Government has committed great blunders in this matter. There was at one time a fairly large quantities of Gur in all districts of the Assam Valley Division and because for sometimes this Gur could not be sold out the District officers reported to the Government, I understand, that no further Gur was necessary with the result that Government refused to indent for any Gur from outside. Now we find that Gur cannot be purchased even at three times the control price.

Then, Sir, as regards sugar the supply of Government has been greatly diminished and the rationing has been so poor that people cannot but have recourse to the black markets. For instances a big joint family consisting of 10 to 12 members gets only 5 seers of sugar in a whole month and it is inconceivable that such a family would be able to manage with only 5 seers of sugar in a month and naturally people have to get their supplies from other sources.

Then, Sir, as regards rice, I understand, I learnt it also at a public meeting which was held recently and one speaker gave this out as he has personal knowledge of it, being member of the Food Committee, that Government has issued recent instructions to the effect that their sub-agents should not purchase paddy with the result that the price of paddy has gone down very low. Taking advantage of this low price, some persons, who were afterwards known to be sub-agents, are making purchases at the low rate. Now the position is that the mill-owners of Gauhati have got no supply of paddy and consequently they had to close down their mills. They have been told that Gauhati is not a producing area and therefore it was a mistake to have their mills at Gauhati. If the mills of Gauhati close down for want of paddy which they cannot even get in black markets, the result will be that supplies to Shillong and some other towns in the Upper Districts will suffer very badly. One policy which the Government should have followed and which has been expressed in this House several times, is that Government should fix and control prices in respect of the commodity of which they have acquired a fair stock with which they can supply the public. Now if the Government cannot get full requirement why they should not grant some licenses for foodstuffs? So long Government say that other should do not sell their goods beyond the controlled price the Government should give them necessary permit to bring a sufficient stock. So, Sir, I support this Motion and agree with my Friends that this scheme has failed.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir,



it is a pity that of all persons, Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee has moved this cut Motion having full knowledge of all the steps that the Government have taken and with the discussions of the Economic Advisory Board meeting which was held yesterday, fresh in his memory.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Are the proceedings of the Economic Advisory Board confidential, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, it is confidential. As usual, Sir, I will start from the specific to the general and I will give prior place as regards my reply to Mr. Rohini Chaudhuri, the Leader of the Opposition. As usual I reiterate that his facts are wrong and the manner of his placing before the House is misleading. He started by saying, Sir, that the Government foodgrains distribution scheme has failed for two reasons, *viz.*, inefficient handling by Government and inefficient and dishonest Government servants to distribute it. Barring this bare statement he did not develop his criticism on those points but he went away to the narration of the difficulty his brother had to face, being without salt for twenty-four hours when salt was sold at Gauhati at eight annas per seer. One hon. Member said that it sold at one rupee and one rupee and eight annas in the interior parts. I can tell my Friends that there is no famine or scarcity of salt in the Province. As a matter of fact we had a stock of two lakhs of maunds in the Province and not ten thousand maunds as my Friend Mr. Chaudhuri has stated. But to the interior, for the closing of railway transport for three weeks, there could not be any movement. It is very painful to me to repeat what I have often stated in the House. Salt is being rushed to those places by means of country boats, by means of bullock carts and in some places by means of motor transport.

The other day one of my Friends spoke about Nowgong where there was a shortage of salt. Orders were at once issued to bring ten thousand maunds from the neighbouring district, *i.e.*, from Tezpur, but as there is no steam ferry from Tezpur to Silghat, it had to be carried by country boats. Sir, we are doing our level best to get salt from outside. I need not repeat what I said elsewhere but my Friend Mr. Mookerjee knows what I had said before the Economic Advisory Board yesterday.

\*Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. When I come here I am bound to forget what I have heard elsewhere. That is a different body altogether.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I see no reason for this explanation of Mr. Mookerjee. I am simply citing him as a witness to the effect that Government is taking every possible steps. I cannot dilate on all the steps that Government has taken. Suffice it to say that Government has sent a certain party to go and if possible charter one of the ships of Scindhia Steam Navigation Company either from the ports of Karachi or Bombay etc., or even from the southern coast, *viz.*, Tuticorin from where salt is exported in large quantities. Therefore it is not proper to say that Government is taking a complacent attitude and is resting on their oars as they had two lakhs maunds of stock in the Province. The same thing is about sugar. Our aim is to import into the Province at least forty thousand maunds of sugar every month. In the month of December last, we got sufficient quantity but in the months of January and February, due to want of transport facilities specially in the Oudh and Tirhut Railway which had to bring sugar from factories to the steamerghat, we could not get a sufficient quantity. But there has been a very great improvement in the first week of the present month. In the first week, we have imported as much as twelve thousand maunds. If we could keep up this rate we will be ahead of our monthly requirement as regards sugar.

The history narrated by my Friend Mr. Chaudhuri about Gur is again laughable and misleading. We have placed six months ago an order to the United Provinces Government to give one lakh thirty thousand maunds according to the quota allotted by the Food Controller of the Government of India. We have been crying in vain for



transport of this quantity and it is only yesterday that we have been told that Gur is on the move to Assam. So long, the Government of India as well as the United Provinces Government placed a ban on exporting Gur from the United Provinces except on Government account and therefore no private trader could bring it under our licence. It was yesterday alone when we received information that after all, United Provinces Government is allowing their own licensees to export Gur to their customers.

Many hon. Members have spoken that the purchasing and storage scheme of the Government of Assam has failed. I see, Sir, a family resemblance in the speeches of two hon. speakers. Probably it is on account of the fact that they come from the same Subdivision and great minds think alike, but up to a certain portion, even phraseology and sentiments of the two speeches were the same. So far as one hon. Member is concerned, I can say, all his facts are incorrect. At the same time I can say that the suggestions made by Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury are all being given effect to by this Government. As my Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury has taken the trouble of making suggestions before the House for adoption by Government, I have taken notes of them. I will touch all the points that have been raised by other Friends and I will reply to them seriatim.

We not only publish in the Gazette the control or ceiling price that has been fixed for a particular period of the year but we also instruct the Government agents to buy at a lower level than the ceiling price, for the control price is the highest price to the consumer, while the Government agents are asked to buy at a price suitable to the producer. He says, Sir, that all cost of carriage or transport to and from the godowns, to the place of delivery should be borne by Government. From the alleged secret document which was read before the House by Mr. Mookerjee on the terms of Messrs. Steel Brothers Agency it is apparent that all this is provided for by Government. My Friend's next suggestion was that the purchase must be under Government supervision. This is a good idea. But the area of operation is so vast and the centres from which procurement is made are so numerous that it will be impossible to have innumerable Government servants to inspect each purchase on Government account. But Government have now appointed Inspectors to see that the stuff that is supplied according to the orders placed by Government, are inspected before it is transported. So far as the purchase which is meant for military supply is concerned, each consignment is inspected by the military staff before the article is put into wagons. My Friend suggested that the Food Committees which now exist in paper should be made to see to the purchases by Government agents. It was also suggested by two hon. Members that each Food Committee should have its own President and Secretary and there should be no *ex-officio* President and Secretary. That is a matter on which opinions differ. It was my intention when I appointed the Food Committees that they will have much say in the matter of distribution of foodstuffs. But as my Friend suggested that they should help in procurement as well, I cannot say how far that suggestion can be given effect to. Then, Sir, my Friend suggested that there should be wide publicity as to the price that the cultivators should receive, particularly what the Government agents should pay them. With our limited resources, we give wide publicity as much as possible and he says that their area should be limited. We have limited the area of operations of the three agencies that are operating in the Province. Then my Friend suggested that transport facilities should be given. To this effect, Government approached the Regional Priorities Committee and the Railway administration to provide transport from the place of purchase and the Railway centres, thus it is Government who provide transport facilities for carriage of goods to different parts of our country. It was stated, Sir, by two hon. Members that sufficient stock of such articles has not been purchased by the agents concerned. I can assure my hon. Friends that the agency operating in Silchar and Karimganj have bought up to their limit of godown space. The other agency had to curtail their purchases, because they could not get any transport at all, as their places of operation mostly, are not on the Railway line. They are to buy in the interiors of Sunam-



ganj and Habiganj which are only reached by means of water communication. We were told by a representative of the Regional Priority Committee of Calcutta that the Steamer flats running through these areas could not be used for the transport of rice and paddy because they have been already booked for carriage of tea and other goods. It is under these circumstances when this barrier of transport is transcendant in four Subdivisions of Sylhet District, they had to cease buying as their godowns are full. It has been suggested, Sir, that the bottom price for rice and paddy should be fixed. I assured my Friends in the House the other day that if I found the price of rice was touching ten rupee level I would at once fix the bottom price. My Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhuri stated before the House that he paid Rs.9 per maund of rice at Sunamganj. I immediately enquired of the Subdivisional Officer there as to the present price and in reply I have been informed that the price is Rs 11 per maund at Sunamganj.

Mr. Blennerhassett has raised a question of the price charged by the Government agents for the deliveries he received from them. Before we began the discussion today, he interviewed me to say that he was going to raise this question in the Assembly and if the matter is placed officially before me I promised him that I would look into the difficulty. He said that he would not move his Motion and write to me demi-officially. But contrary to that, he took part in the discussion on the floor of the House and literally moved his Motion.

\*Mr. F. W. B. ENNERHASSETT: On a point of information, Sir, as a matter of fact I told him that I did not wish to move the Motion when the Hon'ble Premier asked me to let him have a demi-official letter dealing with the subject and that is why I did not want to say as much as I wanted to say.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir, I gave the assurance that I would look into the matter if he would give me facts and figures, because I do not receive copies of bills which the Indian Tea Association received from our agents, Messrs. Steel Brothers. I do not know what was the charges made by Messrs. Steel Brothers. So I asked Mr. Blennerhassett, who is assisting on behalf of the Indian Tea Association in the purchase of foodgrains of the quantity that the tea industry requires, to give me all the facts in the shape of a demi-official letter so that I can get the agent's reply and give the Industry an official reply. Any way, I am glad that he has placed this matter before the House, because the Government agents concerned will be chary in future when the Legislature is having a very scrutinising eye over their manner of operation.

Now, as far as Mr. Mookerjee's censure is concerned, it was mainly due to the fact that in the Memorandum of the Budget Estimate there is a big amount of over 46 lakhs provided for importing of foodstuffs for a reserve for 3 months. In his criticism, he is virtually correct, but he has not altogether summed up the information placed in the estimates. It has been our policy that we should have a reserve for at least three months in the Province of all those commodities that come to the daily necessities and in the dietary of our people. But in certain cases, on account of the vagaries of the railway transport, some commodity has reached as low a level as that sufficient for 6 weeks. We are making super-human efforts to remedy these difficulties and buy as much as possible. I refer to the shortage of salt. The salt that we have in reserve now will meet our requirement for 6 weeks only.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What about sugar?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As I said just now there has been a very great improvement in the import of sugar. We have received in the first week of this month more than 12,000 maunds of sugar. We have pressed upon the Government of India to increase our quota of sugar as well and with great difficulty it has been raised from one thousand tons to 1,250 tons monthly quota. Our demand was for 1,500 tons.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Masur dal is also not available in Shillong now.



The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am perfectly sure that there is shortage of Masur dal. This commodity comes from United Provinces. Unfortunately they had loaded us with Aarahar but very little Masur. Our order was partly for Aarahar and partly for Masur. I am sending Mr. Marar to Patna to arrange that we should get what we have ordered for—i.e., partly Aarahar and partly Masur. We have also asked the Government of the Central Provinces to give us Moog dal. They agreed to send us a consignment of one lac maunds and we have asked them to increase it to two lacs. In this way we have been trying to increase the commodities that are being imported to Assam, but the difficulty chiefly is one of transport. Again here I request Mr. Mookerjee to help me out in saying that he knows the difficulty as he has been a Member of the Economic Advisory Board, where this was thoroughly discussed but the proceedings of which are confidential.

Then my Friend Mr. Mookerjee's main objection to our procurement operation is that the agreement between Messrs. Steel Brothers and the Government is alleged to be confidential. I am not sure whether I stated quite correctly that it was confidential, but I remember to have said that the agreement at the time had not been signed as clauses were under dispute and correspondence was going on certain terms. So long as it is not executed it would not be proper for me to lay it before the House. However secret or confidential the document I may treat, my hon. Friend has got his means of getting the document and he has read before the House the terms that document is no longer confidential.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is all that I have stated correct?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I would take it at its face value because it has come from my hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee and my hon. Friend is an honourable gentlemen.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I have received it from somebody. I don't know whether they are true or not.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Any way, Sir, his main objection is that some of the clauses of this secret document which is no longer secret are one sided. He said that as regards responsibility of the agent there is total absence. In one instance, at least, let me put the reasons. A procurement is to be had immediately to meet the urgent demand and before Government can issue any price directive, the agent under those clauses has the discretion to buy it out at economic and market price. I think every businessman must rely on his agent under such circumstances, but normally we issue a price directive. My hon. Friend also complained that in matters of godowns and their building for stocking the commodities we have given agents a free hand. Up till now Messrs. Steel Brothers have not built any godown and made any huge profit on that. Then he says that even in trading risk Government agents have received very magnanimous terms. I say this is in accordance with the normal trading usages. Any loss or damage in storage on behalf of a body must always be borne by that body in accordance with the law and usages of the trade unless there be any negligence on the part of the agent. My Friend said that the commission to the agent is paid on the weight of the seller and not on the weight that is found on delivery. This is also against normal trading usage, because the agents earn their commission as soon as they procure the commodity and not at the time of delivery. If actually a consignment is lost and if we are to pay commission only on delivery to the consignee, then it will mean loss of commission to the agent and for no fault of the agent. Whatever terms may be embodied in this agreement, Sir, according to the normal usages or law of trade, the commission is to be given in that manner under the circumstances then prevailing.

Lastly my Friend said that even Government advances finance. We have to advance finance for two reasons. In the first place we do not know that anybody would come into the market to buy a certain commodity at a price fixed by them only on commission given by the Government, unless Government advances him money to buy it. But all these transactions are properly audited and there will be a balance sheet. I think Mr. Aiditya is going to raise that question. Not only that there will be a balance sheet, the summary audit account will find its place in the



Appropriation Report which will be examined by the Members of the Public Accounts Committee and by the House. So we have done our best to follow the principles laid down by Sir Theodore Gregory's Food Committee and everything has been done on good motive and with best of intentions.

Then I have to meet two criticisms of Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury. One is that in Bengal they have an Advisory Board whereas we have not got such a Board in Assam. But I think we have got an enlarged edition of the Bengal Advisory Board. Our Economic Advisory Board sits every month and there, every aspect of the economic situation is very carefully dealt with. There are representatives from various benches of this House except the Congress bench and if any one from that bench is willing to serve on this Advisory Board, I will be only too pleased to co-opt him. All those hon. Members who have sat on that Committee are convinced that the Economic Advisory Board as constituted, where we have got representatives of the three methods of transport—the railway, the river as well as the motor transport—where we have got representatives of the Army as well as the representatives of the American personnel who are now operating the Bengal and Assam Railway, has become very useful to us. As the main difficulty we are experiencing is that of transport, the presence of such people in the Economic Advisory Board makes it more useful than any other institution. Unless the military is willing to part with the wagons for civilian goods, unless the representative of the Regional Priority Committee who alone fix priority of different goods accede, we will not achieve much in the way of either importing from outside or in distributing within the Province, goods from one place to another, unless these representatives of the different methods of transport lend their cooperation. Therefore we are convinced that in our Economic Advisory Board we have got a consultative body which is far in advance of the Board that is prevailing in Bengal.

My hon. Friend is very anxious to know about rationing. We have asked every Subdivisional Officer to proceed with enumeration, and as soon as this is done we are ready to supply the rations. We have not deviated from our policy, but the local officers took a longer period than was expected in bringing out a satisfactory census of households.

\*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: On a point of information, Sir. Do I understand the Hon'ble Prime Minister to say that my statement about the scarcity of salt in the villages, where I said it is not available at anything less than Re.1 per seer, is incorrect?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I did not say that, Sir. I only contested the statement that only 10,000 munds of salt was in stock. We have a stock of over 2 lakhs maunds of salt in the Province. In Dhubri headquarters alone, I left 33,000 maunds of salt last month. At Tezpur, there is sufficient stock not only to meet the demands of the Darrang District, but also to lend 10,000 maunds to Nowgong. There is sufficient stock at Sylhet and other Subdivisional towns.

As regards rationing, we are pursuing the matter, and have asked the different Subdivisional Officers to speed up their plans. I am sorry to inform the House that in one particular locality, where enumeration was made by the A.R.P., the enumeration proved to be inaccurate and a fresh enumeration is going on.....

\*Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: At Sylhet, we have submitted to enumeration thrice.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, for the second time. The first enumeration was defective. I think, Sir, that probably by 1st April there will be *pucca* rationing in Sylhet. As regards the Subdivisional towns we have asked the Subdivisional Officers to carry on with their enumeration and come up to Government soon.



Sir, I think I have laid before the House sufficient materials to show that Government are not doing nothing ; on the contrary Government are striving their utmost, they are constantly fighting the Central authorities to increase our quota of imported food-stuffs, they have gone from pillar to post to get sufficient transport. I say "from pillar to post", and the hon. Members will be able to judge for themselves the correctness of my statement when I say that before a commodity can be imported to this Province, priority for that commodity is to be obtained from the Regional Priorities Committee sitting in Calcutta ; over that Body the Government of India have now set up another Planning Board for Transport, which have got to deliberate over the matter again. After that the matter goes to the different Railways concerned, and now that the Bengal and Assam Railway is being operated by the United States Army Authorities, Colonel Appleton, on behalf of them, with his headquarters at Gauhati, has got to give his consent before anything enters Assam. So, Sir, we have got to fight the Central Government, we have got to beg the surplus Provinces for their surplus commodities, and ultimately we have got to fight for transport.

As regards procurement, Sir, I am told by one hon. Member that the Government agents have appointed sub-agents who are pressing the people and getting supplies at a cheaper price by intimidating the villagers. If such a procedure, which has not been reported so far, has been adopted it is entirely wrong, because nobody can buy rice for purposes of trading unless he has got a license from the Deputy Commissioner. The Government agents have not got the right to give sub-agents licenses ; their sub-agents must procure licenses from the Deputy Commissioner, and I know no Deputy Commissioner has given any license to trade in rice to any sub-agents of these agencies. If such a procedure is going on, I will ask for a report from the agencies and this must be stopped at once.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: Is it true that the Deputy Commissioners have been instructed not to issue any license to anybody unless he applies through Government agents ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, the Government of India, in order that procurement under their own basic plan may not be hampered, issued instructions to all Provincial Governments that they should stop issuing more licenses to petty traders in rice and paddy because the presence of these traders in the mufassil would mean further competition with the procurement agencies, thereby forcing the prices up. Pursuant to that, the Supply Department issued a circular that no new licenses should be given, but we did not say that issue of all licenses should be stopped. A discretion has been left to the Deputy Commissioners to issue licenses in deserving cases especially to those who were in the trade before. I mentioned on the floor of the House three days back that I received a complaint from the tribal people in Goalpara ; this was also brought to my notice by Mr. Rabi Chandra Kachari. I have issued orders to the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, to grant some licenses for trade in paddy and rice to those tribal people who had some kind of business in this line. Similar orders are being issued to the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member want to press his Motion ?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Question is:

"That the provision of Rs.3,88,19,688 under Grant No. 34, Major head—85A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War, Minor head—A.—Grain Storage Scheme (total) at page 153 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.46,60,500 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

The Question was negatived.

### Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned for lunch till 2 P.M.



## After lunch

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.46,60,500 under Grant No. 34, Major head—85A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War at page 154 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.46,60,500 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, at the outset I may only say one word regarding the tagging together of some of the important schemes in one Demand—the scheme of motor transport, food supply etc. have been tagged under one Demand and therefore it is not possible for the hon. Members of this House to give separate or individual attention to each of these items. I would request the Hon'ble Prime Minister to put forward separate Demand for each of these items of capital outlay so that the hon. Members may get time to discuss them separately.

My object in moving this Motion is that huge sums are involved in this scheme and we want to know the actual financial position with regard to these schemes. A large difference between receipts and expenditure is explained as lags. Whether this is lag or loss that is to be ascertained.

Secondly, I am afraid, there is chance of fictitious assets being credited in the accounts. The stock may be depleted due to deterioration, wastage and depreciation. These things and market fluctuations will have to be taken into account in valuation of stock. The balance sheet thus prepared will enable our Supply Department to know where they stand and how they are moving in their business venture.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut Motion moved †:—

“That the total provision of Rs.46,60,500 under Grant No. 34, Major head—85A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War at page 154 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.46,60,500 do stand reduced by Rs.100.”

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the point raised by my Friend, Mr. Aditya, is very important and also very relevant. As I mentioned in my reply to the earlier cut Motion, the accounts of all these semi-commercial transactions of the Government will be audited and there will be a balance sheet and the accounts will be posted in the Appropriation Report on which the Public Accounts Committee and later on the House will have an opportunity to discuss.

Then about lumping together these three different Demands, it is not our choice. The Comptroller had insisted that any outlay on capital expenditure on account of war conditions should be made under this new Demand. Therefore, all these three items have been lumped. However, I will consult audit if this could be done.....

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, whether there will be assessment of stock?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, it will be very difficult to have a physical weighing of the stock in hand and we will have to go by the report of our local officers as to the quantity which may be in hand. If my Friend wants that each bag should be weighed, it will be an impossible task, but if he will be satisfied to know how many bags of these commodities are in stock, I am ready to accept his suggestion.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, some of our food-stuff becomes unfit for human consumption. That ought to be eliminated. However in view of the statement made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

The Motion was, by leave of the House, withdrawn.



The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Then regarding standard cloth. The first \*Cut Motion is in the name of Babu Akshay Kumar Das. That is regarding a particular point. Then Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. Does he want to move his Motion No.29† ?

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY : No Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Then comes Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mahmud Ali's Motion †† regarding distribution of standard cloth†. He is not in his seat.

Then Mr. Mookerjee. Does he want to move his Motion ? That will give scope to other hon. Members to speak. I may tell the House that we will continue this Demand upto 3.15 P.M.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Yes, Sir.

I beg to move that the provision of Rs.1,77,47,312 under Grant No.34, Major head—85A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War, Minor head—C.—Standard Cloth Scheme (total) at page 154 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.46,60,500 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, we have heard on the floor of this House on several occasions and for the last three sessions that our Government is trying its level best to import standard cloth to the Province and to help the poor people by selling these standard cloths at a fixed price. But, Sir, it is quite well-known to all the hon. Members that due to scarcity of cloth everybody is feeling beyond measure. The difficulty that has arisen at present is that neither the standard cloth nor other cloths are available in the market. Sir, it is true that Government has purchased some standard cloth, but so far as the distribution is concerned I have got great doubt in my mind whether even 50 per cent. of the cloth that had been purchased by Government has been distributed among the people. Sir, the way in which it is being distributed is most peculiar. I think, it is the duty of the Government to see that the poor people—those who cannot afford to pay high price in the black market—should get their food and cloth at a reasonable fixed price. So far as the food is concerned we have dealt with it at length but so far as the cloth is concerned we are dealing at the moment. This is equally important and in some cases more important because a man can go without food for a day or two but without cloth in the civilised world none can go even for a single moment. Sir, we won't be satisfied only to hear from the Government that we are doing our level best or we are doing such and such things: Sir, we are concerned with the result. I will be pleased, if any hon Member of this House stand up and say that in his locality there is no dearth of standard cloth and that the people of that locality are getting a much standard cloth as required by them. My appeal to the Hon'ble Prime Minister will be that without criticising us at the time of reply he should be good and kind enough to realise our feelings and

\*28. Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS to move:

That the provision of Rs.37,812 under Grant No.34, Major head—85A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War, Minor head—C.—Standard Cloth Scheme, Sub-head—2.—Pay of Establishment at page 154 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.46,60,500 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To censure Government for not making arrangement for distribution of standard cloth to the poor villagers.)

†29. Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY to move:

That the provision of Rs. 37,812 under Grant No. 34, Major head—85A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War, Minor head—C.—Standard Cloth Scheme, Sub-head—2.—Pay of Establishment at page 154 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.46,60,500 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To raise a discussion about the distribution of standard cloth in the villages.)

††30. Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI to move:

That the provision of Rs.37,812 under Grant No. 34, Major head—85A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War, Minor head—C.—Standard Cloth Scheme, Sub-head 2.—Pay of Establishment at page 154 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.2 *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.46,60,500 do stand reduced by Rs.2.

(To criticise the policy of the Government regarding distribution of standard cloth.)



the feelings of those whom we represent in this House and see his way that something real and tangible may be done. Sir, the Hon'ble Premier always presupposes that we say every day on every matter that Government is doing nothing. At least I am not saying that so far as cloth is concerned and so far as food grains are concerned. My point is this : it may be that Government are doing their level best ; but what is the result ? The people do not derive the necessary benefit out of it. Some such steps should be taken so that the people may get rid of food and cloth difficulties. If necessary, the Government should take some bold steps. If the Central Government stand on the way and do not help us to remove our transport difficulty, I shall ask the Hon'ble Prime Minister to take recourse to non-co-operation. It is not that we depend on other Provinces, but other Provinces also depend on us at least for one or two commodities of vital necessity. If he takes a bold stand, I am sure and I can assure him on behalf of the whole House that he will find the whole House at his back. If to solve this problem he requires our assistance in any way, at any hour, rather at any moment he will get our ungrudging and sincere support.

Sir, with these words I am finally appealing to him to do something real for the people and I commend my Motion for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Government if they are in a position to meet adequately the needs of the country in regard to standard cloth and if it is not so, no amount of appeal and discussion in this House will help the matter. We do not know, Sir, from what sources this standard cloth is coming. If the commodity is there, the question of transport and distribution is only a secondary matter and Government can somehow arrange for this transport and distribution ; but I wonder if there is sufficient quantity of this commodity to meet the demands of the country. I have nothing more to say because I have not seen a piece of standard cloth personally in my part of the country and even here in Shillong up to now.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in this matter as well as in the matter of food-supply we have heard and we have no reason to doubt that Government has really very laudable intention. For instance, we have heard that there is about 2 lakhs of maunds of salt, in the Province and that there are in every town sufficient quantity of salt but for want of transport difficulties we cannot taste salt in villages. We have heard that sugar and other commodities are being purchased from outside the Province, but it cannot be brought for want of transport. No doubt that Government's intention is perfect and excellent, but the result has been otherwise. In the matter of cloth also the same thing might be said. Government should look to the poor, naked and half-naked people. They should remove their difficulties. But what is the immediate result of the policy ? The immediate result is that cloths packed up for some months are kept for three months without any Government order for releasing them. In some places I have heard that when they open the cloth they find that there is no price list of some of the commodities, therefore, they could not fix any price and had to repack the parcels and keep them sealed for sometime. That is the working of the Government. Government's intention is very good. Nobody can deny that Government have recited their whole catalogue of activities in this direction to this House. But with what result ?

Then, Sir, as regards cloths in Assam there should not have been much difficulty. If we could have sufficient yarn we could meet our own cloth requirements. There is a Weaving Institute at Gauhati and I think there is also a Weaving Institute at Karimganj.

At Gauhati Weaving Institute large sum of money has been spent. From what we have seen now, the institue has been closed and occupied by the military. Did Government acquiesce in the occupation of the Weaving Institution by the military ? Was the occupation made without previous notice ? If sufficient notice had been given, could not Government have improvised some measure for housing it ? Could not Government build some house ? It shows that Government is not taking really any active interest in supplying cloth to the people and that is how the want of standard cloth is felt here.



\*Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Recently during this session we were told by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in connection with standard cloth that Government would now be in a position to distribute standard cloth in abundance. We also were assured by him that his Government was expecting a very large quantity of standard cloth from the Government of India. In the past also we heard from him that he was getting standard cloth in large quantities; so, why is there a clamour that the people are not getting cloth according to their requirements? Is it due to the fact, as it appears from the statements in various quarters and from the complaints from most of the hon. Members, that the difficulty at present lies in the system of distribution? What is the procedure of the Government? They send the cloth to each of the Subdivisional headquarters and they entrust the work of distribution to some of their officers, but from my practical experience I find that some of the officers such as, Sub-Registrars, in one occasion a forest officer, were entrusted to distribute standard cloth. But as a matter of fact the officers have not got sufficient time to devote to the work to meet the demands of the people. They allocate some of the days in a week for the work and notify the general public to come and receive cloth, but when people come they find the officer absent or that he has not got sufficient time to meet the people or to give them the cloth. They remain there for sometimes, they wait there for a few hours and then return without getting any cloth. Some of them may get or some of them may go back disappointed, because it is not obligatory on the part of the officers concerned to whom responsibility was entrusted by Government to distribute cloths to the people. I find that the method of distribution is quite faulty and Government should find out some other ways by which they can make distribution of cloths more effective. Then again, day before yesterday probably, we heard the Hon'ble Premier saying that the Government were not finding suitable agencies through whom they could distribute cloths. The District Officers were not very much inclined to take up the responsibility on the ground of shortage of officers. But I find, Sir, recruitments are going on day and night in the Supply Department. So there is no ground for Government to plead acute shortage of officers in distributing cloths to the people. Why the poor people should suffer for no fault of their own? It is the look-out of Government to find out some means, it is the business of the Government to draw up certain schemes by which they can efficiently distribute cloths to the poor people. I do not find any justification for the Government in saying that they have got sufficient stock of standard cloth but that they cannot distribute them properly. So, my appeal to Government will be to see that an efficient system of distribution of standard cloth is evolved and no differentiation is made in the matter of its distribution.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hand of co-operation which my hon. Friend, Mr. Mookerjee, has extended, I readily grasp. I won't indulge in recrimination when matters are placed in a very logical, sensible and sound manner.

We have got sufficient stock of standard cloths in the Province now. Up-to-date figures put it at the total of 11 million despatched—over one crore yards—of which, according to our figures, 4½ million or 45 lakhs have already been distributed. Even then I have heard complaints from various quarters that the distribution has not been either proper or adequate. So long Government had insisted when there was a shortage of stock that only the poor people, who would be fortified with a certificate of poverty either from the village Sarpanches or by a responsible officer would alone get standard cloths which were distributed from Government agencies, but when we got large stock very recently, I immediately issued orders to all Deputy Commissioners not to insist upon certificate of poverty, but to sell it to any one and every one. I am indeed sorry to hear that in certain areas stock of standard cloths were opened and then had to be re-packed for want of price lists, as my hon. Friend, Srijut Chaudhuri, has pointed out. I cannot conceive of such a state of affairs, because printed lists were supplied



to all the Deputy Commissioners. In answer, probably to a Question of my hon. Friend, Mr. Mookerjee, I placed a copy of the price list in the House table. Then again, Sir, hearing all these complaints from different hon. Members that distribution has entirely been inadequate inspite of Government's best efforts, I have very recently, about a month ago, appointed an Inspector to push the distribution of standard cloth. He is now touring in the Province and as soon as we hear from him that there are sufficient stocks in the hands of all the Deputy Commissioners, we shall issue instruction to release them at once to the public. On the top of that, according to the distribution of Standard Cloth Scheme under the orders of the Government of India, we appointed a Provincial Advisory Board for standard cloths alone. We had two sittings of this Board during the last one year. Unfortunately some of the very influential and important members could not attend those meetings. The chief person that I have in mind is my hon. Friend, Babu Kamini Kumar Sen, from whom I thought I would get great help. Any way, this Board is sitting tomorrow and as there are as many as five hon. Members of this House represented in the Board, we hope to get sufficient indications from them as to the best way of distributing standard cloth. As circumstances we are now, if sufficient stocks come, there will be no space to keep them. So, after hearing my hon. Friends tomorrow, we will devise means of its distribution which may prove more satisfactory than what we have been able to do hitherto. We have hopes that by the appointment of this Inspector for standard cloth there will be some improvement in the matter of its distribution. My idea is that if our Food Committees in which my hon. Friends of both the Houses are placed get functioning properly then they will be in a position to see that this poor man's cloth is really and properly distributed to the poor people. I have taken every possible steps for its better distribution; if there is any fault in the distribution itself it will be solved soon. I hope my hon. Friends are satisfied with the explanations that I have given.

Mr. Chaudhuri while discussing the topics of standard cloth brought in the question of the acquisition of the Weaving School and I may be permitted to say a few words about it.

Sir, military authorities wanted to take over the Weaving School, against which the Department of Industries was fighting for a long time. Then, all on a sudden there was an urgent message that these buildings were required for very special military purposes. The Industries Department thought that they would not be able alone to fight against this recent demand, so they pushed on the file to me. I protested to the Government of India on the line suggested by my hon. Friend, Srijut Chaudhuri, that at a time when there is acute shortage of cloth the only institution in the Assam Valley which was endeavouring to supplement indigenous looms, should not be closed down as the institution shall have to be closed, if it is occupied by the military. But our protests to Delhi were in vain. Thereafter, I again protested and requested them to spare the main school building and take over all the other structures—the hostels, the office, the emporium and even the dyeing laboratory. Because in the school building numerous looms are fitted, there is one Hattersley power loom also, and it will be difficult to dismantle them, the Jacquard looms, and re-erect them again in another place. But the authorities at Delhi were adamant. They said that this building was required for a very special purpose and it is very likely that its nearness to the Railway station was the incentive for its acquisition. Now, I find, Sir, that these buildings have been made over to the American personnel who are operating the Bengal and Assam Railway. Every kind of protest was made by us. We fought tooth and nail to the last for this institution. My Friend, Mr. Chaudhuri, says that why the Government did not build another school before handing it over. The actual delivery of possession was very quick. We had no time to build. Moreover building materials are not obtainable at the present moment. We have approached the military for some materials like thatch and bamboo so that we can build it either at Gauhati or at Palashbari. The Hon'ble



Minister in-charge will consider whether the school cannot be restarted either at Gauhati or at Palashbari.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: In view of what I have heard from the Hon'ble Premier I do not like to press my Motion.

The Motion was, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.68,05,500 under Grant No. 34, Major head—85A.—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with War, Minor head—B,—Motor Transport Organisation (total) at page 154 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100. *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 46,60,500 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

My object in moving this cut Motion is to raise a general discussion about the Motor Transport Organisation in the Province. This matter came up in the last November Session also when it was very thoroughly discussed. What we could then understand, from the statement made by Government at that time was that this organisation would do immense good to the people of the Province. But practically it has not done what we expected during these abnormal days. I may inform the House, that to our utter misfortune so far as my part of the country is concerned, the people are suffering for the last one year. People have become subject to various sorts of hardship not only on account of foot traffic but also for want of proper facilities with regard to the daily necessities of life. Sir, frankly speaking, since after the abolition of the Shaistaganj—Habiganj branch of the Railway, the people of Habiganj town are passing their days sometimes without getting the very vital necessities of life. They are not in a position to get their things either through railway or through motor or by boat. That unfortunate town is practically cut off from all sorts of communications. The river Barak has been silted up since many years past. Boat communication in the dry season is altogether stopped. I put several Questions regarding this matter so that the Government could see with all seriousness that transport facilities were given to the people of Habiganj as early as possible on the ground that people were cut off from all sorts of communications. But to my utter surprise, I noticed that Government in reply said that there was still road communication. It was expected that since after the abolition of that railway branch Government would be in a hurry to see that motor transport could be arranged there for the purpose of goods and passenger traffic. I am not so much keen for the passenger traffic. It is extremely necessary that the Government should look to the facilities of the people living in that town. They should be given the transport facilities by motor, but the Government have failed in that.

Again, Sir, if I might speak about the other facilities of the private motor owners, they are also very much handicapped in getting their necessary motor parts. Even those gentlemen who are maintaining motor cars for their personal use and for their routine work, are in extreme difficulty to get motor parts, *e. g.*, tyres and other things. With regard to petrol, the less said the better. Even men of high position are not allowed more than twelve or fifteen gallons per quarter. In order to remedy these things, Sir, I draw immediate attention of the Government.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I find that in the Budget the provision made under the Motor Organisation head is a most peculiar one. In all other cases we find that Government wants some money for expenditure. Here I find against ultimate total B at page 153, Motor Transport Organisation *minus* nineteen lakhs ninety-four thousand five hundred. Sir, I really fail to understand why this amount has been shown in such a peculiar way specially when there was such a hue and cry about the management of this organisation on the floor of this House during the last November Session. During the last Budget Session also I requested the Hon'ble Prime Minister to come before the House with a detailed account of this department. Sir, it is impossible for any one to understand the real position. If we go through



the explanation given in the Budget Memorandum we do not find any light to remove our difficulty. Sir, I shall be grateful to the Hon'ble Prime Minister if he can enlighten me why the income was not shown in the receipt side and the expenditure on the expenditure side. Instead of doing that, the minus figure has been shown here in a most peculiar way so that nobody can understand anything. There are many other departments where revenue derived is more than the expenditure incurred they also could be shown with *minus* figures but that is not done and why this departure here where many ugly rumours are afloat? Sir, when I delivered my Budget speech I mentioned about a few ugly rumours and at that time I said that I would deal with it in detail when the Demand for Grants under this head would be placed before this House. Sir, I understand that postal stamps—I hope the Hon'ble Premier will make a note of all these allegations—worth about rupees one thousand have been written off.

A date was fixed for the sale of several vehicles and it was advertised in the paper. But the sale took place before the appointed date. I am sorry that my hon. Friend Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali is absent now. I understand that he sent a wire to the Hon'ble Prime Minister and thereby he brought this to the notice of the Hon'ble Premier who had to intervene and subsequently, I understand, the former sale was cancelled and the said vehicles were sold afterwards in auction. I want to be enlightened on this point also.

Then, Sir, as regards blank cheques I understand that the officer who has the power to sign cheques left some blank cheques with his signatures without any entry of the amounts, in favour of a certain Company at Calcutta. If my information is right, the name of the Company is Cox & Kings. I may be wrong as regards the name of the Company, but so far as the blank cheques are concerned, I have sufficient reason to believe that some blank cheques were left at Calcutta and I understand that this has been brought to the notice of the Comptroller of the Province. If the Hon'ble Premier cares to enquire he will get some light from that department as well. Sir, I understand, the pay orders are signed by Mrs. Adamson, though we got an assurance from the Hon'ble Premier that he would see his way so that one who had no connection with this organisation should be removed. I want to be enlightened how far he has succeeded in this respect. Here I think, Sir, I shall be failing in my duty and I shall commit a crime if I do not mention, as I have understood, that though the Hon'ble Premier had tried to make things right in this direction, Sir, he has failed. As regards spare parts at Rangamati Workshop are concerned, I understand that the stock does not tally with the record and moreover the stock registers which are supposed to be kept in the head office was afterwards transferred to Rangamati. Whether this fact has been brought to the notice of the Hon'ble Premier, I do not know. I hope he will enquire and give a suitable reply to this also. As regards other expenditure, Sir, I understand that when some of the fortunate officers are sent to mufassil, they are supplied with cooking utensils, cutlery, crockery, etc. Everything has a limit, but here in this organisation there is no limit. If the Hon'ble Premier takes the trouble to enquire he will come to know how the money of this Province is being used by this department. It may be said that after all these we are making a huge profit. But, Sir, shall we be satisfied with this? At least I am one of those who will never be satisfied with money only overlooking the moral side of it altogether. The other day I said that due to the rise in prices of essential commodities and due to the critical time which is prevailing in this Province, the people with a low and limited income are being driven to take recourse to corrupt practices. But should not the Government check all this? It is high time that the Hon'ble Premier should take a note of this and take all round necessary steps.

With these words, I support the Motion.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Cut Motion moved by Maulavi Abdur Rahman confines itself to the deficiency of transport between Habiganj and Shaistaganj since the branch railway was withdrawn.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Motion was to raise a general discussion.



The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Yes, Sir. The position as regards this—between Habiganj and Shaistaganj—is that when my Friend, the Mover, and some other Members from Habiganj saw me to say that they must have a substitute transport arrangements, I at once promised them that I would see that some lend and lease lorries are released for plying on this road and I asked them that instead of individual people competing for these lorries, they should form into an association or syndicate and then they should apply in their name. Having made this promise I got information from the Regional Transport Authority that already some 5 or 6 buses were running on that road and there was room for one or two only. Even then I remembered my promise that I would issue some new lorries for that road, because the bus owners who were already plying, were doing so as an experiment owing to the very rickety condition of their lorries. I can assure my Friend that if the present transport facilities on that road is not sufficient and if this is borne out by the Regional Transport Authority of Sylhet, I will leave no stone unturned to release a few of those lorries from the Assam Motor Transport for use in that area.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : On a point of personal information, Sir. When there is such a great transport difficulty in the Province will the Hon'ble Premier see that all the motor vehicles under this department are used for civil population when all those vehicles are under his full control ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Next I come to the criticism of Mr. Mookerjee. He knows full well that only yesterday we discussed in another place about the extreme necessity of transferring some of the lorries for our civil needs.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : I want the whole of it.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : It will not be possible to release the whole fleet of 500. But we have already decided to divert at least 100 lorries immediately for civil need, out of the lorries that we have got now ; we are expecting to receive 100 more during the quarter April and June when 50 per cent. of those vehicles will be diverted for the transport of civil passengers and goods only. So, we are moving in the same line as my Friend who has spoken on the subject thinks.

Then a shrewd critic who has got innumerable ways of getting information, I mean Mr. Mookerjee, has given me some facts for my special enquiry. Two matters of them are already known to me. But the one about the writing off of postal stamps was not known to me. As regards sale of old buses, hon. Members may remember that the original idea of starting this organisation was to repair these old vehicles and after reconditioning them, to put them again on the road for civilian use. But when the Government of India came to our aid and had given lease and lend lorries we found it better and more profitable to use those lorries rather than to try to recondition those old cracks. So it was decided to sell these old lorries that were lying at the Bamboobari of Doorea Tea Estate. Some were sold before, the date for sale by public auction of the balance was fixed, one particular individual—a European business man made an offer of the whole lot for a sum of Rs.1,20,000. The Provincial Motor Controller thought it a very good offer and therefore wanted to close the bargain before the date fixed for auction. Some people of Jorhat who had interest to buy these lorries by way of dismantling, and selling the spare parts, got hold of Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali who sent me a wire of protest. I enquired and found long before the wire was sent by the Khan Bahadur, the European gentleman who had made the offer had backed out. Thereafter, a new date was fixed for sale and only this morning I got the information that the old cracks have been sold for Rs.1,08,000. If we could clinch the bargain with the European gentleman who made the first offer, the Province would have been benefited by about Rs.12,000 more.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : May I intervene on this point, Sir ? When that transaction was not given effect to, I am not going to accept that the transaction was closed at Rs.1,20,000. It might be Rs.50,000 and I say that the Province has been benefited to the extent of Rs.58,000 and there has been no loss at all.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : We have got the offer of that particular gentleman in black and white,



Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Then why was he not compelled to act according to the terms of that offer?

The Hon'ble Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If the House wants that Government should start a litigation for breach of contract.....

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes.

The Hon'ble Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:— We thought that sale by public auction that was wanted by some hon. Members of this House was the best means and we have realised Rs.1,08,000. I could not understand the charge about leaving a blank cheque with Messrs Cox and Kings. Messrs. Cox and Kings are very reputable bankers; but what is the insinuation about leaving a blank cheque with that reputable firm I could not follow? I am not admitting that a blank cheque was left with Messrs. Cox and Kings because I have not heard of it before. But I say that I would make an enquiry into this matter or rather the Comptroller who audits all our accounts will certainly pursue the matter if sufficient materials are placed by my Friend.

Then I come to the pay orders signed by Mrs. Adamson. I have not heard of it. If such pay orders are signed by a person who has got no responsible position in that establishment, it will not be accepted by the Comptroller and no payment could be made. Then the officers and establishment who are thus denied their salaries at the proper time are the best persons to approach the Government and tell them about this irregularity. In this connection my Friend mentioned whether I have been able to see that Mrs Adamson does not interfere in the work of this organisation. I have taken steps and I am sure that as soon as the separation between the Assam Transport Authority and the Provincial Motor Transport Organisation is effected, which we propose to effect by 1st of April next, she will not come to office and interfere. She may come just to see her husband, but she will not interfere or do any work.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: How is this that after so long a discussion in last November we hear of her again?

The Hon'ble Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The question of spare parts at Rangamati has been reported to me. The true statement of affairs is this. The Comptroller wanted to check the stores, but Mr. Adamson found that the clerk concerned who had gone on leave had neglected his duties. He therefore with the consent of Mr. Patton, our Finance Secretary, arranged for Mr. Walton of the Assam Oil Company who was available at the spot to make a physical verification. The books were in Shillong, they were sent to Rangamati as Mr. Raghavan who was there on duty and was well acquainted with these accounts was asked to enter them. The Comptroller objected to the procedure, but he is the man who knows best how the clerk had let the Provincial Motor Transport Controller down.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Was Mr. Walton a subordinate to Mr. Adamson when Mr. Adamson was working in the Burma Oil Company?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Mr. Walton is from the Assam Oil Company and he was only employed for the physical verification of the store.

Then, Sir, the allegation made is that officers who go out on duty into the plains are provided with cutleries and crockeries. This is news to me. I cannot conceive that Assam Government revenue has been spent in providing cutleries and crockeries for our Provincial Motor Transport Controller or anyone subordinate to him. However, as the allegation has been made with due authority of no less a person than Mr. Mookerjee, I will make an enquiry and let him know whether it is true or not.

My Friend Mr. Mookerjee complained about the showing of receipts as a deduct entry into our Budget. If he has read the explanation that has been given in the Budget Memorandum at page 5.....

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I have read it thrice.

The Hon'ble Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If so, there should not have been any criticism at all. It is at the instance of the Comptroller who is the highest audit authority in the Province that this new system has been adopted,



In the Memorandum it is stated thus, Sir :

"A sum of Trs.18,90 was also anticipated as earnings of the organisation and credit for these receipts was taken under the revenue receipt head 'LI.—Extraordinary receipts, but as capital accounts are being maintained for this organisation it has been decided at the instance of the Comptroller to take all receipts from sale proceeds and earnings of the organisation in reduction of expenditure and this has been done both in the revised and the budget. The activities of the organisation have largely expanded and it is anticipated that in the current year there will be an expenditure of Trs.88,00 while recoveries are taken at Trs.39,00 leaving a deficit of Trs.49,00. The Controller, Motor Transport Organization, anticipates that the capital outlay will be recovered in a period of three years and as will be seen in the budget year he anticipates a recovery of Trs.88,00 against the estimated expenditure of Trs.68,06, thus showing a net profit of Trs.19,94 in 1944-45."

This explanation clearly shows why a minus entry has been shown for the receipts.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

The Motion was, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.46,60,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1944, for the administration of the head 'Capital outlay on Provincial schemes connected with war.'"

The Question was adopted.

GRANT No.32.

**(64A.—Transfer to Revenue Reserve Fund)**

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.25,00,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1945, for the administration of the head "64A.—Transfer to Revenue Reserve Fund".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.25,00,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1945, for the administration of the head '64A.—Transfer to Revenue Reserve Fund.'"

There are a number of cut Motions. I think if one cut Motion is moved the whole matter may be discussed. I may tell the hon. Members that we shall go on with this Demand up to 4 P.M., and I would extend the time up to 5 P.M. for discussion of the other Demand.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.25,00,000 under Grant No.32, Major head 64A.—Transfer to Revenue Reserve Fund at page 150 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.25,00,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, I have tabled this Motion, as we know very little of our Government's activities so far as this department is concerned. Sir, the Central Government appears to have undertaken the job of post-war reconstruction in India, and not less than 180 committees are supposed to be busy examining the various aspects of the post-war reconstruction. Under the instructions of the Central Government various Provincial Governments, including the Assam Government, have formed post-war reconstruction committees. Whatever may be the function or findings of these committees, I am however of the opinion that so far as our country is concerned, the subject is one of post-war regeneration, rather than post-war reconstruction. Truly speaking, post-war reconstruction connotes readjustment of economic relations which may have been disturbed by the war and repairing what have been demolished or damaged and putting these things back to their pre-war stage.

Post-war reconstruction or regeneration in our country can have only one meaning. It is rescuing her from chronic poverty, from ignorance, starvation and diseases.



It therefore presupposes that regeneration of our country is planning and working for the fuller utilisation of natural resources of the Province and the two principal sources of production of our Province are agriculture and industry. Nothing within living memory has produced such an acute feeling of panic and sense of insecurity in the minds of the public as the present shortage of food and other essential necessities of life. This crisis has not descended from the sky all on a sudden, but was nourished underground. "Thanks to the war" (in the words of my hon. Friend Mr. Marak,) this long hidden and suppressed malady of starvation, epidemics, inadequacy of food supply and mal-nutrition has now come to the surface. This is not a new phenomenon. Eighty per cent. of the population are engaged in agriculture and are the victims of chronic starvation from year's beginning to year's end. The people are—born in debt, live in debt and die in debt, leaving the burden of accumulated debt to their posterity is an admission of the Royal Commission on Agriculture.

Dr. Ackroyd, an eminent British Scientist, who is an officer of the Government of India, has stated, "that a very large increase in the production of various food is necessary to raise the existing standard of living in India to satisfactory level". He recommends that production of cereals should be increased by 30 per cent., pulses by 100 per cent., milk and milk products by 300 per cent., vegetables by 100 per cent., meat, fish and eggs by several hundred per cent. There is plenty of scope here for the application of scientific methods to agriculture, animal husbandry and fishery. On a broader view there seems no reason why India should, in a well-organised world, be entirely self-dependent as regards her food supply. The mind of men even amidst the present perplexity and confusion is slowly groping its way towards the conception of a planned world economy in which the enormous resources which the application of science can create will be distributed according to the need of each group within our species.

Sir, ours is an agricultural Province and the most important problem is to increase the income of the cultivators. This means not only increasing outturn per acre but also reviving and developing a number of industries. So long as this is not done, the position of the masses will not be materially better. Our culture is the culture of the open field, but our agriculture is the most unorganised and unscientific in the world. The most important course of action here is scientific planning. The problems of reconstruction or planning are being discussed by the Post-War Reconstruction Committee of the Assam Government and the public do not know the lines along which the discussions are being made. But in other countries a net work of public organisations is at work studying and discussing the important problems.

I would like to suggest to the Government that a good system of planning for reconstruction requires thorough statistical knowledge about the availability of raw materials, conditions of market and other resources.

[At this stage the Hon'ble Speaker vacated the Chair, and the Deputy Speaker occupied it.]

Lack of reliable statistical information will be our greatest handicap. We should not copy the method of post-war planning adopted in western countries, but we should draw our own programme of work suitable to our Provincial needs and requirements, as our staggering poverty, low national income and low production are peculiar. The fundamental principle which should govern our post-war planning is a system of balanced economy by which a speedy development of industries like sugar, jute, cotton, cinchona, pyrethrum, oil, paper, hydro-electricity, tobacco, etc., which can make agriculture more remunerative, can be achieved.

The post-war reconstruction committee which should consist of several sub-committees including officials and non-officials should discuss important and urgent matters in the nation-building activities and should draw up a definite plan of work for five or ten years in advance. The plan should be wise and broad based as to be applicable to the whole Province.

The Government should not remain content with occasional talks or passing pious resolutions. There is certainly a great need of setting up bodies of technical and scientific experts of the proper qualities to take stock of our needs and requirements, to survey the resources, to evolve the most scientific and suitable techniques and to



prepare for the Province all round development on a comprehensive and well co-ordinated plan without further delay. This is the first necessity and there is no time to lose.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : Cut Motion moved :

“That the total provision of Rs.25,00,000 under Grant No.32, Major head—64A.—Transfer to Revenue Reserve Fund at page 150 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.25,00,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.”

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is encouraging to see that by their token transfer to the revenue reserve fund of Rs.25,00,000 Government accept the necessity for post-war reconstruction in principle. It is, however, necessary that concurrently with the setting up of a reserve fund there should be a very definite knowledge of the steps, step by step, which will be taken along the path of reconstruction. So far we have no indication that Government have planned one of them.

We heard the other day, Sir, that this war is proving of great benefit to a certain section of people. One is constrained to agree with this somewhat restricted viewpoint. But, however, that may be, the point of view we must all accept is that the war will eventually prove to have been more of curse than a blessing unless it results in the achievement of those high aims for which the United Nations are fighting.

The waging of war is in itself a difficult business calling for great skill and leadership from those who direct its course. Their task is lightened though by the fact that during war there is a fair expectation that those engaged in it on either side will remain unified and imbued with one single purpose, namely, the vanquishing of the enemy. But to those of us who have given serious thought to the problems which lie ahead there is no doubt in our minds that with the sounding of the “Cease Fire” and the firing of the last shot the leaders of the nations of the earth will be confronted with problems more vast than ever before faced men—surpassing all problems of the war.

Let us, therefore, now, in company with hosts of others, address ourselves to this task ; the task of building a worthy future and hammer out some definite plan of action.

Whatever we may think of the merits or demerits of Nature’s plan there can be no doubt that this world is destined to advance to its final goal along a path which is clear for all to see. We cannot resist the influence that carries us along that path, but we can see to it that we are well-equipped to travel in its way.

Now, Sir, if we wish to make the best of what the future has in store for us, and that future is only just round the corner—we have no time to waste—the pressing need is that we should take advantage of what Nature has given us to use for our service. If we are going to raise the standard of living of the people, if we are going to give them health and life, if we are going to find work for the youngmen to do, then we must cease flogging the unwilling and tired horse of agriculture and turn our attention to the development of industry. Because Assam has hitherto been regarded as a purely agricultural Province, there is a danger that we may come to think of it as having no future save in agriculture, but, Sir, that is not the case, for there are major industries waiting to be developed.

Pre-requisite to the development of industry is Power. Mr. Whittaker, the other day, offered for our adoption a slogan “Horse Power per head equals income per head,” and I am now going to ask Government to promise us that they will accept that slogan and take immediate steps to develop Power. It is waiting for us in the hills and in the valleys—waiting to be harnessed and brought to the use of men.

Considerable work has been done in the matter of exploration of the Hydro-Electric possibilities of this Province. Surveys have been made, reports written, and a certain amount of enthusiasm has, from time to time, been stirred up. No more than that has been done and now the time is ripe for the schemes which have been declared feasible to be taken up and brought to maturity.

Some Members of this House may know but little of the subject and so for their benefit, and I hope also to the interest of others, I propose reviewing very briefly the various recommendations for Power development which have been, from time to time,



advanced by experts. Some of these surveys were carried out by private firms or individuals, and some at the instance of Government. Notable in this latter category is the 1919 Triennial Reports on the Hydro-Electric Survey of India by Mr. T.W. Mears. His report on the Hydro-Electric possibilities of Assam was sufficiently encouraging to cause the then Provincial Government to entrust Mr. B. A. Blenkinsop with the task of making a survey of the entire Province and reporting on its potentialities.

Unfortunately before this gigantic task was anything like completed, the work was closed down for want of funds. But we have enough in the report which was issued to know that there are any way four schemes which are practicable. These are known as:—

- The Cherrapunji Project,
- The Burnihat Project,
- The Hukong Valley Project, and
- The Baghmara-Siju-Jankaray Project.

*The Cherrapunji Project* is of doubtful value, largely because of the difficulty certain to be experienced in building the necessary dams, for the stone on the site is so porous and soft that considerable danger of the dam bursting has to be constantly remembered.

*The Burnihat Project* is capable of development upto probably 4,500 horse power, but that is so low a horse-power that save perhaps for the lighting of Gauhati and district, and the supply of moderate power to that neighbourhood, it would be of little value. It is in fact one of those schemes which could be well left alone for years to come, though eventually it might be of service.

*The Hukong Valley Project* is a horse of quite a different colour. The situation for this project is in the Nong-Yong Valley which lies on the level to the south of the Patkai Range, some forty miles from Ledo. A study of the map will show that could this scheme be developed the whole area in the Assam Valley from Saikhowa Ghat to Jorhat could obtain power without a relatively great deal of trouble or expense. The success of the development of this scheme would depend on the damming of a very large catchment area. The damming operation itself would not be a formidable undertaking for it is estimated that the length of the dam would be only 350 feet at the top and 125 feet at the bottom, with a height of approximately 50 feet. Plenty of good hard rock is available at site for the purpose and no cement lining would be required. It is estimated 85,500 horse power would be continually available. Now this horse power would be far in excess of anything which tea factories, town and village lighting schemes, rice mills, railway workshop, and so on in the area served could consume. The presence of limestone on the site indicates the desirability of opening a vast Hydro-Electric Chemical Industry there. Calcium Carbide, Calcium Cyanamide and Cyanides are but a few of the possibilities. The fixation of atmospheric nitrogen by electricity resulting in all the nitrogenous fertilisers Assam requires *plus* a large surplus for export, is another of the possibilities this scheme opens up before us.

Moreover, cement which needs limestone for manufacture, is another industry which this scheme would open up. Cement works are very large consumers of power, and here is limestone for them, and adequate power for their development.

*The Baghmara-Siju-Jankaray Project.*—The site of this scheme lies on the Somewari river in the Garo Hills. The reason for its development would exist very largely in advantages accruing to parts of Sylhet and Mymensingh. The development of the scheme depends upon a fairly large dam and a long pipe-line of 10 feet in diameter. Indications go to show that the scheme would be fairly costly and that only a matter of 17,000 horse power would probably result. In the area, however, is a field estimated to hold 500,000,000 tons of good coal so that apart from the possibilities of the development of the area as a commercial coal field there is a source of Thermal Power on the same site which means that during a water shortage coal would be used, instead of water, and water would only be required in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of cooling and condensing.

I have touched upon only the four schemes which have been more or less exhaustively surveyed, but it remains to be said that there are numerous other places which



would repay surveying in both the valleys. Mr. Allsup, the Chief Electrical Inspector and Electrical Adviser to the Government of Assam recently examined Hydro-Electric possibilities in the west Khasi Hills, and his remarks contained in the "1939 Report on the Administration of the Indian Electricity Act, 1910" on his discoveries were responsible for resuscitating interest in the subject

I am convinced beyond doubt that, apart from any other scheme which has been referred to previously, Mr. Allsup has discovered an area deserving the very fullest investigation, for it promises to develop more advantageously (save perhaps the Hukong Valley) than any other scheme. Minerals of various kinds exist also in this area. Cheap power necessary for their development being available, great benefit must result from their exploitation.

The presence of an excellent grade China Clay in the area also suggests the possibility of a ceramic industry. Cheap power would make this possible.

The advantage of cheap electricity hardly need referring to, so that it is with diffidence I enumerate a few of them.

- (a) All-round improvement by cleaner, cheaper, and more efficient power and lighting, resulting in improved health and living conditions,
- (b) Provision of a pure water supply in towns and rural areas,
- (c) The development of cottage industries on a scale never before contemplated,
- (d) The opening up of chemical and mineral industries,
- (e) Electric motive driving power in factories,
- (f) Air-conditioning (*e.g.*, for tea withering, etc.) and last but not least, improved agriculture by irrigation.

I suggest a commission could fruitfully occupy itself investigating the hydro-electric possibilities of Assam. Some may be tempted to argue that during this war it is no time to be engaged in such investigations. It is possible that, conjointly with a post-war slump, unemployment may increase. This consideration alone draws one to the conclusion that now in fact is the time to undertake the survey so that as soon as conditions permit, work, which would employ large numbers of the people, could be started up. Hydro-electric schemes offer employment for all classes of people for labourers building dams and doing the manual work, for the Bhadrakok tending power stations and performing all the technicalities involved. The survey, as I have said, would probably be fairly costly, but I do not think it would cost more than three or four years' allotments for Mass Literacy Campaign.

In a recent speech President Roosevelt pointed out that Germany is even now developing hydro-electric schemes in nearly every country which has been overrun by the Germans. The President pointedly asked whether, if Germany could afford to do this, the rest of us can afford to lag behind.

In the course of his reply to the Budget debate the Hon'ble Finance Minister deplored the fact that we have no University, we have no Provincial High Court, we have no Agricultural College, we have no Engineering College. Give us power and these things will follow as light follows the darkness, and the serious deficiencies just enumerated by Mr. Mookerjee will disappear, never more to return.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is 25 minutes to 4. The hon. Member is requested to see that this debate may be finished before 4 P. M. Any other hon. Member who would like to take part is also requested to economise time accordingly.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government should be given some time for reply. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall not be able to finish my speech. Unless I get 15 minutes, I shall not be able to finish my speech.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the very idea of the Post-War Reconstruction Scheme presupposes two things—one, that the end of this war is in sight, and the other is that the war is going to be ended in our favour and that there will be no geographical change of this Province at the end of this war. Sir, it also presupposes that we have been making really good efforts to bring about success in this war. His Excellency the Viceroy, the other day, has said that we must be well fed to bring this war to a successful end. My question is, have we really done anything to make this war successful?



Sir, in other countries war is waged with the consent of the people and for the benefit of the people. It is for the benefit of the civil population, which is really the reservoir from where military recruits are obtained, that wars are waged. It is for their benefit that the war is conducted. It is for the continuance of some benefit to the civil population that war is carried on in other countries. Here has Government done all that is necessary to keep the people content? Are we trying to preserve the morale of the civil population? Sir, is it any real attempt to keep the morale of the people that we find thousands of our people going half fed from day to day; thousands are still dying for want of food before their very eyes and they see with their very eyes that food is being wasted by the Military Department and by other Government Departments. The first thing that we are to see is whether it is encouraging really to the formation of an atmosphere for war efforts. Does it really please the civil population? If these men are convicted and tried for offences it would be a different thing, but when people see that their own kith and kins are being detained, that they are detained for years without any trial, without any rhyme or reason, do they think that this war is being fought for them? Sir, when they see their rising generations are not allowed facilities for their education, their education buildings are being snatched away for Military occupation, when they see that their students are not given sufficient quantities of kerosene to read and prepare for university examinations, do they really think that this war is being fought for them, do they really feel the necessity for having a Post-War Reconstruction Scheme? On the one hand you are denying our rising generation facilities for education, for preparing and appearing in the university examinations and on the other hand you say that all these Post-War Reconstruction Schemes are going to benefit them; it indeed sounds a mockery, Sir. When we, Sir, with our very eyes see people being shot and killed without any rhyme or reason and the assailants are not punished, can we take that this war is being carried on for the benefit of our people? I can cite one tragic example, Sir; only a few days ago a father and his daughter while passing the railway line were shot dead by a military gun without any rhyme or reasons. At any rate the reasons for this were not disclosed. The other day at Pandu a man and his wife, a young woman, while coming down were molested by soldiers. They tried to escape and got into a boat and as soon as they got into a boat they were shot and the poor woman died. Police came to the spot but could not get the culprits identified. Are these the ways, Sir, that you really prepare us for a successful termination of this war?

Sir, after the war unemployment will increase manifold but you are giving away all the available lands now to the people who come from outside. All our young men who are now employed in the Army in various capacities will surely be thrown out of employment at the end of this war and surely they will have to fall back upon lands for earning their livelihood but all our available lands are being given to outsiders? Is this the way, Sir, that you are making a successful plan for our youngman?

The Deputy SPEAKER: The hon. Member's time is up.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the absence of any detailed scheme placed before the House, I do not understand how we can be asked to vote for this particular Demand. Of late we have heard that a Post-War Reconstruction Committee has been formed by the Government of Assam and that this Committee sat for some days. But up till now we have no information whether that Committee has been able to draw up any specific scheme. No report has been submitted for the information of this House or for the information of the general public. Without knowing the scheme itself and how the money is proposed to be spent, it is not desirable for us to decide anything about this Demand.

Sir, there has been criticism published in papers that what would be the fate of Indians after the war. To me it appears that the economic condition of the poorer classes of the people will seriously be affected with the termination of the war. If our provincial Government is willing to look after the economic condition



of our poorer classes of the people, I would have found some specific and beneficent schemes drawn up by the Government which would go to a great extent to ameliorate their economic condition. But nothing of the sort has been prepared up till now. It is only rumoured, that the District Authorities have been asked to prepare road schemes. If that be the case and if by making some improvements of the road communication Government think that they will be able to render real benefit to the poorer sections of our people, I should say, Sir, they are very much mistaken. Just after the war the economic bone of the people will be broken in such a way that it will take a longer period for them to recoup their own position. My friend Mr. Mookerjee while moving the Motion was kind enough to touch upon the condition of the poor agriculturists, particularly of the Province of Assam, where agriculturists form the vast majority and where the economic condition can only be improved by the agriculturists. I would make an appeal to the Government that they should be far more generous towards their plan to improve the condition of the poor cultivators.

Then, Sir, with regard to industrialisation of the Province, unless the industries of the Province are improved this scheme cannot achieve the desired effect.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I find that the author of this Cut Motion has started with the plea that the work we should aim at, is regeneration of our people after the war. Mr. Blennerhassett has supported that by asserting that we should aim at reconstruction of our industries through electric power, especially using hydro-electric power. Mr. Abdur Rahman reiterated the plea of my hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee, but I am constrained to characterise the speech of the Leader of the Opposition as degeneration of the ethics of debates in this House. Sir, if I am to use an oft-quoted phrase of English literature suited to the occasion—drawing a red herring across the line—my Friend wanted to draw red herring across the line of arguments of my Friend as well as the scheme of the Government as regards post-war planning. Nobody can quarrel with what has been stated by the other speakers on this Cut Motion. Everybody's idea is to attempt to plan in such a way that the standard of living of our poor cultivators is raised; that they get the amenities of civilisation, education sanitation and also trade and industry in their favour. Every one is thinking on that line. I think, Sir, there is a misconception on the minds of most hon. Members as regards the scope and utility of this Post-War Reconstruction Scheme of the Assam Government. The scheme was started under directions from the Central Government and in May 1943 a small departmental conference was summoned to examine the matter broadly. As a result of this meeting, departments were addressed, asking for schemes in respect of any post-war activities, including those of direct benefit to *ex*-soldiers, that they could put up and it was decided that a second meeting should be held to discuss those schemes. Comparatively little progress was made, partly because departments felt that the financial outlook was so very hazy, and the only specific scheme which was submitted was that of the Director of Agriculture for agricultural colonies of *ex*-soldiers belonging to Assam. The second conference was held in the autumn by which time certain decisions of the Government of India had clarified the situation, *viz.*, that (a) the Post-War Reconstruction Fund formed from the deferred pay of soldiers at Rs. 2 per month would be directly devoted to the benefit of *ex*-soldiers in the form of Agricultural Centres in the main recruiting areas, (b) the Government of India might assist Provinces with funds in respect of both general post-war schemes of development and of schemes for the benefit of *ex*-soldiers, but could not make any specific promises at the present juncture, (c) machinery in every department of the Central Government which is concerned, would be devised for carrying the plans into the realm of definite action, and in each such department there would be a specific officer to encourage and co-ordinate provincial planning.

Sir, this left no room to doubt in the minds of provincial Governments that the original scheme formulated by the Government of India was for the benefit of the demobilised soldiers from whom deferred pay of a sum of Rs. 2 is being cut.



Speaking from memory I can say that by this means after the war is over, and it was expected the war will last two years more, the fund thus created will amount to some twelve crores of rupees. The demobilised soldiers will get a share out of this but by this planning a very small proportion of the people, who will be demobilised, will be benefited. With that expectation, attempts should be made to formulate such schemes as to benefit not only the demobilised soldiers but also the population in general in the country. To make a small beginning, because we are not sure whether the Government of India will help for any such plan for general population, we have started this Post-War Reconstruction Scheme with a nucleus of fund this year. This is the genesis of the Motion moved by my Friend Hon'ble Mr. Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. From this hon. Members will at once find that we are just on the start. Some hon. Members specially Mr. Abdur Rahman wanted to see results immediately. We have, Sir, constituted different committees like the Central Government to plan on various matters. Government think that they require co-operation of the leaders of public. With this idea, we have divided the Post-War Planning Committees into, for the present, five different committees. One Committee on Communications will be represented by Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee and Mr. Amjad Ali of this House and in the sub-committee for the improvement of Agriculture and Forestry we have Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman. There is a Hygiene and Social Service Committee in which nobody is represented from this House. The Industries and Resources Committees are pending constitution but a Committee for Demobilization and Employment of soldiers have already been constituted in which the Raja of Sidli will be represented from this House. Sir, it is thought that the Minister in charge of the department concerned will normally be the chairman of these sub-committees and I may attend in any of the sub-committees if I like. I have no doubt whatsoever, Sir, that these sub-committees will give their best thoughts. The suggestions made by the hon. Members in their speeches delivered in this House to-day will be given due weight.

Sir, ours is an agricultural country and greater attention will be paid to improve our methods of agriculture and also to try to introduce scientific agriculture. There is a hopeful sign that during the course of the next few years, Assam will have plenty of fertilisers to use in her agriculture, for very recently the Deputy Electrical Commissioner with the Government of India visited Assam and informed us that the Government of India was seriously contemplating selection of Cherrapunji for establishment of one of their fertilising factories. Those hon. Members who follow the press may have noticed that Government of India's recommendation is to have about five such fertilising factories to spread all over India so that cheap manure may be available to our agriculturists. I have no doubt, Sir, if the Government of India's intention is given effect to, this would be the foundation of hydro-electric project which could be progressively extended on the grid system to other developments. Side by side to improve our agriculture, we should try to industrialise and start new industries in this matter. We have not yet appointed any committees, for we have not been able to find barring the tea industry, any other organised industry in the Province from whom to draw members. My Friend Mr. Mookerjee is perfectly correct in saying that a scientific knowledge and scientific technique are most important in making suitable and beneficial planning in this behalf. My Friend Mr. Blennerhassett has done a public service in summarising the different electric possibilities that may be utilised. He blesses the Hukawng valley project and according to the figures laid by him, it seems that it will be a very powerful project and will suffice for the needs of the entire Upper Assam. This must surely be taken into consideration by our Electrical Adviser when it is put up before him. I need mention only one matter, Sir, that although most of the hon. Members here are not directly interested in these sub-committees, we will welcome every criticism by them, constructive or destructive, and I will request every one of them to devote a portion of their leisure hour to considering these questions and give me the benefit of their advice. Sir, I have explained the necessity of moving the original Motion for keeping out of our balances a sum of 25 lakhs to start Post-War Reconstruction Fund. I hope hon. Members after hearing the points that I have stated before the



House, will find no difficulty for casting their votes for the original Motion and to reject the Cut Motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : Does the hon. Mover press his Motion.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : No, Sir.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : I hope the hon. Member has got the leave of the House to withdraw his Motion.

The Motion was, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : I am putting the main Motion as a question.

The question is :

“That a sum not exceeding Rs.25,00,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head 64A.—Transfer to Revenue Reserve Fund”.

The question was adopted.

#### GRANT NO.33—64B—CIVIL DEFENCE

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI : On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.14,92,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head “64B.—Civil Defence”.

In moving this Motion, Sir, I think I should draw the attention of the hon. Members of this House to the fact that some of the measures of our Civil Defence are strictly secret and confidential matters such as warning system, etc. and some of the measures overlap to a certain extent some measures of the active Defence. So, Sir, I hope I shall be excused by the hon. Members if I take the liberty of the House in giving a sort of caution to them. I, however, mention here that I shall be always at the disposal of those hon. Members who want to discuss these matters confidentially with me and I hope I shall be able to satisfy them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

“That a sum not exceeding Rs.14,92,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head “64B.—Civil Defence”

There are as many as 15 Cut Motions and I find that the Cut Motion No. 1 standing in the name of Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury is one that will cover the purposes of the other ones and I would call upon Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury to move his Motion.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : Sir, as the Hon'ble Minister has just now said that many of the matters pertaining to this subject are secret, I do not like to move my Motion.\*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : The Cut Motion No.12 is also similarly important and will cover the purpose of other Cut Motions as well. So, does Mr. Mookerjee incline to move his Motion ? I fix the time limit up to 5 P.M. and if the hon. Members would like to sit even later then I would see to that (*Laughter*).

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : I beg, Sir, to move that the total provision of Rs. 14,92,200 under Grant No. 33—Major head—64B.—Civil Defence, at page 151 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 14,92,200 do stand reduced by Rs 100.

Sir, my hon. Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury has already expressed my feeling on the subject When the Hon'ble Minister has so very kindly extended his hand towards the Members who want to know and discuss with him about the secret information so far as the Civil Defence Department is concerned privately in his

\*1. Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move :—

That the provision of Rs.1,05,604 under Grant No.33, Major head—64B.—Civil Defence, Minor head—1.—Expenditure on poolable items.—A.—Expenditure in A.R.P., Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, at page 152 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100 *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.14,92,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100

(To raise a discussion about the Civil Defence policy of the Government.)



Chamber, I am not going to take any time of this House on the subject namely, (A) Civil Defence. But as regards (B), Sir, you will find that under this head, just like the Grant No. 34 (Capital Outlay on Provincial Schemes etc.) three things have been included under one head and lumpsum or no sum has been provided. Even the Petrol Rationing Scheme has taken shelter under the head Civil Defence. I do not know whether he will like to keep this matter as well secret but as nothing has been said I would like to say a few words. If he thinks even now that this is not secret I wish to deal with the item. Here the head has been given, but nothing has been provided. It has been written in the Budget Memorandum as below. "Expenditure on this item will be borne entirely by the Central Government the item being—Motor Spirit and Tyre Rationing Scheme". Sir, this is one of the most important matters in the discussion of which many of the hon. Members would have liked to take part. I admit that the entire expenditure under this head will be borne by the Central Government. May I know from the Hon'ble Minister whether the Central Government advances money on this account before the year begins? If that be the case well and good; but if the money is spent from our Exchequer and then realised afterwards, in that case it would have been better and fair on the part of Government to show the entire amount estimated and then below that show the same amount as realised from the Central Government. Sir, many hon. Members of this House tried to secure even one tube, not to speak of tyre, for more than a year; but in vain they could not secure any. So far as the petrol is concerned, the case is practically the same. There are some fortunate persons, Sir, who get petrol by mere asking. I exclude those of course who do require extra petrol for public and urgent duties and I have nothing to say against them; but there are some who cannot do without extra or supplementary petrol for most urgent and important work do not get it. Some one get it for luxury whereas some do not get it even for most urgent and necessary works.

Sir, I think the Hon'ble Minister would kindly make a note of it and make an enquiry how many honourable Members of this House and of the other House and other men of public confidence and importance applied for tyres and tubes and were refused and on what grounds. Sir, we have heard several times in course of our discussion even once to-day about the transport difficulty. Here is a case of our Government's "Dog in the manger" policy. Government will not and as a matter of fact cannot help us so far as the Railway is concerned; they will say that it is in the hands of the Central Government. So they are not in a position to help us. As regards the Steamer Companies also, the Hon'ble the Premier said to-day that they will be engaged in carrying some particular commodities, they will not be allowed to carry rice even. Lastly so far as the Motor Transport Organisation is concerned, what they have got to say? It is mostly used for the Military though at the beginning we were told that they will be used for the civil population. We have heard many assurances for many a time but when we found that these assurances are of no value we are really at a loss to understand why they will stand in our way when with a very limited help some of the civil population may be benefited. Sir, I can cite one instance from my own experience. Due to want of tyres and tubes two of our cars have become useless. They are not even requisitioned by Government. I will be the first man to give them away if they are requisitioned, because the petrol consumption is very high. Now Sir, can we not blame the Government for this kind of partiality and callousness. Sir, I think in future the Hon'ble Minister will see his way as suggested by me to give us some chance so that we can discuss the matter in full; that is the amount required under this head should be shown in the Budget.

My request to him is that he would kindly make an enquiry and give instruction—of course if he has got any power. I say this because I find when the cost will be borne by the Central Government it may be said that our Government has got no control over this—to issue tyres, tubes, supplementary petrol and other motor parts to the non-officials especially his own country men who do not receive proper treatment. If that cannot be done it is better that there should not be any head at all. We do not like to see these pages in our Budget. With these words I move my Cut Motion.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The Motion moved: "That the total provision of



Rs. 14,92,200 under Grant No. 33—Major head—64B.—Civil Defence, at page 151 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 14,92,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

Mr. D. B. H. MOORE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I may be permitted to speak in support of Mr. Mookerjee's Motion, as I have two Cut Motions tabled in my name.

Firstly, I may briefly deal with the subject of my Cut Motion No.5 concerning the tea garden civic guards. Once again I wish to draw the attention of Government to the shameful way in which the tea garden civic guards are being neglected, particularly in the matter of uniforms. After repeated representation to Government as well as to the local authorities, we have succeeded in obtaining a limited number of tin hats for issue to the tea garden civic guards employed on certain projects. Fortunately tin hats do not wear out but uniforms unfortunately do and once more I am compelled to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that if the tea garden civic guards are called upon to carry out work of importance to the war effort on aerodromes and elsewhere on other projects, they must be decently clothed in proper uniform and not, as is the case, left to carry out their work in old worn out uniforms in all weathers, because Government cannot or will not provide them with necessary replacements. Comparisons may be odious, but I cannot help making such a comparison between the immaculate uniforms of A. R. P. workers here in Shillong and the ragged uniforms of the civic guards who carry out important duties on certain aerodromes in the valley all day and every day in rain and sun. If uniform material is available for these men in Shillong, as it obviously is, why cannot material for uniforms be made available for the tea garden civic guards, who really are doing a fine job of work in front line areas and many of whom have actually experienced aerial attacks on several occasions and are still carrying on? Will the Hon'ble Minister please inform me from whom we can obtain the necessary material and to whom the necessary application should be made so that I can inform those concerned with the least possible delay?

One last word, Sir. If Government decides to institute compulsory A. R. P. measures in all tea gardens, tea garden civic guards will assume a fresh importance as wardens, stretcher bearers, etc. I would ask Government to bear in mind therefore that the enforcement of any such scheme will necessitate making available of still further supplies of uniform cloth for the civic guards on the tea gardens concerned. I ask Government to give an assurance that such supplies will be made available immediately should the necessity arise.

Now, Sir, if I may deal as briefly as possible with this dangerous subject of A. R. P. work and air-raid warning, I hope, Sir, in the few remarks I have to make, that I shall give no secrets, away nor will I ask Government to divulge any secrets to me. Three years ago, Sir, it will be remembered that when I drew the attention of Government to the fact that apparently no funds had been allotted in the Budget estimates for that year, that fact was admitted by the Hon'ble Finance Minister and a Supplementary Demand for the necessary funds was later introduced and A. R. P. work started in the Province. To-day it can be admitted that considerable strides have been made, but this work is still almost entirely confined to urban areas, and little progress has been made in the villages and areas outside the towns. This is especially true in regard to the air-raid warning system. It is all very well cutting slit trenches, erecting hundreds of shelters, organising stretcher parties, fire services, etc., but unless there is an efficient warning system which will give the population adequate warning to enable them to take cover, the value of trenches and shelters is clearly largely nullified. It may be argued that the air raid warning system in large towns is in fact working efficiently, but there are huge areas in the Province which are still entirely devoid of any efficient warning system. Three years ago it might have been said that military targets were confined largely to towns and possibly certain railway junctions. To-day however the situation in our Province has changed to such a degree that there are large areas of countryside which are literally bristling with targets of military importance, and it has now become imperative that adequate air-raid protection is afforded to mufassil areas including tea gardens.



I understand Government contemplate some form of compulsory A. R. P. measures for tea gardens. If this is correct, I urge most strongly that before any such measures are introduced, Government must first take the necessary steps to see that the areas and gardens concerned are provided with a first class warning system. This may well entail heavy expenditure for the installation of the necessary equipment, but the responsibility for this work lies with the Government, and the equipment and fund must be found. It is not only valueless but unfair to insist on slit trenches, shelters and stretcher parties, etc. being provided, if Government on their part are not prepared first of all to instal an efficient warning system. Many gardens and vilages are now and have been for the past 18 months well within the area of definite military targets, and as yet Government have made no effort to provide them with any form of air-raid warning system. The inevitable result has been that when enemy bombers and fighters have come over, the first warning of their arrival has in far too many cases been anti-aircraft fire or the actual explosion of bombs falling on or near the target (*shame*). From my own experience I am convinced that the only efficient system of warning is by means of powerful electrically operated sirens. The hand-operated type is not sufficiently powerful. Government must now obtain large supplies of powerful sirens capable of being heard over an area of 2 or 3 miles, and should undertake their early installation so as to ensure that the warning system in the vulnerable mufassil areas is made as efficient as in the towns. Unless and until this is done it is of little value to insist upon construction of shelters and other precautions.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also intend to take part in the discussion of the Motion moved by Mr. Mookerjee. From the perusal of the Budget speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister it will appear that the activities of the Civil Defence Department since its inception in 1942, have expanded to a great extent and are still expanding. It is not known how far it will expand. But, he admitted that no adequate arrangements have been made for the protection of villagers of the *bustee* area near the air fields. I shall mainly deal with this aspect of the matter. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Defence whether he can say on oath that his Department has up till now taken any care to go to the people of the *bustee* areas, to educate them how they are to save their lives in case there is an air attack? I may mention one district in which alone, my information is, as many as 10 air fields have been constructed; there are certain full-fledged aerodromes.....

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: On a point of order, Sir. Is it parliamentary to urge any Member of this House to speak anything on oath?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, this is not parliamentary.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: All right, Sir, I withdraw the word "oath". As I was saying, Sir, many air-fields have already been constructed and many are under construction, and it is probably known to the hon. Members of this House that these air-fields have been constructed in the neighbourhood of villages. Some of the villages are only a furlong's distance from the air-field. In case there is an air raid Government have not up till now made any arrangement for protecting the lives of these village people, their cattle and other things. I remember, that on some occasions it has been urged on the Hon'ble Minister in charge that their attention should not be confined to the towns alone, because towns that are not in the neighbourhood of air-fields do not run so much risk of being affected. Government should rather make adequate arrangement for those villages which are in the neighbourhood of aerodromes. Sir, from the speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister I find that the expansion activities of this Department are confined mainly to creating more posts and posts and posts. I don't think that by merely creating posts this Department can be helpful to the people in general.

Sir, let me speak about my own subdivision. Practically my subdivision falls in one of the most vital defence projects. The most important road, the trunk road which connects the frontier of Assam with Chittagong, passes through the southern part of our subdivision: but up till now none of the officers of the Civil Defence Department has thought it his duty to go to that side and teach the villagers as to what to



do in case there is a bombardment. I would, therefore, insist on the Hon'ble Minister in-charge that he should instruct his officers that their duties should not be confined to town areas only, but that they should also be very cautious about their duties towards the people living in villages near targets of Military importance.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I have received information, Sir, that Government has very recently been requisitioning bicycles in the Lakhimpur District for A.R.P. purposes. I submit, Sir, that not only is this unnecessary but that it shows a lack of foresight on the part of the Civil Defence Authorities.

Some months ago the Government of India decided that the mounting Allied Air strength in India together with the steady attrition of the Japanese air strength warranted the closing down of Air Raid Precautions in Western India.

This closing down of the organisation in Western India released all the A.R.P. equipment in those parts, such as ambulances, fire lorries, trailer pumps and bicycles. Steps were rightly immediately taken to transfer lorries and trailer pumps etc. to those provinces which are still liable to enemy air attack and many of you would have seen Punjab Fire Service vehicles running on the roads of Assam.

If, however, the Civil Defence Authorities in Assam required more bicycles, why did they not get these also from those released in Western India, or if they were insufficient why do the Civil Defence Authorities not use their very wide powers and obtain their requirements from Indian Cycle Factory at Patna?

To requisition cycles from the poor man is, I suggest, Sir, an act almost of callousness on the part of Government, specially at a time when the public has almost no bus services and for certain no decent train services as alternative means of transport. (*Hear, hear.*)

I trust, therefore, that Government will now give an assurance that they will take immediate steps to obtain their requirements of bicycles from outside the Province and return those recently requisitioned to their late owners together with a suitable sum for temporary hire charge.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, after hearing the hon. Member Mr. Lewis I have not much to say. Sir, this requisitioning of bicycle and requisitioning of school buildings, etc., by the Military are the means for protection and safety of our civil population whereby this department is to achieve satisfaction and good spirit and loyalty of the civil population; without the support of the country, that is the masses, the war effort is without basis. We hear, Sir, many times people say that the soldiers are fighting in the front line. With what spirit they are fighting we cannot say; whether they are fighting for the fear of court martial or for gain we cannot say. But there must be the country, the masses behind them to come to the final victory. This is what our aim is. I think, Sir, our Finance Minister's policy is quite good and the Defence Minister has some plans or schemes before him for which purpose this grant has been allotted. This Cut Motion is for raising a discussion only and we should support and vote for this grant.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: Sir, there is a Cut Motion\* in my name and by that Motion I want to censure the Government for appointing without the help of the Public Service Commission unqualified persons as A. R. P. Officers who could not pass the test of the training centre. Sir, this department has been created for war conditions and I think it is the most important department which can keep the morale of the people of this Province. Our people are really afraid of the war and this department's duty is to look after the safety of the people of this Province. To keep the morale of the people we are to look to our officers. If our officers are recruited from the best stuff then we have reason to believe that our safety may be guaranteed. But what we see from the appointment of the A.R.P. officers is that a number of officers have been selected, as my information goes, by the Hon'ble Minister according to his choice, but when they

\*4. Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS to move:—

That the provision of Rs.1,05,604 under Grant No.33, Major head—64B.—Civil Defence, Minor head—(1)—Expenditure on poolable items—A.—Expenditure on A. R. P., Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, at page 152 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100. *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.14,92,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.



were sent up for trial or test they came out unsuccessful. Really this brings discredit not only to the Province, but it jeopardises the safety of the people of the Province. Sir, this department has been created not to give personal consideration to our near and dear ones, but it is meant for the safety of the public of this Province. Assam is on the front line of war and this Province has become one of the most important provinces of India. Sir, worthlessness should not be given a premium and ability a go-bye. I would request my Friend the Hon'ble Minister in-charge of the Civil Defence to give more weight to the safety of the people than to personal considerations.

Sir, with these few words, I again request my Hon'ble Friend that when he is to select any officer in future he should give preference to the best candidate and also should respect the recommendations of the Director of Civil Defence. It has also been brought to my notice that no communal ratio is observed in this department and no qualification is taken into consideration. Even under-graduates were given preference to graduates and these students came out unsuccessful. I feel there is some reason for this selection which I am not going to disclose before this House.

With these few words, I again request my hon. Friend to look into the interests of public safety and not to personal interests.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I tabled another Cut Motion and my intention was to raise a discussion as to why no explanation had been given for the expenditure that has been provided at page 152 of the Budget under the head "Civil Defence". It will be seen that a big sum of Rs. 1,50,000 has been provided under "Miscellaneous Expenditure", though the item is very big no explanation has been offered even in the explanatory note. I do not know on what purpose this big sum will be spent. I hope the Hon'ble Minister in-charge will give some explanation for the information of the hon. Members.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think, I should begin with the paddle-cycle first. It is no doubt that we have been compelled by circumstances to requisition a few cycles for our messenger service, and rightly if we want to keep the messenger service in a state of efficiency we must provide them with cycles.

Now, I shall state before the House certain figures by which the House will be convinced that very few cycles we have so far requisitioned. Unfortunately, I have not got figures of all the districts before me. But I can give the figures of the Lakhimpur district. In the Lakhimpur district the number of registered cycles is 17587, while our requirements in that district is 190. We have requisitioned only 12 and we have purchased 68 and still we are short of 40. From these figures it will appear, Sir, that we have not requisitioned even one in a thousand. Sir, our total requirement is 481; we have requisitioned only 177 and purchased 172. We wanted to purchase the whole of the requisite number of cycles in the open market; but owing to transport difficulty and non-availability of the stuff we require, we could not purchase the required number. So Sir, the blame that has been levelled at the door of the Civil Defence for indiscriminate requisitioning of paddle-cycles has no foundation. If however a few individuals are put to difficulties we must bear with patience and ignore such inconvenience for the common good. Sir, I hope, it will be our endeavour as it was in the past to bring the deficit number 132 from outside the Province.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: By requisition or by purchase?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Yes, by purchase.

Next about the uniform. I hope, Sir, I would not be charged for divulging a secret if I give some sort of a detailed account of the formation of civic guards in the tea gardens. The formation of civic guards in tea gardens was originally sanctioned for 21 gardens in the Lakhimpur district. Each garden was granted a sum of Rs. 100 to meet the initial cost of uniform and equipment. Later on we decided to extend this concession to all the tea gardens where the formation of civic guards was deemed necessary and it was further decided by the Government that the civic guards in these tea garden who would work in



aerodromes or other military projects would enjoy all the regular concessions that have been provided under the Civic Guards' Ordinance and Rules thereunder. The Deputy Commissioner of every district was instructed accordingly to arrange payment of allowances and concession including new uniforms to the civic guards. Mr. Moore has asked me to tell the House from whom they are to get their uniforms and all those concession that have been allowed to civic guards. I understand from my Department that the Deputy Commissioner is the proper authority from whom all these uniforms and steel helmets could be had and if the Government is to be moved for any concession that will have to be done through the respective Deputy Commissioners who are also the Controllers of this organisation.

Now, Sir, our difficulties with regard to uniforms have been augmented by the Textile Control Order. It is very difficult to procure Mazri cloth either from the Textile Controller or from the Kalyanmal Mills from whom we used to get our supply direct and who have recently declined to execute any order for Mazri though special permission was granted by the Textile Commissioner. I understand that Mazri cloth that was supplied for the uniform of civic guards last year have worn out and now we find it extremely difficult to supply them with new one. We are however trying to have a supply of Marzi cloth to meet our requirements, and as soon as we get the consignment, I hope we will be able to satisfy the demands of the civic guards who are working in aerodrome areas and in other military projects.

Next, Sir, Mr. Moore has also raised the point of improving our air raid warning system and I think, Sir, I shall have to deal with this matter very cautiously so that I may not give out any secrets. For the satisfaction of Mr. Moore I can say that we are insisting on improved air raid precaution in such tea gardens as are within 3 miles of either classified towns or any air fields. We have been doing our best to improve the warning system in and near such tea gardens as far as possible. Some powerful electric sirens have been provided in some air fields and tea estates and some more are expected and will be installed in suitable places.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: May I know the names of those tea gardens, Sir?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: I think I should not disclose it here, Sir.

As I said before we expect to get some more and as soon as we receive those sirens, I hope, Sir, we shall be able to install them in those areas which require them most. We have also indented for some low voltage sirens to suit such tea estates as have low power electric supply in their gardens. We have also distributed in Basti areas and in the neighbourhood of air fields and tea estates about 338 hand operating sirens and more will be distributed in the near future. So, Sir, it will appear from all these facts stated that we are not sitting idle over the matter. We are pressing hard and I hope that in the near future we would be able to meet the requirements of all those places where installation of sirens is necessary.

Then, Sir, Maulavi Abdur Rahman has raised the point that we have not provided any air raid precautionary measures in Basti areas near about air fields or aerodromes. But, Sir, we have provided with all precautionary measures in our Basti areas and I can give him some details about the provisions that we have made in those areas. In the Basti areas our Party consists of one stretcher bearing party of 5 volunteers with a paid leader for 500 inhabitants, one Class III Instructor for 1000, each with one messenger, one Class I or II Instructor with a messenger for supervision work. Medical arrangements have also been made with regard to our Basti areas near about these target areas. On the top of all these 3 Assistant A.R.P Officers have been placed in charge of organising A. R. P. measures. So, Sir, from all these facts I have placed before the House, the hon. Members will be convinced that we have made suitable arrangements for air raid precaution to all Basti areas.



Lastly, Sir, hon. Babu Akshay Kumar Das has criticised the Government regarding the selection and appointment of candidates in our A. R. P. Department and has passed remarks insinuating the selection and appointments that have hitherto been made in this Department. For the information of the House I may state here that the appointments in the non-gazetted or lower ranks are made by the Director of Civil Defence or the Controllers who are mostly Deputy Commissioners and they have all along been instructed to maintain the communal quota as far as practicable. Appointments in the gazetted ranks are made by the Government in consultation with the Head of the Department. We have had all our officers trained in the Government of India Staff Training School or College for which every time the Government of India allotted a fixed number of seats for Assam candidates.

When the staff school was at Lahore, it seems to have been the policy of the Government of India to declare the result of candidates in terms of 'average, below average etc.', and it will be perhaps an information to the hon. Members that most of our candidates sent to Lahore although credited with the remarks "below average, should not have been sent to the school etc." have been found to be doing very well after being posted as officers. Some of them are regarded as assets for their excellent work (*hear, hear*).

Since the staff school was transferred to Hyderabad it was raised to the status of a college and the results of the candidates were declared in terms of passes and failures. In the first course at Hyderabad three of our trained Assistant A. R. P. Officers who were previously dubbed as below average at Lahore school came out successful. In the Second Officers' course, *viz.*, last course to which perhaps Mr. Akshay Kumar Das made pointed reference, the candidates had to be sent at an extremely short notice given by India. So the selection had to be made from applications submitted to the Director of Civil Defence from time to time. With an eye to communal representation we made the best possible selections out of the candidates available and they were deputed for training when the course was actually started. The candidates who counted amongst them B.Sc. with distinction, B.L., B.Ts., and men of established merit in their respective services joined the course without any basic training and failed. It may be said here that the candidates from other provinces who had their training with our candidates were trained people in A. R. P. as was the case with our first batch at Hyderabad who could pass. This failure in a training course of altogether an unknown subject lasting for three weeks cannot perhaps be taken as an index to their demerits. I have already said that candidates with similar results in staff school in the past have proved themselves to be successful officers in our Department.

Hon. Babu Akshay Kumar Das has also questioned why the selection was not made through the Public Service Commission. During 93 regime it was decided by the Government that the Public Service Commission was not in a position to select men for special temporary war work which was distinguished from the ordinary activities of the Government in requiring special qualities without so much attention to ordinary principles of selection and accordingly Public Service Commission regulations were amended to provide for selection of men for temporary posts in the Civil Defence Department with the concurrence of His Excellency in his individual judgment.

We also followed the same for selecting candidates for gazetted post particularly in consideration of the fact that notices for sending candidates for training were invariably short. Moreover, in selecting candidates we had to look not only to educational qualifications but to their power of leadership, political antecedents and reliability of character.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Hon'ble Minister has already exceeded the time limit. He should finish now.

**The Hon'ble Khan Sahab Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI:** Yes, Sir, I shall finish in two minutes' time.

Then, Sir, another fact which I should mention before the House is that with the abolition of A. R. P. measures in other provinces which were declared as white areas some of the provinces wanted through Government of India to send some of their



trained personnel herein Assam. We have resisted their claims and had perhaps reasonable grounds of doing so for the men coming from other provinces would have their inevitable language difficulties and the difficulties of knowing men and things before they could be in a position to start. Therefore we endeavoured to train our own men for the service of our own people and the Province and now, Sir, instead of getting approbation we are being criticised and found fault with for our selection. I have explained my position fairly well and I hope the hon. Members will see their way to withdraw the Cut Motions.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the hon. Mover press his Motion?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes, Sir, my name has never been mentioned. So I press for division.

Mr. R. A. PALMER: On a point of information, Sir, may I have the assurance of the Hon'ble Minister that compulsory A. R. P. measures will not be enforced in any tea garden until the new sirens which have been ordered for are received?

The Hon'ble Khan Saheb Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Yes, Sir, it is under the consideration of the Government until these new sirens arrive I think no garden will be asked for having A. R. P. measures on a compulsory basis.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

“That the total provision of Rs.14,92,200 under Grant No.33 Major head—64B.—Civil Defence, at page 151 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.14,92,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

The question was negatived.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

That a sum not exceeding Rs.14,92,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head “64B.—Civil Defence”.

The question was adopted.

### Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 2 p.m., on Friday, the 17th March 1944.

SHILLONG:

The 26th April 1944. }

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary Legislative Assembly, Assam.