

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

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 2 p. m. on Friday, the 17th March 1944.

PRESENT

The Hon'ble Mr. Basanta Kumar Das, Speaker, in the Chair, ten Hon'ble Ministers and forty-eight Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given)

Area under sugar-cane cultivation

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*60. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The area under sugar-cane cultivation in Assam ?

(b) The steps taken to increase the production of gur in connection with the Grow More Food Campaign in 1943-44 ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied :

60.(a)—The area under sugar-cane in Assam during the year 1943-44 is 45,100 acres.

(b)—The Department of Agriculture issued 13,55,500 and over 20,00,000 setts of improved varieties of cane to cultivators during the years 1942-43 and 1943-44 respectively. It is proposed to distribute another 20,00,000 setts during the year 1944-45.

Government Agent for purchasing seed potatoes

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*61. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The name of the Government Agent for purchasing seed of potatoes ?

(b) What is his commission per maund ?

(c) Whether any price has been fixed by Government ?

(d) If so, what is the price ?

(e) If not, who fixes the price at the time of purchase ?

(f) Whether payments of price are made direct by the Director of Agriculture ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied :

61.(a)—Rai Bahadur Jibanram Goenka.

(b)—The commission paid to Rai Bahadur is annas 4 per maund.

(c)—No. The price is fixed from time to time by the Director of Agriculture on the basis of the prevailing market prices.

(d)—Does not arise.

(e)—The hon. Member may be referred to the reply given to question 61(c).

(f)—Yes.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Was any tender invited before appointing the Government Agent ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: No, Sir. The firm being a reputed one which supplied potato seeds in the previous years was given the chance.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Are not several other reputed firms doing the same business in Shillong ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: This firm is the only reputed firm which has got potato business in Shillong in an extensive scale.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Who gave that information to the Hon'ble Minister that this is the only reputed firm which deals in potatoes?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: According to our information this is the only reputed firm in Shillong which supplied potatoes in previous years and that is why the contract has been given to it.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: My question was: who gave this information to the Hon'ble Minister that this is the only firm which deals in potatoes?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: According to our information this is the only reputed firm.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: What is the source of that information?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: When we first gave contract to this firm, we made sufficient enquiry and according to the investigations that we made, which are confidential, we came to the conclusion that it would be safe for the Government to give the contract to this firm.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Was not the opinion of the Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, taken in this matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: I cannot say beyond what I have already said. We made confidential enquiry.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Was the enquiry made by the Hon'ble Minister personally?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: No, through our departmental heads.

Money advanced to rice and paddy purchasing agents

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

*62. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The total amount advanced by the Government to their rice and paddy purchasing agents during the year 1943?

(b) The total quantity of paddy purchased by them during 1943 and the average cost per maund paid to them?

(c) The total quantity of rice purchased by them during 1943 and the average cost per maund paid to them?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

62. (a)—A sum of Rs. 1,93,86,800 was advanced to the Agents during the year 1943.

(b) & (c)—6,42,284 maunds of paddy and 22,53,891 maunds of rice at an average price of Rs. 10-1-0 and Rs. 18-14-0 respectively.

(Questions Nos. 63 and 64 standing in the name of Maulavi Mabarak Ali, M.L.A., were not put and answered as the questioner was absent.)

Permission to Political Prisoners for appearing at the B.A. Examination

†Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked:

*65. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether the following political prisoners have obtained permission from the Calcutta University to appear at the ensuing B. A. Examination—

1. Naba Kumar Bhattacharyee,
2. Harinarain Dam,
3. Hridayesh R. Das,
4. Lily Dutta?

†This question was put by Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri on authorisation.

(b) If so, whether Government has permitted them to appear in the said Examination ?

(c) If not, why not ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

65. (a)—Government have received no intimation to that effect from the University.

(b) & (c)—Government after careful consideration have found it impracticable to arrange for security prisoners to sit for University examinations.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : What are the practical difficulties, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Difficulties are regarding accommodation, vigilance and segregation.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I think, this matter was discussed the other day.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : In that discussion the Hon'ble Premier said that he would consider the matter. Is this the result of that final consideration in this matter ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : The other day a suggestion was made by Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee probably, if the jail authorities could not make arrangements in conformation of the University requirements for holding the examination within the jail precincts. I said that I would enquire of the possibilities of allowing them to attend normal examination centres under police escort and I have accordingly referred to district authority whether such arrangements could be made.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : In view of the fact that the B. A. Examination will commence from 22nd March next, will Government take immediate steps to make some arrangements ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I think, the Hon'ble Premier will reply to this in connection with question No.67.

Price of cloth other than Standard Cloth

Babu LALIT MOHON KAR asked :

*66. Will Government be pleased to state what measures they have adopted to bring down the price of cloth other than the standard cloth ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

66.—This Government is administering on behalf of the Central Government the Cotton Cloth and Yarn (Control) Order, 1943, which is a de-hoarding, anti-hoarding and price control measure aiming, firstly, at making old stocks available to the consumer at cheap prices and, secondly, at ensuring a quick and continuous flow of future supplies from the manufacturer to the consumer at increasingly reduced prices. With these objects in view it provided for the exposure of all old stocks by the 31st August, 1943, and for their final disposal by the 31st October, 1943, the latter date being subsequently altered to the 31st December, 1943. It also provides for the final disposal by retail sale of all future stocks within six months from the time when they are packed by the mills. All stocks manufactured before August, 1943 (which are distinguishable by the absence of a mark known as the "Texmark", with which cotton cloth and yarn manufactured since are being stamped), found in the possession of dealers after the 31st December, 1943, were seized and are now being gradually released after being stamped with retail prices, 10 per cent. above the *ex-mill* prices, ascertainable from a price directory issued by the Central Government. These prices are generally speaking, more than 100 per cent. lower than the peak attained about the middle of 1943. Time-barred stocks will similarly be dealt with in future so that as time passes, prices will become lower and lower. Several orders under the Defence of India Rules have been passed by this Government to supplement the provisions of the Central Order, the most important of which is a licensing Order.

Re Student Political Prisoners

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*67. Will Government be pleased to state what arrangement they have made to allow the student political prisoners to appear in their University Examinations ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

67.—Government carefully considered whether it is practicable to allow security prisoners who are candidates for University examinations to take those examinations in the jails. They found that there were insurmountable difficulties, particularly in respect of accommodation and supervisory staff, in making such an arrangement with due regard to segregation and satisfaction to the University authorities. While deciding therefore that such examinations cannot be held, they issued directions that stationery should be provided to candidates reading for the examinations, and books which they can provide from their own resources allowed to them, and every case of a candidate is being carefully again reviewed to consider if he can be released with safety.

I can further add that in pursuance of this policy, I have already released Miss Lily Datta.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Will the Hon'ble Premier please consider the case of Naba Kumar Battacharyee, Harinarain Dam and Hridesh R. Das and release them on parole only for the purpose of sitting in the examination ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Parole rules do not provide for release, even temporarily, of political prisoners for the purpose of sitting in University examination. Therefore I have taken another suggestion into consideration whether they could not be allowed to sit in ordinary examination hall and attend those places under police escort. I have already referred this to the Deputy Commissioner.

†Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: Will Miss Lily Datta be allowed to come to the centre of examination ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes.

†Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: When the Silchar Jail allowed the privilege of sitting in the Examination, will the good offices of the Hon'ble Premier be available to have these facilities for Sylhet examinees as well ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:—This time they too have refused to make any arrangement.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Scarcity of Cattle

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

45. (a) Are Government aware that cattle have become scarce in the Province ?

(b) If so, will they be pleased to state the reasons for this scarcity ?

(c) Is it a fact that plough cattle are selling at a very high price ?

46. Are Government aware that cultivators are experiencing great difficulties in procuring good plough cattle ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied :

45. (a) & (b)—Government have no information of any general scarcity throughout the Province but it is likely that there may be local difficulties in some places on account of the falling off of the normal import of cattle from other provinces.

(c)—Yes, as in the case of all other commodities.

46.—Government have no information that the cultivators in general are experiencing great difficulties in procuring plough cattle.

†Speech not corrected.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: With regard to question No.45 (a), will Government please state whether the fact that an enormously large number of local cattle has been sold to the Military for slaughter purposes has not affected the availability of cattle in the Province ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, I have already replied that there is no general scarcity in the Province ; there may be difficulties in some places. One of the reasons for this scarcity is for using plough bullocks in carts for relieving transport difficulties.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: My question was whether the fact that there has been a large slaughter of local cattle had not affected the number of plough cattle in the Province ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Not in all places, Sir.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Are Government aware that thousands of cattle are being purchased by the contractors for supplying to the Military ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Contractors are of course purchasing cattle, but the Military are getting cattle from other provinces as well.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: It is stated in the reply: "there may be local difficulties in some places on account of the falling off of the normal import of cattle from other provinces". May I know what kind of cattle was actually imported into this Province from outside ? Was it not cart cattle and, only occasionally, cows ? Do Government mean to say that plough cattle were imported into the Province at any time ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: We have no information what kind of cattle were imported ; plough cattle also might have been brought from other provinces occasionally.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Can Government give us any idea as to the number of such imported plough cattle ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: We have no information.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: In view of his reply to question No. 45(c), may I ask the Hon'ble Minister whether he contemplates to take any action for providing a greater number of cattle for this Province, so that the price may come down ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: I don't know what action the hon. Member wants us to take. We have exhorted our people not to sell their cattle even at high prices.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know whether he will take necessary steps to import cattle from other provinces, as he says the difficulty is on account of falling off of the normal import of cattle from other provinces ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:

May I be permitted to reply, Sir, because I am in possession of all the facts.

It is extremely right that the leaders of the public represented in this House should view with great anxiety the cattle position in the Province. From a very recent note from Mr. Woodford, which was discussed in the Economic Advisory Board, we came to know that the Province has 69 lakhs of cattle, out of which the Military up till now have purchased 6,000. (Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee: Direct?) They purchase through their contractors. Unfortunately, according to Military regulations cattle between the years 3 and 9 are to be used for food purposes, whereas according to the expert, Mr. Woodford, those are the years of usefulness of cattle in this Province ; the average life of our cattle is taken at 13 years. So, we have decided, Sir, to approach the Government of India, and through them the General Headquarters of the Army, to see that cattle over 9 years, *i.e.*, 10 years and above are only sold to the Military for eating purposes. In the meantime, we have put an embargo on the sale of all plough cattle and cows in pregnancy or in milk. On an inspection of a dump of cattle owned by the Military, Mr. Woodford found that the Military had been trying their level best

to co-operate with the Assam Government in this respect ; but their hands are tied by the general direction from higher authorities that for meat purposes only cattle between the ages of 3 and 9 should be purchased. So, we have taken up the matter. The rest lies with the Government of India and the General Headquarters.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I enquire whether their attention has been drawn to the latest steps taken by the Bengal Government restricting the sale and destruction of cattle in that Province ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Other provinces have also tried to conserve their livestock, and Assam is not behind-hand of any other province in this respect.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know what actually is the present price of a pair of plough bullocks ? Is it a fact that the price has gone up to Rs.300 a pair ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir, I heard in certain places the price of local plough cattle is round about Rs.300, but the price of a pair of imported stock from Bihar has gone up to Rs.800.

Quantity of paddy and rice purchased by Government Agents

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

47. Will Government be pleased to lay a statement on the table showing—
(a) The quantity of paddy and rice purchased by the Government Agents from the 1st of January 1944 up till now ?

(b) The rate at which they purchased them ?

(c) The names of sellers with quantity purchased from each of them ?

48. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether the Government purchasing agents have been purchasing rice at the rate of Rs.16-12-0 per maund from the market at Srimangal ?

(b) Whether they are charging at the rate of Rs.20 per maund in their bills ?

(c) If so, why so ?

(d) Whether they propose to stop any profiteering by these Agents ?

49. Do Government propose to enforce upon the purchasing agents to publish weekly and monthly accounts regarding their transaction in local newspapers mentioning the purchasing rates, the rates charged on the bills and the sellers' names with quantity of rice and paddy purchased from each of them ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

47. (a)—Returns are submitted periodically. Uptodate figures are not therefore available. Figures for January 1944 are—

Rice

3,11,028 maunds.

(b)—At rates varying from Rs.16 to Rs.20.

(c)—Names of sellers are too many to be mentioned, nor is the maintenance of separate accounts by the Agents showing the purchases from each seller worthwhile the extra labour involved.

48. (a)—No.

(b)—No.

(c)—Does not arise.

(d)—District officers have been instructed to keep an eye over the Purchasing Agents to preclude the chance of any profiteering.

49.—Ceiling prices have already been published in the Gazette. Government do not propose to publish further details about purchases, etc., as it may defeat adequate procurement.

Paddy

84,243 maunds.

At rates varying from Rs.9 to Rs.11.

Price of paddy and rice purchased by Government Agents

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA asked :

50. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The price at which the Government Agents purchased paddy and rice in the different subdivisions of the Surma Valley in December and January last ?
- (b) The quantity so purchased in each subdivision ?
- (c) Storage, transport or any other incidental expenses borne by Government in each subdivision on this account ?
- (d) Commission paid or due in respect of those purchases? (To be shown subdivision by subdivision.)
- (e) Market price of paddy and rice obtaining at the time of purchase in each subdivision ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

50. (a)—The following are the rates :—

			Sali Rice			Sali Paddy			Aus Rice			Aus Paddy		
			Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
Hailakandi	...	...	17	4	0	9	12	0	16	8	0	9	0	0
			to			to								
Silchar	...	...	18	8	0	11	4	0	16	4	6	.....	
			to			to			to					
Karimganj	...	...	19	10	0	9	14	0	17	0	0	9	12	0
			to			to			to			to		
			17	10	0	9	8	0	16	12	0	10	8	0
			to			to			to			to		
			19	4	0	11	0	0	17	4	0	10	8	0

			Rice						Paddy							
			Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.		
North Sylhet	...	...	17	8	0	to	21	0	0	.....					
Sunamganj	...	...	17	4	0	to	19	1	0	.....					
Habiganj	19	0	0	to	20	0	0	10	0	0	to	11	0	0
Maulvibazar	18	0	0	to	19	8	0	9	8	0	to	10	8	0

(b)—

			Rice			Paddy		
			Mds.			Mds.		
Silchar	...	...	45,817			9,777		
Hailakandi	...	...	5,500			22,800		
Karimganj	...	...	8,375			20,854		
Habiganj	...	...	3,344			4,653		
Maulavibazar	...	...	9,193			4,473		
Sylhet	...	...	22,601			.....	
Sunamganj	...	...	3,808			.....	
			98,638			62,557		

(c)—No incidental charges have yet been borne by the Government.

(d)—Commission is payable to the Agencies on the total purchases made during a month in the entire area of operation, subdivisional figure cannot therefore be given. Total Commission due to the two Syndicates is Rs.22,322 (approximately).

(e) Market prices of rice and paddy obtaining at the time of purchase were not the same throughout a subdivision and have varied considerably among different areas according to accessibility and other factors.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: The answer to Question 50 (c) is "No incidental charges have yet been borne by the Government". May I know, Sir, is there not any charge on account of storage, transport or any other incidental charges, and if so, who bears them?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: These charges are borne by Government.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: What was the amount of expenditure incurred in this connection, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As I have stated, Sir, that these charges have not yet been borne by Government because these stocks have not yet been sold to anybody and as soon as these are sold these charges are put in the bill.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Now, who is bearing or advancing this expenditure, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: From the imprest money that is with the agents.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: With regard to Question No.50(e) Sir. Is there no machinery of Government to ascertain the price movement of the agricultural produce of this Province?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir, all I have replied is that the market price is not uniform throughout the Province; it varies from place to place according to accessibility and other factors.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Is it not a fact, Sir, that for each subdivision the market price is published in the Gazette?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The average price is published in the Gazette, Sir.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, is the average price below or above the price at which the purchase is made on behalf of Government?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Regarding all the purchases made from February up till now, Sir, the price is within the controlled price. Only there was one instance which was purchased in December which was over the controlled price but Government has ordered never to go over the controlled price.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Was it over market price, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Did Government enquire at what price the Indian Tea Association made their purchase, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Government had no reasons to enquire from the Indian Tea Association the price they paid but so far as I know the Indian Tea Association was permitted by me to make local purchase within 5 miles of their gardens and the Indian Tea Association could either get it at a cheaper rate or would be willing to pay higher price because the haulage would be lower.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, there will be substantial difference between the price paid by the Indian Tea Association and the price paid by the Government agencies.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: This is giving information and not seeking information, Sir.

Visit of Maulavi Imdadul Hoque, A. R. P. Officer, Dhubri, to Calcutta

Srijut PARAMANANDA DAS asked :

51. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether it is a fact that Maulavi Imdadul Hoque, A. R. P. Officer stationed at Dhubri, visited Calcutta on 30th September, 1943 and 13th February, 1944 ?

(b) Whether these visits were connected with public purposes ?

(c) If so, what was the nature of the public purposes involved during each of the visits and who assigned them ?

(d) If not, the nature of leave enjoyed by this officer on each occasion and the name of the officer who allowed the leave to him ?

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

51. (a)—Yes. (b) & (c)—He visited Calcutta on the 30th September, 1943 during joining time before actually taking over as A. R. P. Officer, Dhubri. The visit to Calcutta on the 13th February, 1944 was on official duty as he was deputed by the A. R. P. Controller, Dhubri to negotiate the purchase of an A. R. P. Car. (d)—Does not arise.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : May I know, Sir, whether the negotiation fell through ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI : I require notice, Sir. I have got no information.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Is it not a fact, Sir, that the purchase of Government car is generally made through the Transport Department ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI : Yes, Sir, it is the case ; generally the purchase is made through the Provincial Motor Transport Controller ?

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Sir, what sort of a car was it that it required the presence of an A. R. P. officer ? Is it a special car for A. R. P. or a second-hand car ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI : Government have no information, Sir.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : May I know, Sir, who has got the information when the Government has not got the information ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI : From the reply it will appear, Sir, that the Controller who is the Deputy Commissioner sent the A. R. P. Officer concerned to Calcutta in connection with the purchase of a car for A. R. P. As the question required some information, we have furnished that but further information has not been called for from the Controller.

Supply of toilet, etc., to Class I Security Prisoners (Political)

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

52. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether, toilets and writing materials are supplied to Class I Security prisoners (political), in Jorhat Jail ?

(b) Whether the aforesaid articles are supplied to Class I Security prisoners in Sylhet Jail ?

(c) If not, why not ?

53. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether tea in Sylhet Jail is supplied to Class I Security prisoners, (political) only once in a day ?

(b) Whether Tea in Jorhat Jail is supplied to Class I Security prisoners, (political) twice in a day ?

(c) If so, why is the difference of treatment between the two Jails ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

52. (a)—In the case of all security prisoners who do not receive funds from their families or friends, Government allow expenditure of Rs. 5 per mensem for each security prisoner to be spent upon such items. Stationery is also allowed free for the purpose of study to those who are reading for examination.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Does not arise.

53. (a)&(b)—Hitherto the Superintendent of the Jail has been given discretion in regard to the supply of tea, bread and butter to security prisoners which is provided as a concession, in paragraph 369 (1) of the Jail Manual for A and B Division prisoners only. Recently at the instance of the Deputy Inspector General of Prisons they have decided to make this concession a regular issue to all security Prisoners who ask for it and have fixed a definite scale.

(c)—Government are not aware if the Superintendent of the Jorhat jail is making two issues, but will enquire into the matter. The rule provides for only one daily issue.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, is the enquiry going to be made with the purpose of stopping the supply of tea twice a day in Jorhat Jail?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It is not with that particular purpose. Sir, I have said that the rule provides for only one daily issue. If for any specific reason, the Superintendent, Jorhat Jail, thought it fit that two issues should be made and if Government is satisfied that the reasons advanced are sufficient, Government may continue the double issue.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Are Government aware that on the average the gentlemen of the class to which the security prisoners belong take at least 4 or 5 cups a day. (A voice from the European benches—*hear, hear*). So instead of giving one cup a day would not the Hon'ble Prime Minister be pleased to order that twice a day may be allowed in all Jails. My hon. Friends, the Planters also agree to this suggestion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member is to put a question.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, will Government agree to allow the same ration in Sylhet Jail?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am awaiting the report of the Superintendent, Jorhat Jail, Sir.

Adjournment Motion *re*: sale of National Savings Certificates

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I have received notice of an Adjournment Motion. Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri may move his Motion now.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg leave of the House to move that this House do now adjourn to consider a definite matter of urgent public importance of recent occurrence, *viz.*, undue pressure put by Government for sale of National Savings Certificates through their officers in the Textile Department.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Was not this matter discussed in the House the other day?

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Yes, Sir, but I am going to give a specific instance of very recent occurrence, that is, a notice issued on the 14th March last. I am reading this notice, Sir. The notice was issued from the Price Control Office of Gauhati. It is dated 14-3-44. It was issued over the signature of the Textile Inspector, Gauhati. It reads thus:—

“All dealers of Cotton Cloth and Yarn of Gauhati town are hereby informed that they should take out their licenses for Cotton Cloth and Yarn which are ready for issue from the Textile Office, Gauhati. Every dealer should purchase National Savings Certificates from the Gauhati Post Office on the following scale and must produce the Savings Certificates to the Textile Officers before obtaining the license.

1. Whole salersRs. 200 (two hundred) only.
2. Retail dealers....Rs. 50 (fifty) only.
3. Petty dealers.....Rs. 20 (Twenty) only.”

Thus even the petty dealers are not also exempted. They must produce National Savings Certificates of certain value. If they cannot produce this certificate, they will not be granted licence for the sale of cotton and yarn. This will adversely affect the supply of cotton and yarn. Unless the dealers agree to take National Savings Certificate they cannot take license for the sale of cotton and yarn. The repercussion will be that public will not get cotton and yarn.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Is the hon. Member sure that the document he has read from is a genuine document?

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: If the Hon'ble Prime Minister does not proceed adversely against the person who gave me this notice, I can show it. I have got the original of this notice with me but I do not want to disclose the name because his license may be cancelled altogether.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I can give the assurance. This is entirely against the policy of the Government to compel people in this way.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Does the Hon'ble Premier want to see the document? I can show him provided he keeps it confidential.

(The document was handed over to the Hon'ble Prime Minister.)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: On behalf of the Government I need only say that this must have been done by some over-zealous officer. I shall see that this is atonce withdrawn and stopped.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I have also heard that the Mauzadars have been instructed not to take revenue from persons of substance if they cannot produce National Savings Certificates. Something must be done to stop such practice. Some instructions or some sort of orders must have been sent by Government to this effect; otherwise how can the Textile Inspector issue such an order? Unless he had some instruction from his superiors or from Government how can this idea occur to him at all?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Prime Minister has given the assurance that he would take steps in the matter.

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: May I bring to the notice of the House one fact in this connection. Sometime back the amalgamation of the sale of National Savings Certificates with the issue of licence for dealing with textile goods was brought to my notice by the Textile Inspector of Karimganj. I passed definite orders then that they should not amalgamate the sale of such certificates with the issue of licenses laying down the condition that in order to get a license they must possess a National Savings Certificate.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Textile Department admits that there is such an order and that instructions were issued to Textile Officers to secure National Savings Certificate.

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: There was nothing of that nature to the effect that they must possess a National Savings Certificate for getting a license. When one such fact was brought to my notice from Karimganj, we took immediate action as I have already stated; and in this case the Hon'ble the Prime Minister has assured that orders will be passed not to lay down such condition.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Does the Hon'ble Minister know that textile and cotton dealers might have got orders from other quarters?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: What does the hon. Member mean by other quarters?

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: If the Hon'ble Prime Minister gives an assurance that he will immediately inform the Textile Department at Gauhati that licences should be issued irrespective of the question of buying National Savings Certificates, I may be ready to withdraw the Motion. All these licenses have been held up. No one has been allowed to take cloth; so unless immediate action is taken public will suffer.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have already undertaken to issue circular to all Deputy Commissioners not to use any form of compulsion and I will do so. But to allay the suspicion that is lurking on the minds of some of the hon. Members, I can say this much that as an anti-inflationary measure and as inculcating thrift in our people, Government of India started this National Small Savings Scheme and each province was given a target figure of subscriptions according to its population. Assam has also been given a target figure to which Assam Government should try to contribute towards the scheme. The Assam Government on the basis of the population of different districts told the Deputy Commissioners that it was expected that the people within their jurisdictions would subscribe such an amount. In the same instruction, it was definitely laid down that there should be no compulsion whatsoever. If any Deputy Commissioner has taken any compulsory action on his own initiative, it is beyond the instruction of the Government. I declare before the House that I will issue immediate circular order that such action should not be taken or indirect pressure should not be put on the public. Under Government of India orders, we have appointed a special officer with 3 assistants to carry on propaganda work in the country side for buying National Savings Certificates. If that department cannot produce the amount which the Government of India expected from this Government, it is not for the Deputy Commissioners to take any direct or indirect action leading to compulsion.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Will the Hon'ble Prime Minister wire to Gauhati for suspending such order and issue licenses irrespective of whether National Savings Certificates are bought or not? They are not getting licenses for failure to produce the certificate.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: A telegram takes more time now-a-days than a letter. I will see that an express letter is issued not today but tomorrow.

The Motion for leave to move the Adjournment Motion was not pressed.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RESULT OF ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: As a result of the election to the Public Accounts Committee that was held the other day the following 7 hon. Members have been elected to it under Rule 102 (2) of the Assembly Rules—

1. Mr. A. Whittaker.
2. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahab Chaudhuri.
3. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee.
4. Maulavi Abdur Rahman.
5. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury.
6. Srijut Dharsing Deuri.
7. Maulavi Muhammad Amjad Ali.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

GRANT No. 1.

(4.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax)

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. 41,400 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 "4.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 41,400 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 '4.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax'."

We have got a number of Demands to dispose of today; but we have got only 20 minutes from the Question hour; thus we shall get one hour 20 minutes for the disposal of these Demands. Having regard to the numerous Cut Motions tabled I would request the hon. Members not to devote more than 2 or 3 minutes to move each Cut Motion.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.41,387 under Grant No. 1, Major head—4.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax, Minor head—Collection of Taxes on Agricultural Income (total), at page 25 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.41,400 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, I have taken this particular opportunity to criticise Government for not having any office of the department at Sylhet. Last year I also tried to convince the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the necessity of having an office of the Agricultural Income-Tax Department at Sylhet. This year, Sir, when the Agricultural Income-Tax Officer went to Sylhet he was able to secure, some how or other, one seat in the Dak Bungalow. His room was a two-seated one and the other seat was occupied by somebody else. We the assesseees had to appear before him in his bed room with our officers while that room was occupied by some other gentleman; there were other assesseees who were waiting just outside the room with their papers and officers. The position can better be imagined than described. Everybody has got his own privacy and secrecy, but we were compelled to discuss matters, we were compelled to show our papers before others most reluctantly, as we were left with no other alternative but to do so.

I would request the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge to see that in future these sort of things do not occur. With these words, Sir, I commend my Motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: Sir, if I have understood Mr. Mookerjee correctly, he does not want permanent establishment of an office at Sylhet. He only wants that when the Officer goes out on tour for inspection, sufficient accommodation should be provided for the Officer and those people who go to see him. I think Mr. Mookerjee is aware of the difficulties that we have been experiencing in obtaining accommodation at Sylhet. Still, Sir, I can assure him that we shall try to secure better accommodation in future than it has been possible to do in this year.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: (The Mover expressed his desire not to press the Motion.) Has the hon. Member leave of the House to withdraw his Motion?

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

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.41,387 under Grant No. 1, Major head—4.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax, Minor head—Collection of Taxes on Agricultural Income (total), at page 25 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.41,400 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, Assam receives a share of income-tax from the Central Government, but so far as excise duty levied by the Central Government on tea and tobacco in this Province is concerned, we do not get any share. By this Cut Motion I simply like to urge upon the Hon'ble Minister to press the Central Government vehemently so that we may get our proper share of the excise duty levied on tea and tobacco.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That the total provision of Rs.41,387 under Grant No. 1, Major head—4.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax, Minor head—Collection of Taxes on Agricultural Income (total), at page 25 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.41,400 do stand reduced by Rs.100".

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: Maulavi Maqbul Hussain has raised the general question of the contribution that we should get from the Central Government and as I said in my Budget Speech, we have been making every endeavour to get more financial assistance from the Central Government than what we have been getting and I can assure him that we shall continue to press the Central Government to get greater share than what we have been receiving in the past.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The question is :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 41,400 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 '4.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax'."

The question is carried.

GRANT No. 26

Tools and Plant and Establishment charges of the Public Works Department

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,10,400 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 Public Works Department (Establishment and Tools and Plant).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.4,10,400 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 Public Works Department (Establishment and Tools and Plant)."

There are some Cut Motions tabled. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mahmud Ali to move Cut Motion No. 1*.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Grant No. 26 deals with Establishment of Tools and Plant only.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I find that this Cut Motion is clearly out of order. Of course I have often told the hon. Members that simply because a Cut Motion is put in the list, it should not be assumed that we have found it in order. If there is any objection with regard to admissibility of any Cut Motion I shall decide it on the floor of the House.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs. 4,10,400 under Grant No. 26, Major head—18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works, 39.—Public Health and 50.—Civil Works at page 137 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,10,400 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

I have tabled this Cut Motion to criticise the Government with regard to Public Works Department's tools and plant. It will be seen at page 46 of the Budget Memorandum where it has been explained that :

"Under tools and plant the increase both in the revised and the Budget is due to larger expenditure on tools and plant required mainly in connection with Defence projects. Owing to the tremendous amount of wear and tear in the present stock of tools and plant under the conditions now obtaining, it has become necessary to provide for every large replacement in the Budget year and for this purpose a provision of Trs. 10,20 has been made."

Sir, my point is that the general public also should derive some benefit out of this. Government should not devote their entire energy and all available money to purchase machineries only for the purpose of war projects. They should also see that the Trunk Roads and other main roads are kept in good order. We always hear that due to want of rollers, caterpillars and things of the like, the roads could not be maintained and kept in good condition. So, Sir, my point in moving this Cut Motion is that Government should assure us that along with the war projects other important roads also would be kept in order and some portion of the machineries would be used for that purpose. With these words, Sir, I commend my Motion for the acceptance of the House.

*1. Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 1,42,006 under Grant No. 26, Major head—18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works, 39.—Public Health and 50.—Civil Works, Minor head—A.—Direction charges (total), at page 136 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 2, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,10,400 do stand reduced by Rs. 2.

(To criticise Government for their failure to take up more works in connection with embankment and drainage, etc.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

“That the total provision of Rs. 4,10,400 under Grant No. 26, Major head—18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works, 39.—Public Health and 50.—Civil Works at page 137 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,10,400 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Sir, I think, I can assure the hon. Members that these tools and plant will be used for keeping the roads in a high standard of efficiency whereby the public will derive large benefit. So far as our communication is concerned, I think, Sir, the war has been a blessing to us, because many of the roads have already been improved and there is still hope for improving some more. So, I can give the hon. Members this much assurance that within the limit of our budgetary provision we will do our best to utilise these tools and plant for the benefit of the public.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, in this connection, just for an information, may I enquire of the Hon'ble Minister whether he had the opportunity to go even up to Nowgong during the last two months, and also how he found the conditions of the road from Sylhet to Silchar and Habiganj side? Has he got any experience of these roads, Sir?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: I have been to both these places, to Cachar and also to Nowgong. Of course the roads are not in a very good condition but they are fair now.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: They are not in a very good condition but are they in good condition?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: That is a matter of opinion, Sir. I may say that the roads are not in a good condition because the traffic is very heavy now.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I have got the answer, Sir. I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Has the hon. Member leave of the House to withdraw his Motion?

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

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move: That the total provision of Rs. 4,10,400 under Grant No. 26, Major head—18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works, 39.—Public Health and 50.—Civil Works at page 137 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,10,400 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

Most of the hon. Members of this House know that there was a Public Works Department tea room at Nongpoh and my experience of travel in this line enables me to see this Public Works Department tea room at Nongpoh for more than the last twenty years. Side by side there was a private restaurant which is still there and even these two restaurants were hardly sufficient to cope with the needs of the travelling public. About three or four months ago this building which belonged to the Public Works Department and in which there was a tea room the lessee of which was selected by the Deputy Commissioner of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, was handed over to the Military and supply of tea altogether stopped. In this Public Works Department tea room there were two retiring rooms—one for ladies and the other for gentlemen. With the closing of the tea room which is now being reserved for the British troops, Indian ladies particularly suffer a great inconvenience. They do not find any place to retire and they have to go all over the neighbourhood to find out a suitable place. I have drawn the attention of the Hon'ble Minister and showed him how we were all inconvenienced on account of the closing of this tea room.

In the other tea house naturally preference is given mostly to European passengers and European styled passengers whereas Indian passengers find it difficult to have seats there. Further more, Sir, although the Public Works Department's tea room has been reserved for the British troops, the other private restaurant is mostly occupied by the British officers. So the ordinary Indian passengers find difficulty to get any seat there.

What I say, Sir, is this:—if really there was a necessity to hand over this building to the Military and to sacrifice the interest of the ordinary public, the Government should have built another house or shed, whatever it is called, or a semi-permanent house for the convenience of the Indian passengers just as in the same place near the Public Works Department's tea room they have built another tea house for the Indian troops. They could have long ago built another tea house for Indian passengers, but I hope Government will even now remove this public grievance as early as possible.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Motion moved :

“That the total provision of Rs. 4,10,400 under Grant No. 26, Major head—18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works, 39.—Public Health and 50.—Civil Works at page 137 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,10,400 do stand reduced by Rs. 100”.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this tea house belongs to the Public Works Department. But for a long time past, Public Works Department delegated the powers of leasing it out, to the Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Before the expiry of the lease it was requisitioned by the Deputy Commissioner on the 4th of October last. Of course this fact was reported to the Public Works Department later on. It was said that this tea house was requisitioned by the Military for Military exigencies. The Deputy Commissioner thought that no inconvenience should be caused to the public because there was another private tea house there. Of course up till now Government had no information that much inconvenience has been caused to the public by the requisitioning of this tea house.....

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : I question that, Sir, because I personally drew the attention of the Hon'ble Minister about a week ago that much inconvenience has been caused to the public.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : As I said, Sir, the tea house was taken on the 4th of October and during the last session, nobody in this House brought this to the notice of the Government. It is a fact that only some days ago the hon. Mover brought it to my notice at Nongpoh and now it has been seriously brought to the notice of the House. We shall look into this question and see if anything can be done to remove this grievance of the public.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Does the hon. Mover press his Motion ?

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : In view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Has the hon. Mover leave of the House to withdraw his Motion ?

The Motion stands withdrawn with the leave of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The question is :

That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,10,400 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 Public Works Department (Establishment and Tools and Plant).

The question is carried.

GRANT No. 7

(12.—Charges on Account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act)

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. 2,87,200 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—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,87,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending the 31st March, 1945, or the administration of the head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act”.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.38,544 under Grant No. 7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head —A.—Charges for collection, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total), at page 42 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,87,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

The Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1936 has taken the place of the enactments which empowered the Local Bodies to tax motor vehicles and the compensation which was payable to the Local Bodies for the loss of their income has been provided under this head. The surplus of the receipt over compensation also is partly disbursed amongst the Local Bodies and partly for the improvement of the provincial roads. But, Sir, for the last two years we have noticed that the distribution has been most arbitrary and even some of the Local Boards were not paid at all. We all know of the desperate nature of the Local Bodies' finances all over Assam. We do hope, Sir, that there would be an equitable and regular distribution of this grant to the Local Boards. With these words, I commend my Motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved: That the provision of Rs.38,544 under Grant No. 7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—A—Charges for collection, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total) at page 42 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,87,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I find that Motion No. 4 is also the same to raise a discussion in regard to the Local Bodies.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Sir, I do not like to move my Motion* to raise the same discussion.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury is correct in saying that the powers under which the Local Bodies could tax motor vehicles have been taken away by the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act of 1936. In order to compensate the Local Bodies for the loss they sustained thereby, in 1936 Act it was provided that out of the net proceeds, *i. e.*, after deducting the cost of collection, Local Bodies should get their revenue from motor vehicles taxation as in the year 1935-36 and that this distribution should be revised after 5 years, *i. e.*, in about 1942, and it was also provided that if there would be any surplus, that surplus should be divided to the extent of 2/3rds to the Local Bodies and the balance of 1/3rd would be utilised for improving the provincial roads. I am surprised to hear that my Friend alleges that the distribution is arbitrary. It cannot be so under the very Act itself, because the Local Bodies have to get the amount which they realised as taxes from motor vehicles in the year 1935-36; it is only regarding the balance that my Friend could say anything. As regards that we ask both Local Bodies as well as the Commissioner to make suggestions how proper allocation is to be made. The Commissioner of Divisions forwards the schemes of Local Bodies to Government with his recommendation. It is after this has been thoroughly scrutinized that distribution is made.

Now, as regards the amount which is to be spent on provincial roads, the Chief Engineer makes his recommendation. The amount of the surplus is always paid after one year of the receipt, to the Local Bodies and that is necessitated by the fact that we get recommendations from the different officers and the Local Bodies about the allocation of the surplus after a certain period of time. At the present moment Sir, we have not received the Commissioner's recommendation for disposal of the

*4. Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY to move:
That the provision of Rs.38,544 under Grant No. 7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—A.—Charges for Collection, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total) at page 42 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,87,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.
(To raise a discussion about the allocation of funds to the Local Bodies from the Motor Vehicles Taxation Fund.)

surplus so the Local Bodies, whereas the Public Works Department has already recommended that their share should be spent in improving the Municipal roads which had been badly cut by the heavy Military traffic.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Sir, I may inform the Hon'ble Premier that the Sunamganj Local Board did not get anything in this respect even as regards the main distribution.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: My Friend is perfectly correct. I believe this matter was raised last year, and I informed the House that the basic portion or basic share of this taxation is to be divided according to the income of the Local Bodies in the year 1935-36. The hon. Members know that Sunamganj Subdivision had in that year or year previous to that no motorable roads. Therefore, there was very little or hardly any motor vehicle ever plied in that area, and so they had no income from motor vehicles and did not receive any share out of this allocation. I promised Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury that I would look into the matter at the time of the disposal of the surplus. This time the surplus is only Rs.33,000 and the Commissioner has made so many recommendations that I cannot meet these demands according to the claim of the Local Boards. In order to give something to Sunamganj I will have to withdraw *pro-rata* from the other Local Bodies, from their funds. If that surplus has been big, I would have entrenched upon the portion of other Local Bodies and give something to Sunamganj. It is for this reason that I could not give effect to the hopes that I gave him last year.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: I beg leave of the House to withdraw the Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I hope the hon. Member has leave of the House to withdraw the Motion.

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

Mr. R. A. PALMER: I beg to move that the provision of Rs.38,544 under Grant No.7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—A.—Charges for collection, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total) at page 42 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,87,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

I wish to bring to the notice of Government a very real difficulty which is being experienced by owners of motor vehicles owing to overlapping of the present arrangements for supply of spare parts under the Spare Parts Control Order and petrol rations under the Petrol Control Order.

It is probably well-known that to obtain spare parts it is necessary to have the registration certificate of the vehicle endorsed by the Provincial Motor Transport Controller stating that the vehicle is essential and the registration certificate thus endorsed must be sent with the order for spare parts, to be endorsed by the supplier and the names of all spare parts supplied entered on it. Unfortunately the same registration certificate is also required to be sent to the Petrol Rationing authorities in order to obtain basic petrol rations and again in order to obtain supplementary petrol rations.

It will be readily seen that it often occurs that when petrol coupons are needed the certificate is away to obtain spare parts and when a spare part is needed it is away to obtain petrol coupons. This is a frequent occurrence under present conditions of delay and difficulties in communications especially as so often happens, the certificate has to be sent to Calcutta or even to Bombay.

As a means of overcoming this difficulty, I would suggest that the licensing authorities should issue a duplicate registration certificate on payment, and that one certificate should be used for petrol coupons and the other for spare parts. This solution would also help to keep the registration certificates legible. With all the numbers of petrol coupons issued and all the spare parts purchased written on the one certificate, many registration certificates are already a mass of hieroglyphics and will require renewing in the very near future.

I would be glad to have the Hon'ble Minister's assurance that he will look into the matter.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut Motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs. 38,544 under Grant No. 7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—A.—Charges for collection, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total) at page 42 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,87,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the grievances mentioned by my hon. Friend, Mr. Palmer, are genuine. But in this matter our hands are tied. The procedure which he is finding galling have been laid down by the higher authority—the Government of India. All I can say is that I will forward the suggestion made by my Friend to them. We have already pointed out various difficulties in carrying out the procedure laid down by them. But it is an All-India question. The Government of India has not given any definite reply to us. Probably they are consulting other Provinces.

The suggestion of having duplicate registration certificate will receive my careful and sympathetic consideration. In the rules made under the Indian Motor Vehicles Act, there is provision for issuing duplicate registration certificates, but those are in the case of either loss or illegibility on account of some accident. But I will see whether on account of the facts that have been laid by Mr. Palmer, we cannot amend that rule and allow a duplicate on all circumstances on payment.

Mr. R. A. PALMER: I beg, Sir, to withdraw my Motion with the leave of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I hope the hon. Member has leave of the House to withdraw his Motion.

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

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.38,544 under Grant No. 7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—A.—Charges for collection, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total) at page 42 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,87,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, this is the third time that I would like to bring to the notice of this House the greivances of the public on the Sylhet-Shillong Motor Service. The greivances were brought before the House both by me as well as by Mr. Mookerjee. It will be admitted by every hon. Member of this House that hundreds of passengers daily go away without having accommodations in the Service. The Company did not open a booking office in the town as was pressed by Mr. Mookerjee. The passengers who go from Shillong to Sylhet by the morning service and those who come from Sylhet to Shillong cannot carry their luggages and this put the passengers to a great difficulty. Ordinarily the cars go direct to the railway station and the passengers who want to go to the town with their luggages undergo great troubles. I and Mr. Mookerjee brought these greivances more than once to the notice of the Government, but I am sorry to say that Government did not take any action. Again by this Motion I urge upon the Hon'ble Premier to take immediate action and remove the greivances of the public as soon as possible.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut Motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs.38,544 under Grant No. 7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—A.—Charges for collection, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total) at page 42 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,87,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I should like to speak a few words on this Motion. If I remember aright it was said like this: as no new vehicle was available then, the difficulty of carrying the luggage had to be experienced. But this difficulty would be over when a few new vehicles would be given to that Company. I understand that some buses have been worn out in such a way that they should be replaced. When these new vehicles would be handed over, a

condition may be made that a portion of some of these vehicles should be used as luggage van, so that, the passengers coming up or going down may have their luggages by the same timing in which they travel and thus the difficulty may be solved. With these few words, I beg to resume my seat.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would only raise one point in this connection—whether the regulations on blackout have been withdrawn or not. As we all know, this is not observed by the military vehicles with the result that the drivers of private cars have to experience great difficulty in driving their cars in towns at night. I have noticed recently that some private cars have not been following this blackout regulation and they have been doing so with impunity. I want to know definitely whether the regulation has been withdrawn at Shillong and other parts of the Province.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir **MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I can inform my hon. Friend, Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri, that the masks that were so long put on the lights of our motor vehicles need no longer be continued. We have issued order and this order applies throughout the Province that there will be no blackout so far as moving vehicles are concerned.

As regards the complaints which have been submitted before the House by Mr. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury and Mr. Mookerjee, they are genuine grievances of the public so far as the administration of the motor service on Sylhet-Shillong Road is concerned. I placed before the Company all the suggestions that were made here and all the grievances that were made before. The Company pleaded their inability to carry out all those on account of shortage of vehicles. At certain times, in order to help the travelling public to Sylhet, I had very reluctantly agreed to some vehicles from the Gauhati-Shillong Road being brought and put on this line. The suggestion made by Mr. Mookerjee will now be placed before the Company. I know they had about ten vehicles from the Provincial Motor Transport Controller delivered to them as replacements. I understand they have applied for 24 more, of which 12 have been allotted to them. As soon as these are delivered, I will see that at least one more luggage van is placed to run on the road simultaneously with the passenger buses so that the passengers may not have to wait half a day for their luggages.

I would also put the grievances mentioned by Mr. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury before the Company. I see no reason why a town office should not be opened for booking of passengers and luggages.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the Motion.

The Hon. the **SPEAKER** I hope the hon. Member has leave of the House to withdraw his Motion.

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

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.52,678 under Grant No. 7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—A.—Charges for collection (total) at page 43 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.10, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,87,200 do stand reduced by Rs.10.

The object of my Motion is to urge upon Government to have some more control over the private bus owners.

Now-a-days the buses are most irregular and they do not at all keep to the time, specially the buses running from Tezpur to Gauhati. These bus owners get petrol with a view to ply buses from Tezpur to Gauhati. From Tezpur to Gauhati there is, however, a railway, but due to congestion and overcrowding, the general public cannot go by the railway. So they have to go by the buses. But the bus owners though get petrol for running their buses on this route use that petrol in carrying marriage parties. For that reason they cannot keep to the time and they are irregular.

Again they do not keep the buses in proper repair and in many cases it is found that the bus owners ply these buses with passengers and in the midway it is found that the buses break down and create immense trouble and difficulty to the public.

Again, regarding fares, they charge anything they like. They do not care whether the passengers are rich or poor ; they would charge as they like.

Then, Sir, overloading of passengers is the order of the day. Even if any police officer travels by the bus, they will overload with impunity. Neither the police officer nor they care in the least. So, my earnest request to Government is that they should have more control over the private bus owners.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Cut Motion moved :

“ That the provision of Rs. 52,678 under Grant No. 7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—A.—Charges for collection (total) at page 43 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 10, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,87,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 10.”

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would also like to say a few words regarding the great inconvenience and hardship which are being experienced by the public while availing bus services. In one bus of the Gauhati-Goalpara Association I saw more than a dozen passengers sitting on the roof of the bus, thus damaging the bedding and other luggages of the passengers by trampling them under their feet. I want to know is there no limit of seats in the buses. I think the hon. Mover is right when he says that Government should have more control over the bus owners. Of course the fault does not always directly lie with Government. These bus-owners compel extra passengers to get down before and after any Police Station on the road. On the last occasion—on the 2nd or 3rd February last—I was travelling by a bus which had over 15 passengers on the top. Near the Saigoan Police Station all the passengers were dropped and the bus stood there for inspection. The officer-in-charge deputed a constable on a bicycle to follow the bus. The bus then ran and the passengers were also running after the bus. The bus ran up to the Kukurmara bridge. Then one gentleman stopped the bus and assured the bus-driver that he would make things right. On that assurance the bus-driver picked up the passengers again.

With these few words, Sir, I support the Motion.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it would be incorrect to say that the Government have no control over the private bus-owners, or that Government have no hand in seeing that the rules and regulations promulgated by them are observed in operating these bus services. But, Sir, we are living in abnormal times. All public carriers, *i.e.*, passenger buses, are licenced by the Regional Transport Authorities and in the license, the number of passengers to be carried, the charges for carrying passengers and luggages, etc. are laid down. But a large number of buses had been withdrawn from the roads by requisitioning them for work on military roads, and since petrol rationing and the difficulty about getting spare parts has arisen, the number of buses that can ply or are plying on different roads has dwindled to such an extent that they can not cope with the volume of traffic. Therefore there have been cases not merely of overloading in the body of the bus but also of loading passengers on the roof. I have personally seen on a certain road what Mr. Marak has said so eloquently, *i.e.*, the roofs of the buses were filled with human beings, and not by luggage of passengers. In order to remedy these things, I came before the House the other day with a proposal for separating the functions of the Assam Transport and those of the Provincial Motor Transport Controller. The functions of this latter officer will be to see that lorries that were taken away from certain roads are replaced, that there is proper running of these vehicles ; in short, to see that the operation of these bus services is regularised. My hon. Friend Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed has said that the buses run at irregular intervals. That is quite correct, Sir ; they do not run to correct time, because the number of vehicles is so small now that these bus-owners can dictate terms. But Mr. Badaruddin Ahmed and other hon. Members who have suffered at the hands of these bus-owners have got the remedy in their own hands. If they have been overcharged they need only report the fact to the Regional Transport Autho-

rity, and the license of the particular bus will be cancelled. But if my hon. Friends would not take that trouble I cannot help them because there are as many as 70 roads on which buses ply including the main motor roads. It will be difficult for either any special staff of the Government or the police to see that buses that are even now plying on these roads do follow the rules laid down under the Indian Motor Vehicles Act. I will request my hon. Friends to see whether the proposed splitting up of the present arrangement of the Motor Transport Controller's functions improves the lot. I can assure them that it has been the intention of Government to reserve at least 100 new vehicles for the use of civilians both for transport of passengers as well as goods. If we can do this, some of the vehicles will be allocated according to the needs of the public and the volume of traffic on particular roads. In that case, these difficulties will be to a great extent removed. However, I can assure them that I shall ask the Regional Transport Authority and the Police Department to see that the few available buses are run according to the schedule and under the conditions laid down in their licenses.

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I hope the Hon. Member has leave of the House to withdraw the Motion.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There is another cut Motion in the name of Maulavi Abdur Rahman but I am afraid there is no time.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I am not willing to move it*, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.2,87,200 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 '12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act'."

The Question was adopted.

GRANT No. 8

(13.—OTHER TAXES AND DUTIES)

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. 6,400 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 "Other taxes and duties".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.6,400 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 'Other taxes and duties'."

There are three cut Motions Does Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury want to move his cut Motion †

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: No, Sir.

*6. Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN to move:

That the total provision of Rs.2,87,200 under Grant No.7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act at page 42 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs 2,87,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To raise a discussion about this Department regarding the condition of the Private Motor owners.)

†1. Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move:

That the provision of Rs.6,400 under Grant No.8, Major head—13.—Other Taxes and Duties, Minor head—A.—Charges for collection (total) at page 44 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.6,400 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To raise a discussion about failure of Government to implement any scheme for supply of cheap electricity from the natural resources of the Province for lighting and for industrial and agricultural improvement.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Does Mr. Trinkle move his Motion*?

Mr. P. TRINKLE : No, Sir.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.6,400 under Grant No.8, Major head—13.—Other Taxes and Duties at page 44 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.6,400 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not much use my appealing for more taxation for the Government of Assam if I do not take every opportunity of drawing their attention to the fact that at the present moment they are losing revenue by not taxing motor spirit brought into this Province. In the case of the Commercial Carrying Company, Sir, the motor spirit consumed by that company escapes taxation. In the case of large volume of lubricating oils which are being consumed by army vehicles in this Province no revenue is accruing to the Government of Assam. I ought, in fairness and frankness, to say that if my Motion is accepted, it will be a considerable injury to many of my constituents, namely, the tea industry, because they too are consuming lubricating oil inside this Province brought from outside which has not paid the sales tax. But the main deficiency comes from the fact that the army lubricating oil is escaping taxation. Now, in so far as the Government of Assam have been successful in securing from the Defence Department the two annas sales tax on army petrol consumed in the Province I would urge on the Government of Assam to make a similar effort with regard to lubricating oil. Members must know what additional revenue will come from a tax on the petrol consumed by the Commercial Carrying Company in the hill services to Shillong.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Cut Motion moved :

“That the total provision of Rs.6,400 under Grant No.8, Major head—13.—Other Taxes and Duties at page 44 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.6,400 do stand reduced by Rs 100.”

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Sir, as Mr. Whittaker has pointed out, Government is undoubtedly losing revenue because of the evasion of taxes under the Motor Spirit and Lubricating Taxation Act. There has been, Sir, a defect in the Act itself and because of that defect it has not been possible for us to tax the Commercial Carrying Company for the petrol they purchase outside and use in their fleet of cars. Government is taking step to remedy that defect and we propose to introduce, Sir, if possible, during this session a Bill to remedy that defect and we hope that when that Bill is passed no more evasion will be possible under this Act.

Besides this, Sir, we have appointed a staff of four Sub-Inspectors of Excise to check the collection of these taxes and prevent leakage and Government will try to see that the evasion of taxes does not take place in future.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : With this assurance, Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Question is :

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,400 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 ‘Other taxes and duties.’”

The Question was adopted.

*2. Mr. P. TRINKLE to move :

That the total provision of Rs.6,400 under Grant No.8, Major head—13.—Other Taxes and Duties at page 44 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.6,400 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To draw Government's attention to the fact that considerable quantities of motor spirit which have not paid tax are being consumed in the Province.)

GRANT No. 14

(30.—Ports and Pilotage.)

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,000 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 " 30.—Ports and Pilotage ".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Motion moved :

" That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,000 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 ' 30.—Ports and Pilotage '."

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Sir, I beg to submit that these cut Motions are not in order as they do not come under this head.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Which one ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : All these three *Motions Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Have the hon. Members got to say anything with regard to the admissibility of these Motions ?

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : Sir, to me it appears that the Motions are in order because under this head we are maintaining our launches.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : No, Sir, a similar Motion was tabled under the head ' General Administration ' but it was not discussed here.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : This grant relates only to the limited purpose of an expenditure in the nature of a subsidy of Rs. 2,000, to the Steamer Companies.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Sir, we are paying this sum to the Steamer Company for marking channels, supplying pilot lights and such other things.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : So, I think, these cut Motions are not in order. The Question is :

" That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,000 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 ' 30.—Ports and Pilotage '."

The Question was adopted.

*1. Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move :

That the provision of Rs. 2,000 under Grant No. 14, Major head—30.—Ports and Pilotage, Minor head—C.—Pilotage and Pilot Establishment at page 79 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To urge upon the Government about the necessity of providing a steam launch for the use of the Subdivisional Officer of Sunamganj for facility of work.)

*2. Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move :—

That the provision of Rs. 2,000 under Grant No. 14, Major head—30.—Ports and Pilotage, Minor head—C.—Pilotage and Pilot Establishment at page 79 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To raise a discussion about the necessity for making provision for creating scholarships for Assam boys for their training in the Mercantile Marine.)

*3. Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY to move :

That the provision of Rs. 2,000 under Grant No. 14, Major head—30.—Ports and Pilotage, Minor head—C.—Pilotage and Pilot Establishment at page 79 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To raise a discussion about the silting of navigable channels in the district of Sylhet.)

GRANT No. 16

(37.—Education—European and Anglo-Indian.)

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 49,000 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 "37.—Education (European and Anglo-Indian)."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There is no cut Motion tabled to this Demand. So I am putting the Question.

The Question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 49,000 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 '37.—Education (European and Anglo-Indian)'."

The Question was adopted.

GRANT No. 28

(55.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions, etc.)

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. 18,95,000 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 "55.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions, etc."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: As there is no cut Motion, I am putting the Question.

The Question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 18,95,000 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 '55.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions, etc.'"

The Question was adopted.

GRANT No. 6

(11.—Registration)

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,73,500 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 "11.—Registration."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,73,500 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 '11.—Registration'."

There are some cut Motions, but I am afraid time will not permit us to take up all. We may take up only one.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 69,565 under Grant No. 6, Major head—11.—Registration, Minor head—A.—District charges, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Special Sub-Registrars and Sub-Registrars at page 41 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 1,73,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

My intention is to urge upon Government the necessity of converting the Dera Sub-Registry office into a regular establishment. Some six years back this office was established; since then the office is rendering very useful work. The number of documents registered is very big. So in the fitness of things Government should take steps to make it a permanent establishment.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Cut Motion moved :

"That the provision of Rs. 69,565 under Grant No. 6, Major head—11.—Registration, Minor head—A.—District charges, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Special Sub-Registrars and Sub-Registrars at page 41 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 1,73,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 100."

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA : This particular cut Motion refers to a particular grievance in a certain locality. This Sub-Registry office is run on a commission basis and was established in 1938. We have got many other Sub-Registry offices which are run on commission basis. As regards Derai Sub-Registry office, the hon. Mover of this cut Motion submitted a representation to me in November last. In reply he has already been informed that the matter will be taken up later on after getting a proposal from the Inspector General of Registration, after the war. I have already stated that there are several Sub-Registry offices which are run on commission basis and this is certainly not the time to take up any proposal involving additional expenditure. As soon as the normal time comes, I shall certainly take into consideration the case of Derai Sub-Registry office in due course.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : Steps will be taken after the war, but we do not know when the war is going to end. In any case, as there is no time, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the Motion.

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

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSIAN CHA DHURY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 69,565 under Grant No. 6, Major head—11.—Registration, Minor head—A.—District charges, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total) at page 41 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 1,73,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

More than once it was brought to the notice of Government that in Mufassil areas 10 waiting sheds for female executants have been provided by the Government. This grievance remains the same up till now. By this cut Motion, I want to bring this fact again to the notice of the Government so that they may take early steps to remove this grievance. With these words, I commend my Motion to the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Cut Motion moved :

"That the provision of Rs. 69,565 under Grant No. 6, Major head—11.—Registration, Minor head—A.—District charges, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total) at page 41 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 1,73,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 100."

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Sir, I rise to support this Motion.

The difficulty is very great.

(Voices—We all support it).

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA : The hon. Mover of the Motion has said that he raised this question many times ; but I do not remember to have received any complaint from any quarter. After enquiry at the office I find that they have also not got any indication that there is any such grievance in the Mufassil.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : May I interrupt the Hon'ble Minister ? He says that he received no complaint ; but due to a complaint, a separate shed for women has been erected very recently at Habiganj.

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA : Any how, the matter will be looked into. Recently we have provided one waiting shed for women executants at Hailakandi. There may be some difficulty for women executants in some areas, but any how all the cases will be taken up when they come up.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSIAN CHAUDHURY : I do not press my Motion.

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

Khan Sahib Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN : I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 69,565 under Grant No. 6, Major head—11.—Registration, Minor head—A.—District charges, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total) at page 41

of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 10, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1,73,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 10.

There is only one Sub-Registry office in the district of Nowgong and documents presented for registration have so much multiplied that they are double or three times of what they were last year or year before last. The Sub-Registrar and the Special Sub-Registrar who are authorised to register documents can hardly cope with the heavy works of registration, with the result that parties presenting their documents for registration have to sit over for days together in the hope of getting an opportunity for the registration of their documents. In order to remove this grievance which has taken a very acute shape, I would urge upon the Government to set up two more Sub-Registry Offices, one at Hojai or Daboka and the other at Mairabari on commission basis. People have to come to the Nowgong Sub-Registry office in the headquarters from 30 to 50 miles off from all directions. This entails not only troubles and harassments but unnecessary expenses as well on the parties and no less strain on the particular Officer who has to register overwhelming number of documents every day.

With these few words, I draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to look into the matter at an early date and remove that grievance.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs. 69,565 under Grant No. 6, Major head—11.—Registration, Minor head—A.—District charges, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total) at page 41 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 10, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1.73,500 do stand reduced by Rs.10."

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: I have heard what has been said by the hon. Mover of the cut Motion. As the hon. Member has already submitted a representation to me two days back, I have already taken action on it. I have asked the Inspector General of Registration to give us a report, if it is possible, to have an additional Sub-Registry office for these areas.

Khan Sahib Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN: In view of the assurance, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I hope the hon. Member has got leave of the House to withdraw the Motion.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.1,73,500 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—'11—Registration'."

The Question was adopted.

GRANT No. 27

(54A—Famine Relief.)

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 50,000 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 "54A—Famine Relief"

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 50,000 be granted to the Hon'ble Minister 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 '54A—Famine Relief'."

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 50,000 under Grant No. 27, Major head—54A.—Famine Relief, Minor head—A—Famine Relief (total) at page 138 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.50,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Last year, Sir, we found that there was some scarcity in the Province of Assam and as there was no provision in the Budget there was some difficulty of the people

living in the areas affected by scarcity. This year, Sir, Government has only provided Rs. 50,000. This is quite inadequate. I, therefore, urge upon the Government to see their way to increase the amount, in-case there be any emergency.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: A Supplementary Demand can be brought if any necessity arises.

The Motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs. 50,000 under Grant No. 27, Major head—54A.—Famine Relief, Minor head—A—Famine Relief (total), at page 138 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 50,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100."

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: In this connection I want to speak a few words.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There will be no difficulty for Government to provide more money if necessity arises.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I will only urge the Hon'ble Minister to see if some money can be provided from this head to meet a very specific demand of an organisation which has undertaken a very serious and responsible work in their hands. The Assam Mohila Sanmilani has sent me a report which discloses certain very serious matter. From the report which they have sent to me I find, that from the Baniyachong village nearly 300 Hindu widows and divorced wives have sold out their honour for a morsel of food. In Sylhet and Gauhati towns some women have been discovered, who are destitutes of Bengal, to have taken recourse to degraded profession as the report says. I need not give out more details about this degeneration. I would request the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge to enquire into this matter. If as a result of the enquiry this is found to be true, I think, it is high time that Government should take immediate steps to render relief to these women, who have been forced to take recourse to selling their honour for a morsel of food. I urge the Government to set up certain relief centres so that these women may be provided with food free of charge.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Sir, I quite appreciate the intention of the hon. Mover of this Cut Motion, but I think, this Cut Motion can be disposed of in one sentence, namely, should necessity arises, it should not be difficult for Government to find as much money as may be necessary for this purpose (*hear, hear.*)

As regards the other point mooted by my hon. Friend, Maulavi Abdur Rahman, I will look into the matter and do the needful towards that direction.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Please do something.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: This is a very urgent thing, Sir.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Of course, Sir, this point has not been brought to the notice either of me or of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, during the debates on the Baniyachong affair.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I am told, Sir, that the representative of the Sanmilani also saw the Hon'ble Premier on a deputation on this matter and probably the Hon'ble Premier assured them to call for a report from the District Authority.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: If the Hon'ble Premier has assured of action being taken, that shall certainly be taken.

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

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.50,000 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—'54A.—Famine Relief'."

The question was adopted.

Grant No. 15

(36.—Scientific Departments)

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.5,600 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 "36.—Scientific Departments."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.5,600 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 '36.—Scientific Departments'."

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.700 under grant No. 15, Major head—36.—Scientific Departments, Minor head—A.—Donations to Scientific Societies (total), at page 79 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.5,600 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, I find that the Government of Assam maintain a Scientific Department, but it is a pity that no money has been spent for scientific research. From the Budget Speech, we find there is only one mention of the Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti. By this Cut Motion I want to urge upon the Government that they will make arrangements for scientific research at least in Government Colleges. With these words, Sir, I commend my Motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs.700 under Grant No. 15, Major head—36.—Scientific Departments, Minor head—A.—Donations to Scientific Societies (total) at page 79 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 5,600 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Sir, I appreciate the hon. Member's intention to have scientific researches in the colleges. This has been brought to my notice only recently by my hon. Friend Khan Bahadur Keramat Ali and I think I shall have to examine the possibility of utilising the laboratories of the two Government Colleges for scientific researches.

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

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.4,905 under grant No.15, Major head—36.—Scientific Departments, Minor head—B.—Museums (total), at page 79 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 5,600 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

By this Cut Motion, Sir, I submit that the Museum at Gauhati, has been styled as the Assam Provincial Museum, and Government is contributing a large sum of money to that Museum. But the people of Assam has got no say in the management of the institution. By this Cut Motion, Sir, I beg to submit that if actually funds are to be provided from provincial funds, at least representatives of this House should have some say in the matter. I suggest that some Members of the Surma Valley may be taken in the management of this Museum.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs.4,905 under grant No. 15, Major head—36.—Scientific Departments, Minor head—B.—Museums (total), at page 79 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 5,600 do stand reduced by Rs. 100."

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know from the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge why lesser amount has been sanctioned for the Museum?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Sir, my hon. Friend is not correct, when he says that in the management of the Museum there is no representative from the whole Province. In fact, from the Surma Valley, two members are nominated on the Board of management of the Museum and they are:

1. Mr. Raj Mohan Nath, and
2. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman.

The latter being a Member of this House.

As regards the point of my hon. Friend Srijut Chaudhuri, I will have to enquire into it, as I cannot say off-hand why the amount has been decreased.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The question is :

“That a sum not exceeding Rs.5,600 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—‘36.—Scientific Departments’.”

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 5

(10.—FORESTS)

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.14,49,200 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 “10.—Forests”.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

“That a sum not exceeding Rs.14,49,200 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 ‘10.—Forests’.”

There are 11 Cut Motions and I am afraid, all cannot be taken up. I think Cut Motion No. 9 is very comprehensive and it can be taken up.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: I beg to move that the provision of Rs.7,55,990 under Grant No. 5, Major head—10.—Forests, Minor head—B.—Establishment (total), at page 40 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.14,49,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

My main intention in moving this Motion is to draw the attention of the Hon. House to the very serious danger the Province will have to face in the near future, because of indiscriminate cutting down of trees in our forests. I am sorry my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker is not present here. Any way there are other European Friends here ; they will support me, Sir. About two years back they brought a Resolution before the Legislature asking the Government to bring some legislation to regulate jhoom cultivation. Cutting down of forest trees indiscriminately make floods frequent and the fate of the whole Province will be doomed unless we can stop this sort of cutting down of trees immediately. I am afraid the whole Province will have to face frequent floods in the near future and the whole topography of the Province will be changed very seriously. That was my main intention in bringing this Cut Motion, Sir. I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Forest Department to see if he can check the temptation of earning a lot of money by supplying timber at high rates to the Military and save our forests in the interest of the future generation of this Province :

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The motion moved :

“That the provision of Rs.7,55,990 under Grant No. 5, Major head—10.—Forests, Minor head—B.—Establishment (total), at page 40 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.14,49,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.”

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Motion. I shall touch a few points which have not been touched by my hon. Friend. Sir, my Friend has mentioned about deforestation. I shall try to bring the other side of the picture before the House. Sir, at page 39 of the Budget it will be found under

VII.—Organisation—Improvement and Extension of Forest. Sir, the Finance Minister, the other day, expressed his delight at the time of delivering the Budget Speech. The Hon'ble Finance Minister said that they were deriving a very large revenue from this Department. It is quite true, Sir, that if we go three years back or four years back, we shall see that the revenue under this head has been increased by fifty per cent. In place of twenty-four lakhs and odd it has come up to thirty-seven lakhs; and so far as the expenditure side is concerned, the hon. Members will find that the expenditure has also increased by fifty per cent. Sir, if there be any necessity of cutting the timbers for war purposes, whatever we all may say against it on the floor of this House will be of no use. But I think, I am entitled and nobody will challenge me if I say that it is the bounden duty of the Government to see that the capital of this Province is not wasted as in the present case. But, Sir, they have got no such desire and they are not doing their duty because if they had any honest desire and had they been dutiful, in that case, they should have provided a large sum for the extension of the forest. Instead of doing that, they are deriving revenue by selling the forest and they are not providing any amount to recoup the loss caused by deforestation. I say, no amount has been provided for the extension of the forest. Sir, even in normal years, from various quarters, the Government were requested to look to this point, that they should try to extend the forest but no heed was paid to those requests. Sir, as regards the after-effect, one point has been brought to the notice of this House by my hon. Friend, the Mover regarding flood. Now-a-days it is practically a common-sense affair. The Government on several occasions admitted this but in spite of that they are not doing the proper thing to check this devastating flood which is practically an annual occurrence in some part or other of the Province.

Sir, so far as cinchona is concerned, I shall touch only that part which is connected with this Department. It will be found that some money has been allotted and of course, Sir, the need of cinchona plantation cannot be denied by any sane man. The whole of India is now in want of quinine. The way we are proceeding, it will take not years but generations to find the desired effect. Sir, several committees were appointed and the recommendations of those committees and specially of Wilson Committee was brought before this House only two years back and some of the recommendations which were mentioned were appreciated by the then Minister-in-charge of this Department. Sir, only appreciation and pious wish will not serve the purpose. We have got more than four thousand acres of land which can be utilised for cinchona plantation. But what is our present average? It has taken over a decade as I have already admitted that the provision made this year is better than the previous year, but it is nothing in comparison to our need and demand. Sir, Government think, that it will not be possible for them to cultivate more than their present rate, then I would ask them to leave it with some other private enterprise. If Government connection, I would like to mention that some time ago I approached the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Forests, to enquire whether Government is willing to lease out land for cinchona cultivation to private persons or companies. Sir, in this reply which I received, I do not like to say. I hope the Hon'ble Minister will give the reply or will repeat what he said to me. Sir, it is well and good if Government can manage this. But if they cannot manage for various reasons as it was stated then, to me in that case, I would urge upon the Government to lease land to other persons who can at once take up the project in a proper way.

Sir, if we depend on the Forest or Agricultural Department, I am sure there is no chance of reaching our goal, so far as the cinchona plantation is concerned. I wonder what would have happened with the tea industry if the Agricultural Department or the Forest Department had been allowed to try their hands in it. I fancy, we would have heard from them that tea is a doubtful crop and the soil of Assam is not suitable for this plantation. Thanks to the foresight of the tea planters, both European

and Indian, they have been piloting the industry all by themselves. Sir, I have faith in the sincerity of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Forest Department. He is very sincere in his efforts. But he forgets one thing, I am sorry to mention, that all are not sincere like him. It is not he alone who can give the desired effect, but he shall have to take help from others who may not be as sincere as he is. Sir, with my final appeal, I shall resume my seat. Let Government take up the cinchona plantation in right earnest at once and complete the scheme in the course of a year or two so as to plant the entire available land otherwise they should lease out the land to be taken up by such private enterprisers who can complete the plantation in course of two or three years.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support what Mr. Dev and, so far as cinchona cultivation is concerned, what Mr. Mookerjee has said. Mr. Dev has introduced a very vital subject. He spoke of jhooming, a scourge which has been with us for many years and still continues. I simply do not understand why terracing as practised in the Naga Hills cannot be made compulsory in the other hills of Assam. Unless jhooming which, as Mr. Dev says, is responsible for floods, is not stopped, irreparable and everlasting damage by erosion will be done to the hills, and moreover the plains will be turned into arid wastes.

So far as cinchona cultivation is concerned, I support all that Mr. Mookerjee has said. If Government cannot do the job themselves, I do urge that they should hand it over to some enterprising commercial concern, but in any case, get the job done. In these days with a shortage of quinine, we simply must have cinchona, and in my view Government are simply toying with the matter.

Then, Sir, with regard to the extensions of forests which Mr. Mookerjee also touched upon, I do stress that as being a subject of very great importance, and I endorse what Mr. Mookerjee has said in that connection. We must remember that with the extraction of timber for war purposes, for the manufacture of charcoal for Gas Producer Plants, and as wood-fuel for Industry, forests are liable to be very rapidly deforested, and unless concomitant with the decimation of forest re-planting is done, we shall lose considerable areas of our forest resources.

One more point, Sir, and I am through. I want to draw the attention of Government to the suspension of elephant Kheda operations in the Province. There is a Cut Motion standing in my name on that subject. Though most districts are, to some extent, affected by the nuisance caused by elephants and their damage to some crops, Nowgong appears to be the principal sufferer. It is clearly unreasonable to expect cultivators to exert their best efforts and to take a full interest in the Grow More Food Campaign and produce bumper crops just to feed wild elephants. It is necessary for Government to institute large scale Kheda operations forthwith. Mela Shikar is perfectly useless. I have had occasion previously to call the attention of Government to the same subject, and I trust it will not be necessary for me to do it again.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Sir, I want to speak a few words only on cinchona cultivation. It is gratifying to note that as a result of discussions held on the floor of this House within the last two years, increased attention has been diverted in the matter. About 2,500 acres of land outside the Nongkhyllam Reserve Forest, near Nongpoh, have been protected from Jhooming and there the extension work is being carried out. I submit, Sir, that the rate of progress at which Government is proceeding is anything but satisfactory. The matter is so vital and the shortage of quinine and cinchona so acute that the pace of progress should be accelerated.

So long, cinchona cultivation has been tagged with Forest and all expenditure for cinchona experiments has been found from the Forest Budget. But the matter is so vast and important that it is necessary to provide for it under a separate Budget head, as has been done in Bengal.

I also stress the need of publicity and propaganda regarding our activities in the Forest Department. For the last two years no official report appears to have been published. One very interesting book "The Forest Research of Assam" was compiled by Mr. Jacob. I submit that this book should be translated into Bengali and Assamese.

About the research work of cinchona, Sir, I have another Cut Motion (No. 2).^{*} There I wanted to urge upon the Government the necessity of starting a Research Scheme for the cultivation of cinchona in Assam with special reference to (1) Soil studies, (2) Comparative experiments with different soil conservation measures, (3) Manurial trials, (4) Experiments in vegetative propagation, particularly grafting and (5) Selection of hybridisation work. In this connection, I beg to submit that it is essentially necessary that some sort of scholarships, may be provided and the students selected for these scholarships, be sent to Mungpoh in Bengal for necessary training for cinchona plantation and after proper training they may take up research work in the Province.

With these words, Sir, I support the Motion.

Babu BALARAM SIRCAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I like to bring to the notice of the Government some grievances of the timber traders of Surma Valley who incurred last year and are still victims to incur this year heavy loss by the Government controlled rates published in the *Assam Gazette* of the last 18th August, 1943. Sir, the rates for the logs (barked) under British area are fixed thus:—

					Rs.	a.	p.	
The hardwoods—Class A.	...	...	...	...	1	2	0	per c.ft.
Others	...	...	...	...	0	14	0	„ „
Softwoods	...	...	...	...	0	7	0	„ „

And the rates for the sawn timbers were fixed accordingly more or less three times that of the barked logs which will be found in the above mentioned Gazette. Sir, other orders were also passed by the Government to this effect that all British logs should be supplied, on requisition, to the Government stores, being converted by the cutters or traders or any purchasers into hutting timbers and by no means the British logs barked or sawn were allowed to go outside the Province except the logs of Hill Tippera District. Sir, it is obviously clear that to float a log it requires sufficient bamboos, canes and other materials for which there were no controlled rates and hence they became six to eight times the previous rates due to numerous military demands. Therefrom it was calculated that a trader was to spend nearly Rs. 2 per c.ft. of hardwoods—Class A. and others and nearly Re. 1 per c.ft. of softwoods which were sufficiently more than that of Government rates. Sir, with detailed descriptions a representation was sent to the Government, Conservator, Utilisation Officer, etc. in the last month of September by the President, Timber Traders' Association, Patharkandi, to increase the rates, but it was of no use.

Sir, in Longai and Juri valleys, the British logs come from one side while the Hill Tippera logs from the other side of the Juri and Longai rivers from the same places, from the same jungles, at the same cost and in many cases by the same traders also. But the Hill Tippera logs (barked) were sold to Bengal traders at the rates of about Rs. 3-8 to Rs. 4 per c.ft. of hardwoods—class A, Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 3 per c.ft. of others and Re. 1 to Rs. 1-4 per c.ft. of soft woods which are nearly three times that of British logs.

Sir, with these few words, I draw the attention of the Government to increase the rates of the British logs (barked and sawn) keeping equality with that of the Hill Tippera logs so that the traders may give supply to the Government demands without incurring any loss and also to allow them to despatch some logs outside the Province.

^{*} 2. Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 1,50,000 under Grant No. 5, Major head—10.—Forests, Minor head—A.—Conservancy and Works, Sub-head—1.—Timber and other produce removed from the forests by Government Agency (total) at page 39 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 14,49,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am at one with the Mover of this Cut Motion inasmuch as he stresses the imperative need for seeing that there must not be indiscriminate cutting of timbers. To exemplify myself I may say, for the information of the House, that when a proposal came over to me to cut down the scheme of the working plan, I did turn it down because I maintain the same policy as the hon. Mover of the Cut Motion has in view.

Our hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee has complained on several counts. In effect he complains that the Government have practically no policy about this Department. For his information (I see he is absent) I must disclose that the Government have been steadily pursuing a clear-cut progressive Forest policy in this Province. In 1873-74 the area of State forest was only 214 square miles, it rose to as much as 6,756 square miles, in 1942-43. That does not show a lack of heart or a lack of policy.

The figures speak more eloquently than any one could emphasise. I hope the hon. Member now sees it.

With a view to show that there has been indiscriminate cutting of timber, it has been stated further that the revenues have gone up by leaps and bounds. That may be so. If the Forest revenue has increased to a large extent, that does not reflect the increased cutting to that extent, because this also includes an important factor, namely precipitous rise in the price of timber. Although it cannot be gainsaid that war exigencies have necessitated cutting of more timber than perhaps ordinarily it might have been the case. But hon. Members are assured that great care is being taken to see that the cutting is *not indiscriminate*, and, our working plan and utilisation scheme have been going on in full swing, not only as a safeguard but also as a protective and regeneration measures.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I intervene? How much money has been provided in the Budget for the working plan?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: It is as much as it was thought necessary for the purpose (*loud laughter*). Mr. Mookerjee and his Friends laugh. But I can imagine they might hardly do so if they took the pains to scan the Forest Budget.

We have also to think about the post-war reconstruction schemes for which a sum of Rs. 25 lacs has been set apart from which Forests may be expected to have a lion's share.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Not even a rupee.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Sir, further plans and schemes are being called for and as soon as they will be ready, we shall again be coming forward with a Demand for Grant of the necessary fund by the vote of the House. But, I have great doubt, Sir, if the hon. interrupter has been able to grasp the Forest Budget which requires a bit more penetration.

My hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee has also drawn pointed attention of the Hon. House to our cinchona scheme. He thinks that the pace is very slow. But for his edification, I have to state that we have adopted a very bold scheme for the cultivation of cinchona in this Province. *We have already launched a scheme for working out as much as one hundred acres per year of plantation and we have combined both the Russian and the ordinary methods therein together.* It will cost about one lac annually and we expect that in course of about 30 months or so we shall be getting cinchona under the Russian method. As we have combined both the Russian and the ordinary methods together, we soon expect yield as the Russian method gives yield in about 30 months, although the ordinary method will give us yield in about 7 years.

My hon. Friend Mr. Blennerhassett has stressed on terraced cultivation. We think this is a valuable suggestion. Terraced cultivation is to be done mostly in places which are included and partially excluded areas and they come under the purview of His Excellency the Governor's jurisdiction. I had a discussion with His Excellency and I am glad His Excellency has assured me that he wishes to fall in line with the policy pursued in non-excluded areas.

One of the hon. Members from Sunamganj, Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury, has mentioned that already there are 2,500 acres under which *jhooming* has been prohibited. This is so and with a view to grow cinchona plants in those areas undisturbed by

jhooming. That indicates the policy we have been pursuing in our efforts in this respect. As I have already stated we have started a bold scheme, and one hundred acres to start with per year, cannot be a matter to be trifled with. This causes us a tremendous labour difficulty and other difficulties in those parts of the country where malaria curse is also very virulent.

The same hon. Member has suggested scientific research, etc. Scientific researches are carried on in other places, and we should benefit by their experience rather than hurry through a research station here. He has also urged that some students should be sent to Mungpoh for training. What I did was to send the Junior Conservator of Forests to Bengal to study on cinchona cultivation. He had also previous study in the matter, and after his recent study the Junior Conservator has submitted a comprehensive report, and those who are at work are trained accordingly. So far as our plantation work is concerned, we have not received any complaint on the score of inexperience. And if I feel that steps in the suggested direction are necessary, I shall try to implement my hon. Friend's wishes.

My hon. Friend Mr. Blennerhassett has brought one other matter to our notice, *viz.*, the necessity for starting Kheda operations in order to prevent depredations caused by elephants. We have already taken steps, though not in the shape of Kheda operations. We have increased the number of seats allotted to those areas in Mela Shikar, and I shall consider the feasibility of starting Kheda operations as soon as possible.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: On a point of information, Sir. In view of the fact that depredations are caused to the Aus crop, and Kheda operations cannot be undertaken before the cold weather, will Government consider the desirability of introducing Gajali Shikar?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: I have already taken this into my consideration. I have passed orders on a certain petition I received, increasing the seats and I have also asked the officers concerned to take note of the fact, and examine the necessity of their further increase.

One hon. Member—Mr. Balaram Sircar—has complained about the timber rates and the losses that are being incurred by the timber traders in the Surma Valley. I also received a representation from him the other day. I shall carefully consider his suggestions and pass necessary orders as early as possible.

Sir, Mr. Mookerjee has suggested that if Government are unable to grow cinchona to the extent the desires the Government should hand over the matter to a private concern. One private gentleman approached me, over and above Mr. Mookerjee himself. He had a discussion with me and he submitted a petition. I have held that as Government have in right earnest undertaken growing of cinchona plants on a large scale, this is not the time to consider his petition. I have therefore rejected the petition. At the conversation which Mr. Mookerjee had with me, I made that view point quite clear. I am sorry, Sir, I could not accede to his request. Need I tell the House, Sir, Government are no less anxious than Mr. Mookerjee or any body else to see that cinchona is available in this Province not only to the extent of the province's needs, but also for export to other provinces and countries.

I think, Sir, it has been quite clear to the hon. Members that the Government are not sitting idle over the matter. They are not only anxious to expedite the matter, but they would move with electrical speed, if that was possible.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: What does the hon. Mover propose to do?

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: So far as my point of indiscriminate cutting down of trees is concerned, the Hon'ble Minister has assured me that no such cutting is going on. With regard to the other points raised by other hon. Members, I do not think they have been satisfactorily met. So, I do not take the risk of withdrawing the Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, Order, the question is:

“That the provision of Rs. 7,55,990 under Grant No. 5, Major head—10.—Forests, Minor head—B.—Establishment (total) at page 40 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 14,49,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

The Assembly divided.

Ayes—18.

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|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Babu Akshay Kumar Das. | 10. Babu Nirendra Nath Dev. |
| 2. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. | 11. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya. |
| 3. Srijut Bepin Chandra Medhi. | 12. Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett. |
| 4. Babu Bipin Behari Das. | 13. Dr. G. G. Terrell. |
| 5. Babu Dakshina Ranjan Gupta Chaudhuri. | 14. Mr. A. Whittaker. |
| 6. Srijut Ghanashyam Das. | 15. Srijut Bideshi Pan Tanti. |
| 7. Babu Kamini Kumar Sen. | 16. Mr. Binode Kumar J. Sarwan. |
| 8. Babu Lalit Mohon Kar. | 17. Mr. Jobang D. Marak. |
| 9. Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri. | 18. Babu Sanat Kumar Ahir. |

Noes—34.

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| 1. The Hon'ble Mauiavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla. | 17. Maulavi Syed Abdur Rouf. |
| 2. The Hon'ble Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta. | 18. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahbab Chaudhury. |
| 3. The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali. | 19. Khan Sahib Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin. |
| 4. The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty. | 20. Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed. |
| 5. The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhuri. | 21. Khan Bahadur Dewan Eklimur Roza Chaudhury. |
| 6. The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia. | 22. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali. |
| 7. The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. | 23. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. |
| 8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman. | 24. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman. |
| 9. The Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn. | 25. Maulavi Naziruddin Ahmed. |
| 10. The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma. | 26. Maulavi Sheikh Osman Ali Sadagar. |
| 11. Srijut Joges Chandra Gohain. | 27. Mr. D. B. H. Moore. |
| 12. Babu Kalachand Roy. | 28. Mr. C. W. Morley. |
| 13. Rai Sahib Doulat Chandra Gohain. | 29. Mr. R. A. Palmer. |
| 14. Srijut Surendranath Buragohain. | 30. Mr. P. Trinkle. |
| 15. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury. | 31. Mr. Benjamin Ch. Momin. |
| 16. Maulavi Abdur Rahman. | 32. Srijut Bhairab Chandra Das. |
| | 33. Rev. L. Gatphoh. |
| | 34. Srijut Rabi Chandra Kachari. |

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,49,200 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—‘10.—Forests’.”

The question was adopted.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 A. M., on Saturday, the 18th March, 1944.

Shillong:

The 28th April 1944.

A. G. P. (L.A.) No.245—122+2—3-5-1944.

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