

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 11 A.M. on Saturday, the 11th March, 1944.

PRESENT

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

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given)

(Starred Questions Nos. 36-41 standing in the name of Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee were not put and answered as the Questioner was absent.)

Seizure of Guns in Sylhet

Babu LALIT MOHAN KAR asked :

*42. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether any guns have been seized by Government in the district of Sylhet under the Defence of India Rules ?
- (b) If so, what is the number ?
- (c) Whether any of the seized guns have been returned to the owners ?
- (d) Whether they propose to pay up to the owners the prices of the guns that have not yet been returned ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied.

42. (a)—Yes.

(b)—93.

(c)—2.

(d)—Yes.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know, Sir, why these guns have been seized ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The guns were seized at a time when the sabotage movement was in progress and it was Government's fear that these guns may be used in furtherance of that.

Occupation of Dak Bungalows by Military Personnel

Srijut SURENDRA NATH BURAGOHAIN asked :

*43. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether they are aware of the occupation by military personnel of the Dak Bungalows in Upper Assam ?
- (b) If so, whether they are taking any steps to make these available to the members of the public and of the Services ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

43. (a) and (b)—Military personnel may of course occupy rooms in Dak Bungalows under the rules like other travellers. The right is limited to occupation for 24 hours, after which the accommodation must be vacated, if required by another traveller. The hon. Member perhaps refers to Military occupation of the Dak Bungalow at Sibsagar for a considerable period to the exclusion of travellers. This, so far as Government are aware, was a solitary instance, and matters were set right as soon as it

came to their notice. Government have also urged on the military authorities the necessity of providing alternative accommodation for military personnel so as to keep Circuit Houses and Dak Bungalows available for the use of Government officers and the public.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, are Government aware that in some Dak Bungalows notices have already been posted prohibiting the military officers to occupy them? I have particularly seen it in Nowgong.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: This is in pursuance of Government circular, Sir.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, are Government prepared to accept that during the last one year no Member of the Legislature or any respectable person was allowed to occupy the Dak Bungalow at Sylhet because of the fact that it was always found filled up by military personnel?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I think, Sir, it is not a fact because during this one year, some Hon'ble Ministers of this Government had to occupy the Dak Bungalow and there were rooms for them.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, was it not because of a previous request in writing to the Deputy Commissioner that the Hon'ble Ministers were allowed to stay there and every other individual who went there was not allowed to stay there?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am not aware of the facts now stated by my hon. Friend, Sir.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Sir, do Government propose to reserve seats or rooms for the Members of the Legislature in the Dak Bungalows when they come on duty?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, there are rules for staying in the Dak Bungalows. If hon. Members who travel on duty write for reservation of seats, surely their seats will be reserved.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Sir, will Government take it from me that some of the hon. Members even after writing to the Deputy Commissioner were not allowed to occupy seats or rooms in the Dak Bungalow?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am sorry to hear that, Sir, but Government was not aware. If my hon. Friend will give me details, I will make enquiry about it.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Are Government prepared to issue a circular letter to all district authorities so that the hon. Members of the Legislature may be allowed to occupy Dak Bungalows, in preference to the Military, when they are on duty?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: My reply is clear, Sir, that military personnel may occupy rooms in Dak Bungalows under the rules like any other traveller but the right is limited to occupation for 24 hours after which the accommodation must be vacated, if required by a new traveller.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Are Government aware that in the Sylhet Dak Bungalow certain rooms are permanently reserved for military personnel and no individual of whatever status is allowed to occupy those?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir, Government are not aware but as I have already stated that I have already taken up the matter and issued instructions to every Dak Bungalow that military personnel should not be allowed to occupy the Dak Bungalows to the exclusion of other travellers.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: As a personal discomfort, I may say, Sir, that for the last one year, I was not given a seat in the Sylhet Dak Bungalow except on one or two occasions and on one occasion I had to take shelter in the Police Club.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member is stating facts.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: May I know, Sir, if my hon. Friend wrote either to the man in charge of the Dak Bungalow or to the Deputy Commissioner to reserve seat for him there?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: No, Sir, as a matter of fact, I did not write to the Deputy Commissioner or to any body but whenever I go there I find that it is occupied by the Military.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Sir, I personally wrote a letter to the Deputy Commissioner this time, but on my arrival I found that no seat was available and the *khansama* told me that no seat was reserved for me.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, I will request the Khan Sahib to write me a demi-official letter on the matter and I will enquire into it.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Sir, on a previous occasion when after attending a Session I was going back to Tura, I stayed in the Dak Bungalow at Gauhati and although in the book I wrote that I stayed there while on duty, the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Humphrey addressed me a letter asking me on what authority I claimed non-payment of the Dak Bungalow rent. I had to pay that amount later on, Sir, in order to avoid further unnecessary correspondence.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: My hon. Friend ought to be aware that in Dak Bungalows everyone even Government officials, though he occupies on duty, has got to pay seat rent.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Whenever the Inspection Room was not available, I had to occupy the other room of the Dak Bungalows, when I was Deputy Inspector of Schools, but I was not required to pay the Dak Bungalow room-rent.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Are Government aware that there has been a great inconvenience to the public on account of the conversion of the tea room at Nongpoh into a tea house for British Troops?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That may be, but there is another private tea house available to the public at the same place.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: That is not sufficient.

(Starred Question No. 44 standing in the name of Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee, was not put and answered as the Questioner was absent.)

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Electrical Development of the Province

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA asked:

32. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether they sent any representative to the Power Engineers' Conference held in Calcutta recently under the presidency of Mr. H. M. Mathews, Electrical Commissioner to the Government of India?

(b) If not, why not?

(c) Whether any proposal for electrical development of this Province was placed before the Conference?

(d) Whether the Conference made any recommendation for the electrical development of this Province after the War?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA replied:

32 (a)—No.

(b) This Government received no invitation and were not aware of the Conference.

(c)—Does not arise.

(d)—Government are not aware of the recommendations of the Conference, but expect to receive them.

Re Appointment of Health Officers

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA asked:

33. Will Government be pleased to state why Health Officers have lately been re-appointed when qualified new Urban applicants were available.

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN replied :

33.—A retired Urban Health Officer was re-employed purely on a temporary basis pending appointment of a suitable candidate from the community having more claim for the post.

†Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : How long will this state of things continue when candidates from other communities are still available ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN : Whenever candidates from under-represented communities are available they are always appointed.

†Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : What will be the case when such candidates will not be available ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN : We then consider the case of over-represented communities.

†Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : Will that matter be disposed of shortly ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN : I hope so, Sir.

Separate seat in the Legislature for *ex-tea* garden labourers

Mr. BINODE KUMAR J. SARWAN asked :

34. (a) Are Government aware that the *ex-tea* garden labourers who are backward minority people in the Province have been agitating for separate seats in the Legislature since Provincial Autonomy has been introduced ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state whether they have taken any steps to move the proper authorities in this behalf ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

34. (a)—Yes.

(b)—In the Budget Session of 1943, of the Assam Legislative Assembly, a Resolution was moved recommending separate seats in the Provincial Legislature for the *ex-tea* garden labourers and in pursuance of the undertaking given by them, this Government have forwarded a copy of the debates in the Chamber to the Central Government.

†Mr. BINODE KUMAR J. SARWAN: Has the Hon'ble Minister in-charge received a resolution of a meeting which the people of this community held at Moran ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Does that Question arise, Sir ?

†Mr. BINODE KUMAR J. SARWAN : With regard to (a), Sir, it arises.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : A resolution from the Association has been received by Government.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Will Government be pleased to state whether the resolution will travel beyond Delhi ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : We can go up to Delhi but what Delhi does, I cannot control.

Rate of rice and paddy purchased by Government Agents

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

35. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether sub-agents of main Government purchasing agents have been purchasing rice at the rate of Rs.13 to Rs.14 per maund in the Habiganj Subdivision ?

(b) Whether the main agents sold to Government at the rate of Rs. 19 to Rs.20 per maund in January, 1944 ?

(c) Whether the Food Committee, Habiganj passed a resolution asking Government to fix the maximum and minimum rate of paddy and rice for purchase and sale ?

(d) Whether the Habiganj Food Committee have informed Government that the hoarders have been getting the opportunity to hoard for the non-interference policy of Government ?

(e) Whether the said Committee have demanded that Government should make purchases through Co-operative Stores ?

(f) Whether the main purchasing agents of Government have stopped purchasing after the passing of the aforesaid resolution by the Habiganj Food Committee ?

(g) Whether their sub-agents are still purchasing rice at the rate of Rs. 12-8 to Rs. 13-4 per maund ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

35. (a)—Government have no information.

(b)—Government agents are to purchase well below the controlled rates but they alleged that they purchased at Rs. 19 or so in the second part of December, 1943.

(c)—Yes. Government have already notified the maximum prices of rice and paddy to be purchased in Notification No. SD.293/43 of 27th September, 1943.

(d)—Yes, but Government do not apprehend anything of the like neither is it understood what is meant by "non-interference policy of Government."

(e)—Yes. The suggestion is that purchase should be through peoples' Food Committees and not through the Co-operative Stores.

(f) & (g)—Government have no information.

Statement by the Hon'ble Speaker regarding grant of permission for absence from Assembly Meetings by five Members of Legislative Assembly.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I am now to ask the hon. Members to consider the question of granting permission for absence from meetings of the Legislative Assembly as applied for by the following hon. Members.

- (1) Mr. Gopinath Bardoloi, Member representing the Kamrup Sadr South General Constituency.
- (2) Mr. Arun Kumar Chanda, Member representing Silchar General Constituency.
- (3) Mr. Kameswar Das, Member representing the Barpeta North General Constituency.
- (4) Mr. Debeswar Sarmah, Member representing Jorhat North General Constituency.
- (5) Mr. Gauri Kanta Talukdar, Member representing Nalbari General Constituency.

The hon. Members are aware that the question I shall put before the House is to be voted upon without any debate. The circumstances under which these hon. Members were unable to attend the past three Sessions of the Assembly, and are still unable to attend the present Session, are well known to all the hon. Members of the House. These circumstances were, and are still, admittedly beyond their control. Mr. Bardoloi and Mr. Chanda were in detention under the Defence of India Rules since August, 1942, and though they are now released from prison on grounds of health, are still under restriction put on their movements and actions by Government under the Defence of India Rules, which are now deemed to be restrictions under the Restriction and Detention Ordinance No. III of 1944, and are such as have prevented them from attending this Session of the Assembly. Mr. Bardoloi's application is dated 29th February, 1944 and that of Mr. Chanda is dated 2nd March, 1944, and both are from Calcutta where they were permitted by Government to go for treatment of their ailments which led Government to release them from prison. But at the same time Government have required Mr. Bardoloi to reside within the limits of the Municipality of Gauhati and Mr. Chanda within the city of Calcutta for 4 months commencing from the 14th November, 1943. The other hon. Members—Messrs. Kameswar Das, Deveswar Sarma and Gaurikanta Talukdar are still in detention in prison and their detention also commenced since August, 1942, and are now deemed to be detained under the Restriction and Detention Ordinance No. III of 1944. Their applications are dated 6th March, 1944 and are from the Sylhet Jail, the present place of their detention. The applications of all these hon. Members that have been sent contain statements of the circumstances under which they could not attend the past three Sessions of the Assembly and are still unable to attend the present Session. The reading of these

letters would take a considerable time of the House. The requirement of Regulation I(d) of Appendix E to the Assembly Rules, which is a Regulation framed by me, is complied with, by what I have stated before the House. I, therefore, dispense with the formality of reading these letters to the House. Hon. Members will realise that this enforced absence of these five hon. Members and that of some other hon. Members is due to unhappy circumstances that have arisen out of the present political situation prevailing in the country aggravated by the situation of the war and that a question may arise whether they are really cases that are contemplated by Section 68 of the Government of India Act. In dealing with the question that I shall now place before the House that aspect of the matter is not, however, so much necessary to be considered now. But I deem it necessary to inform the House in this connection that in October last Messrs. Gauri Kanta Talukdar and Arun Kumar Chanda, who were detained at the time in the Sylhet Jail, submitted applications requesting me to make arrangements to enable them to attend the last November Session of the Assembly. The applications were accordingly forwarded to Government with the request to meet the wishes of the two hon. Members. In reply I was informed by Government in February last that after careful consideration in consultation with the Government of India, the Government of Assam had concluded that no arrangements could be made to enable Members of the Legislature who have been detained or are deemed to be detained under the Restriction and Detention Ordinance to attend the Sessions of the Legislature.

I may also inform the House that in reply to a separate communication made by the Assembly Department on 10th November, 1943 on a different matter, Government also informed in February last that printed debates or other communications from the offices of the Chambers cannot be delivered to those hon. Members of the Legislature who have been detained or deemed to be detained under the Restriction and Detention Ordinance. I may point out here that the expression "other communications from the offices of the Chambers" in Government reply may include not only the various communications relating to Assembly business but the summons also which the Secretary is bound to send under rule 2(1) (b) of the Assembly Rules to all hon. Members to attend the meetings of the Assembly. If my reading of the Government reply is correct the result would be that the Members who have been kept detained in jails will not be in a position to know whether the Assembly is functioning at all and if so, where and when its Sessions are being held. I have deemed it desirable to acquaint the hon. House with this peculiar position which has arisen and which will have to be considered by it in connection with the question of absence from the meetings of the Assembly of other hon. Members, who are and would be similarly circumstanced.

Having regard to all these facts, therefore, I put the question before the House in the following terms:—

The question is:—

"That this Assembly do permit the following hon. Members of the Assam Legislative Assembly to be absent from the meetings of the Assembly for the period from the 12th day of November 1942 until the date on which the March 1944 Session of the Assembly is prorogued; and also from all future meetings of the Assembly which may be held hereafter during the continuance of their detention in prison or the restriction imposed upon their movements, as the case may be, under the Restriction and Detention Ordinance III of 1944, for the reasons stated in their applications.

1. Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi, Member representing Kamrup Sadar South General Constituency.
2. Mr. Arun Kumar Chanda, Member representing Silchar General Constituency.
3. Srijut Kameswar Das, Member representing Barpeta North General Constituency.
4. Srijut Debeswar Sarmah, Member representing Jorhat North General Constituency.
5. Srijut Gaurikanta Talukdar, Member representing Nalbari General Constituency."

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: On a point of information, Sir. Do the hon. Members request permission to be absent from all Sessions, as I understand from the first part of your remark, or only from the Budget Session?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Having regard to the fact that from the circumstances as I have detailed before the House, it will not be possible for the hon. Members to attend any Session so long as they would be under detention, I have thought it necessary to take the vote of the House on the question I have just placed before the House. I have stated that there may be circumstances under which they may not even know when the Assembly Session is being held.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: I think that is possible, Sir, but it seems to me that it is not for the Assembly to improve upon the original requests submitted by these hon. Members. If they request for exemption from the Budget Session, I think that is the only issue before the Assembly.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: No, there is also requests that their absence may be excused which I have taken it to be not only for this Session but also for future Sessions.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, on a point of order, may I know whether it is necessary for the Hon'ble Chair to come before the House to obtain its approval, whether the hon. Members now in Jail should be granted permission or not? The hon. Members, who have sought for permission as I find, have been forced to remain absent under restriction orders of Government and that their absence is absolutely compulsory. I have seen the other day in the newspaper that the Hon'ble Speaker of the Orissa Legislative Assembly has ruled that when hon. Members remain absent from the House under certain legal compulsion, the Hon'ble Chair need not come before the House to take the verdict of the House to grant them such exemption.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member must have carefully listened to the statement I have made. The hon. Member would note that I have also raised that question. But when I have got these applications I have no other alternative than to place them before the House. With regard to other Members whose cases may come up hereafter to be considered by the House that question may arise. But so far as the present question is concerned, I have said that it is not so much necessary to consider that aspect of the matter now.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: That is not quite the answer of my question, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: No, this is in reply to Maulavi Abdur Rahman's question. I have answered the hon. Member before.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: My point is that if I am to exercise my vote, am I to exercise it on the requests of the Members concerned, *i.e.*, permission for the Budget Session or am I to exercise my vote on a much more comprehensive issue as framed by the Hon'ble the Speaker? That has put me in a difficult position, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It is within the discretion of the Chair having regard to the circumstances detailed to put the question to the House as to whether they should be permitted to be absent from all future meetings of the House. If the hon. Members want that these two parts of the question are to be put separately to the vote of the House, I am ready to do that.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: That is what I want, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am then putting the first part of the question. The question is:

"Permission be granted to those five hon. Members to be absent from the meetings of the Assembly from the period from 12th day of November 1942, until the date on which the March 1944 Session of the Assembly is prorogued for reasons stated in their applications."

The question was adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then I am putting the further question.

The question is:

"That permission be granted to those five hon. Members to be absent from all future meetings of the Assembly which may be held hereafter during the continuance of their detention in prison or the restriction imposed upon their movements, as the case may be, under the Restriction and Detention Ordinance No. III of 1944 for the reasons stated in their applications."

The question was adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: In due course the permission of the House will be forwarded to hon. Members concerned.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know, Sir, if any application has been received by you from certain Members of the Assembly for arrangements to be made to attend the Budget Session and if so, what action has been taken on it?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, Srijut Gauri Kanta Talukdar applied this time as well as last time to be present, but as I have intimated the Hon'ble House there is the order of the Government which has been communicated to me that no arrangement could be made to allow the Member to attend the sessions.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, is the House helpless in the matter?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, helpless as the circumstances stand. Government refused to grant permission and make arrangements for producing detained Members to attend Assembly Sessions.

Government Motion *re*: re-organisation of the Public Health Department.

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly recommends to Government that, with a view to improve the administration of the Public Health Department and to utilise the staff more fully and efficiently in the eight plains districts of the Province, the Department may be reorganised from the 1st April, 1944 effecting the following changes:—

(1) Duties and responsibilities of the Civil Surgeons and the Subdivisional Medical Officers in respect of Public Health administration to be withdrawn and placed (i) under the present Assistant Surgeons of the Public Health Department to be designated as the District Medical Officers of Health and (ii) under senior Sub-Assistant Surgeons to be designated as the Subdivisional Medical Officers of Health.

(2) The areas of jurisdiction of the present Assistant Directors of Public Health to be reduced by creating a third post of Assistant Director of Public Health and the jurisdiction of the eight plains districts be redistributed as follows:—

(a) Southern Public Health Division comprising the districts of Sylhet and Cachar with Headquarters at Sylhet.

(b) Western Public Health Division comprising the districts of Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang with Headquarters at Gauhati, and

(c) Eastern Public Health Division comprising the districts of Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur with Headquarters at Jorhat.

(3) The present cadres of Epidemic Assistants, Vaccination Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors to be abolished and two new cadres of Rural Health Inspectors and Assistant Rural Health Inspectors to be created in their place on the scales of pay of Rs.40-3/2-55-2-75 and Rs.30-3/2-45 respectively and the existing subordinate staff to be absorbed in these new cadres.

(4) A direct chain of responsibility from the Director of Public Health down to the most junior officers of the Department to be maintained in respect of all Public Health aspects and not through the Civil Surgeons and the Subdivisional Medical Officers as at present.

The object of the Motion, Sir, is very clearly explained in the first paragraph of the †Explanatory Note. Under the present arrangement a great deal of

*Speech not corrected

†EXPLANATORY NOTE

In order to keep pace with modern trend of advancement and to effect better control of epidemics and improve the general aspect of Public health in all its branches, the re-organisation of the Public Health Department in Assam is urgently necessary. At present the Civil Surgeons and the Subdivisional Medical Officers are the District Health Officers and the Subdivisional Medical Officers of Health. In view of their other duties and responsibilities as officers of the Medical Department which is their primary concern, they have very little time and energy left to give wholehearted attention to the multifarious Public Health Department works. Moreover the present position is anomalous as they are not responsible to the Director of Public Health (except in a limited sense) and still less so to the Assistant Directors of Public Health. Placing of control and responsibility of the Public health work under whole-time Public Health Department Officers who are better qualified for this work, will

delay occurs in sending orders especially when epidemics break out as these orders are to be communicated from the Director of Public Health here in Shillong whereas in the proposed scheme it has been proposed that orders will be communicated by the Assistant Directors of Public Health who will be the men on the spot. Also Sir, under present arrangements there is a big gap in the chain of responsibility from the Director of Public Health down to the juniormost officer, and the sooner these defects are removed the better the Department will work. In the Explanatory Note the complete cost of the scheme with every detail has also been shown. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Members to the actual financial commitment. Only Rs.11,816 will be required immediately and the ultimate cost will be Rs.23,216.

This is a very small sum for such an important scheme and if this Motion is accepted by the House, Sir, I shall come forward in due course with a Supplementary Demand.

improve the position and this will also relieve the Civil Surgeons and the Subdivisional Medical Officers to enable them to give more attention to their duties for the treatment of the sick. Consultations among officers of Public Health and Medical Department will however continue as required particularly during periods of epidemics so as to co-ordinate the work of both the departments. Under the scheme now envisaged the District Health Officers will work directly under the Assistant Director of Public Health of the Division; and the Subdivisional Medical Officers of Health will work under the direct orders of the District Health Officers. Other Sub-Assistant Surgeons who will be called Rural Health Officers and the Rural Health Inspectors and Assistant Rural Health Inspectors will work under the control of the District Health Officers or the Subdivisional Medical Officer of Health.

The present subordinate staff consists of 42 Epidemic Assistants, 9 Inspectors of Vaccination, and 30 Sub-Inspectors of Vaccination. Of these 81 Officers 61 have been considered suitable for special training which will make them fit to hold independent charge of thanas. Theoretical training is given on Cholera vaccine, Small-pox vaccine, water sample, common adulteration of foodstuff, disinfectants, Epidemiology and prevention of cholera, small-pox, *Kala-azar*, malaria and practical training in disinfection of houses, excreta, water supply, etc. There will thus be 61 such trained officers who will be posted one in each thana in independent charge to do all the Public Health work including propaganda, checking of vital statistics, etc., under the direction of the District or the Subdivisional Medical Officers of Health. They will form a separate cadre to be designated as Rural Health Inspectors. The other 20 Officers of the existing cadres are at present found not suitable to follow the special course of training and to hold independent charge of thanas. They will be posted in thana areas where there are Sub-Assistant Surgeons of the Public Health Department so that they can work under the direct supervision of a doctor. This class will be designated as Assistant Rural Health Inspectors. If however any of these 20 officers are found in future competent, their case for promotion to the higher cadre will receive due consideration.

Under the existing arrangement, deputation of staff to a particular district or area where an epidemic breaks out is done by the Director of Public Health from Shillong which causes some delay. In the proposed scheme, this will be done by the Assistant Director of Public Health of the Division concerned which will ensure speedy action. The Assistant Director of Public Health will move Director of Public Health only when the staff under him is inadequate to cope with the situation.

The expenditure in connection with the scheme will be for one more Assistant Director of Public Health, conversion of a post of Public Health Department clerk now working in Civil Surgeon's Office to that of a Head Clerk for the Office of the 3rd Assistant Director of Public Health and creation of the cadres of Rural Health Inspectors and Assistant Rural Health Inspectors. Details under each item are as below:—

	Immediate cost.	Ultimate cost.
1. One Assistant Director of Public Health (Efficiency Bar)—30—750	Rs. 300—25—600	
	Rs.	Rs.
Pay	3,600	6,348
Travelling allowance of Assistant Director of Public Health	1,000	1,000
Travelling allowance of establishment	100	100
Contingencies	1,500	600
	6,200	8,048
2. (a) Rural Health Inspectors (61) Rs. 40—3/2—55—2—75	32,436	42,456
(b) Assistant Rural Health Inspectors (20) Rs. 30—3/2—45	7,776	8,640
	40,212	51,096
3. Head Clerk for the Assistant Director of Public Health's Office, Jorhat (Rs. 55—5/2—90)	660	930
Grand Total	47,072	60,074

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That this Assembly recommends to Government that, with a view to improve the administration of the Public Health Department and to utilise the staff more fully and efficiently in the eight plains districts of the Province, the Department may be re-organised from the 1st April, 1944 effecting the following changes:—

(1) Duties and responsibilities of the Civil Surgeons and the Subdivisional Medical Officers in respect of Public Health administration to be withdrawn and placed (i) under the present Assistant Surgeons of the Public Health Department to be designated as the District Medical Officers of Health and (ii) under Senior Sub-Assistant Surgeons to be designated as the Subdivisional Medical Officers of Health.

(2) The areas of jurisdiction of the present Assistant Directors of Public Health to be reduced by creating a third post of Assistant Director of Public Health and the jurisdiction of the eight plains districts be redistributed as follows:—

(a) Southern Public Health Division comprising the districts of Sylhet and Cachar with headquarters at Sylhet.

(b) Western Public Health Division comprising the districts of Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang with headquarters at Gauhati, and

(c) Eastern Public Health Division comprising the districts of Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur with headquarters at Jorhat.

(3) The present cadres of Epidemic Assistants, Vaccination Inspectors and Substant Rural Health Inspectors to be abolished and two new cadres of Rural Health Inspectors and Assistant Rural Health Inspectors to be created in their place on the scales of pay of Rs.40—3/2—55—2—75 and Rs.30—3/2—45 respectively and the existing subordinate staff to be absorbed in these new cadres.

(4) A direct chain of responsibility from the Director of Public Health down to the most junior officers of the Department to be maintained in respect of all public health aspects and not through the Civil Surgeons and the Subdivisional Medical Officers as at present."

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHOUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we beg to accord our whole-hearted support to the Motion for re-organisation of the Public Health Department. Such a step was long overdue. We are grateful to the Hon'ble Minister in charge and also to the present Director of Public Health for this courageous move. It will no doubt place the Department on a sounder foundation and will remove the grievances of the public as well as the officers of the Department.

But as regards the Explanatory Note, I beg to offer one or two observations. In the Explanatory Note, appended to the Motion, it has been suggested that the vaccination staff under the Government will be placed after proper training in charge of the thanas under the designation of Rural Health Inspectors and Assistant Rural Health Inspectors. To me it appears that it will not be a correct procedure.

The hon. Members are aware that if malaria is called public enemy No. 1, small-pox is decidedly public enemy No. 2. To combat this scourge, the whole-hearted attention of the vaccination staff will be required. Moreover, there are as many as

The existing immediate cost and ultimate cost on account of the present staff of Epidemic Assistants, Vaccination Inspecting Staff and a Clerk of the Department is Rs. 35,256 and Rs. 36,858. The increase therefore in the immediate and ultimate cost if the scheme is given effect to will be only Rs. 11,816 and Rs. 23,216 respectively.

It is proposed ultimately to have only one cadre of Rural Health Inspectors. When the present staff of Assistant Rural Health Inspectors will ultimately retire or get promoted it is proposed to replace them from time to time by a corresponding increase in the cadre of Rural Health Inspectors as the latter class of officers will be much more useful being capable of holding independent charge of thanas. The ultimate cost for 81 posts of Rural Health Inspectors will be Rs.56,376 against Rs 51,096 for the two cadres proposed at present.

For an all round improvement of the Public Health Department and for prompt and efficient work the re-organisation is urgently necessary but as a schedule could not be prepared in time for provision to be made in the 1944-45 budget, the vote of the Assembly is being taken on the proposal to give effect to it from 1st April 1944. If the scheme is approved by the House, a supplementary demand will be asked for in due course.

425 vaccinators working under the Local Boards, Municipalities and the Development Boards. A cadre of 9 Inspectors and 30 Sub-Inspectors are scarcely sufficient to supervise the work of this huge number of vaccinators working in the rural areas. Should they be disturbed and brought to the general line of Public Health? This is a very vital matter and should engage the serious consideration of the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge.

Then again we have 121 Sub-Assistant Surgeons in the Department. Under the present scheme, about 20 senior officers will be required to act as the Subdivisional Medical Officers of Health. But what about the rest one hundred? Can they not conveniently be placed in charge of the thanas? This will mean confidence and efficiency in the working of the Department. The Epidemic Assistants have not sufficient qualification to justify an independent charge. Will it not be wise to place one Sub-Assistant Surgeon in charge of each thana and put one of these Epidemic Assistants at their disposal?

Sir, the Hon'ble Prime Minister, when he was pleased to visit Baniachong, was shocked to find in what insanitary condition the people lived. I submit, Sir, that Baniachong is not the only place where such conditions prevail. Most of the villages share the same fate. This unhygienic condition is mostly due to the latrine arrangements in the villages. So I suggest that there should be one extra Health Inspector trained in Bore-hole latrine work attached to each subdivision. The materials for Bore-hole latrines may be supplied by Government at a low price and boring apparatus lent free of cost. The villagers under the directions of the trained Inspectors will be able to do the boring themselves.

I would like to refer to another thing. Public Health is also one of the charges entrusted to the Local Boards. But from the scheme, we do not find any attempt for co-ordination of work between the Local Boards and the Public Health Department.

The last thing that I would mention is that of medicine. The Public Health dispensaries are already in short of medicine. The Local Boards have not been able to procure sufficient amount of the quinine and vaccine from the authorised dealers. It is no use to organise the Department without sufficient provision for medicine. There should be a full-fledged Public Health Dispensary at every unit.

With these words, Sir, I support the Motion.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I congratulate the Hon'ble Medical Minister for having brought this very urgent Motion before the House and I think she need not have been so apologetic about the sum of money that is going to be spent for this purpose. For, Sir, in consideration of what the people are suffering for want of proper medical help, even a much bigger sum than she is going to provide for, would have been very much justified for having this Department self-contained. Only to one or two points I want to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister of Medical. My first point is about the qualification of the Health Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors. The Department, it seems, thinks that 61 of these officers may be taken in for further training. So far as my information goes, Sir, I do not think all of them are even Matriculates. I think Matriculation ought to be the minimum standard for selecting candidates for further training. Those who do not possess that much qualification may be still kept as Assistant Health Inspectors. They may qualify themselves, if they can, in future.

The other point is, Sir, it seems only one Head Clerk for the Assistant Director of Public Health is being provided for. The District Medical Officers, I think, will also have much to do of correspondence and clerical work and unless they are also assisted by clerical staff, I am afraid, their supervision work and their executive work also may suffer to a great extent. As we know, at present, Sir, doctors, for the most of their time, engage themselves in clerical and other correspondence work, which period of time could well be spent in medical work. These District Officers will have to help the whole staff of Subdivisional Medical Officers and Health Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors and they will also have to tour the whole of the District and as such they will have a lot of work to do in that line. Therefore, the Medical Officers ought to be assisted, as far as clerical and such other works are concerned, by appointing clerical staff. With these words, I support the Motion and I congratulate again the Hon'ble Medical Minister for having brought this urgent Motion.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAJN: Sir, the Science of Public Health has made rapid strides all over the world within recent years and it is desirable that we ought to give more importance to the branch of Public Health than to the one of medicine. In Soviet Russia that process has been carried to such an extent as to make the curative side of medicine a minor branch in the administration of Public Health. In India, Sir, other Provinces have made more progress than we have been able to do in this Province. For instance, Sir, there are certain things necessary for us to which I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister and the Government. We do not find in this Province any arrangements in the Department of Public Health for these things. There is no maternity and child-welfare work undertaken by this Department. There is no provision for medical inspection and treatment of Lower Primary school boys and girls and there is nothing about the nutritional side of the people and for their improvement. And the most important of all is that there is conspicuous absence of any attempt for the betterment of rural health and sanitation. All these things, Sir, are of very great importance for the health of the country-side. I hope, Government will give these matters the attention that they deserve. The Motion that has been sponsored by the Hon'ble Minister is certainly a right step taken by Government. This is well known to the House that this Department gets its doctors trained specially in the subject of Public Health at great cost. In spite of that, these doctors when they are placed in the Districts, they are placed under the Civil Surgeons who have no special training and this naturally creates complication and also results in a deterioration of the administration of Public Health. This Motion seeks to do away with that state of things by placing that specially trained man under another specially trained officer over him. I therefore welcome the Motion that has been brought by the Hon'ble Medical Minister. With these observations, I support the Motion and I hope the Government will please look into the questions that I have raised so that they may do something in those directions that I have suggested.

Dr. C. G. TERRELL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it gives me great pleasure to say a few words in support of this Motion introduced by the Hon'ble Minister for Health for the re-organisation of the Public Health Department, and to congratulate Government on their enterprise in formulating this proposed amended legislation—even if it is somewhat overdue.

It is gratifying to note that many of the suggestions incorporated in the re-organisation have been advocated from these benches on the occasions of debates on public health matters in the past.

There is enormous scope for a splendid programme of public health improvement in the hands of such a Department as now visualised, provided it is inspired with vitality and a proper conception of its function and the real needs that exist.

The proposed organisation should be a beginning only, and after reasonable experience of its working, it could undoubtedly be expanded with great advantage. Although unwilling to put forward any criticism of a well-thought-out scheme, it might not be out of place to record my opinion that the areas of jurisdiction of the present Assistant Directors of Public Health might, with advantage, be still further reduced by the creation of more posts of Assistant Directors. If this were accepted, I would suggest that the two districts of Cachar (with the Lushai Hills) and Sylhet should have their own Assistant Director, instead of there being only one combined for the Southern Public Health Division, and this would ensure more efficiency and smoother working.

The same principle also applies to the Upper Valley where at least one more post should be allocated. The additional expenditure required would be more than counterbalanced by the inevitable increased efficiency.

It is to be hoped that the newly organised Public Health Department will lose no time in inaugurating a campaign for improved sanitation throughout the Province, and it is certain that, more so than at any other time in the past, this would be welcomed by the general public as a whole. The urgency for this cannot be over-emphasized, and a start should be made with the larger towns, which as a whole, are so notoriously lacking in the essentials of modern sanitation.

In view of the present very serious outbreak of small-pox in many districts of the Province, it seems opportune to record the hope that the urgent question of provision of isolation hospital arrangements at central points will have the earliest consideration of the new organisation instead of being entirely shelved, as it has been in the past.

From a study of the Explanatory Note attached to the re-organisation proposals it occurs to me that the transition mechanism from the old regime to the new has been rather lightly touched upon by the Hon'ble Minister. In order to get the best value from the old system and the minimum of delay and inefficiency in inaugurating the new, it is suggested that well-thought-out machinery for the transfer should be devised—also may I be permitted to emphasize the great importance of ensuring that this also provides security to eliminate the future considerable risk of overlapping between the Medical and Public Health Departments. There must of course be full co-operation between the two and it will not be easy for this to be achieved and also to avoid overlapping, which would be definitely detrimental to success.

Sir, I call to mind on the occasion of a previous Assembly Session being privileged to bring to the notice of Members of this House grave dangers associated with food adulteration and contamination, and the imperfections which exist for the proper working of the Pure Food Act. I stated that the value of the Act is largely annulled owing to the difficulties which exist in the application of its provisions—these include the complicated processes laid down for its function and the fact that the responsibility for this is thrown upon local authorities instead of its being shouldered by the Public Health Department and administered by its officers, who should be vested with executive powers.

May I ask that in her reply the Hon'ble Minister be good enough to refer to this matter and inform the House to what extent the administration of the Pure Food Act will be effected by the proposed revised legislation?

It would also be appreciated if the Hon'ble Minister would in her reply give Members a little more information concerning the important matter of any revised system for vital statistics, to which brief reference is made in the Explanatory Note.

In conclusion, I would like once more to re-affirm our fullest support for this proposed re-organisation scheme and it is my firm belief that it will also have the wholehearted approval of the medical profession.

With good will and co-operation of all, the new scheme should see the beginning of a new era of improved health conditions in the Province of Assam (*applause*).

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY:
Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Motion. The re-organisation of the Public Health Department has long been overdue. We were trying for many days to separate the Public Health from the Medical Department. I am glad that the Hon'ble Minister for Medical and Public Health has at last brought this Motion to re-organise the Department. Though the scheme brought before the House is a modest one, I welcome this as a beginning and I hope in years to come the activities of the Public Health Department will be expanded and the present terrible mortality from preventable diseases will be reduced. It is necessary that a competent, well-qualified and decently paid staff armed with proper equipments to discharge their responsible duties should be appointed throughout the country in order to make the Department a really efficient one. Government must have noticed, I hope, that there is great activity now both in America and England regarding social security. In a recent public address, the Vice-President of the United States, Mr. A. Wallace, made it clear that health should come first if the civilisation was to grow and go forward. Similarly in England the Government was engaged in enforcing the Beveridge Report.

In this connection I must mention that adulteration of food-stuffs is a standing menace to the health of the people. Active steps must be taken to prevent the adulteration. In this Assembly, hon. Dr. Ferrell told us in a previous session to what extent mustard oil which is one of the essential food-stuffs is adulterated. Then again, Sir, I remember that one of our hon. Friends in the European Group spoke at length on the necessity of looking after the sanitation of market places near air-fields. I would go further and say that all market places throughout the whole Province should be controlled. In order to give a proper clean up to the countryside as well

as to the urban areas, efforts should be made to arouse health consciousness among the people. This can be properly done by means of propaganda and health exhibition which should be organised with the assistance of the Publicity Department.

I congratulate the Government again for bringing this Motion and I hope that the Public Health Doctors freed from the present dual control will now be able to give a better account of their work.

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

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hope my hon. Friend on the left, Mr. Whittaker and other hon. Members of the House will excuse me if I beat my own drum a little bit. Now-a-days if you do not beat your drum yourself, no one will beat for you. Thirteen years ago, as a member of the Retrenchment Committee in 1931, I put up this very identical proposal before the Committee.

Government of the day did not accept that proposal. Even during my brief sojourns in the Cabinet I had made some efforts in this direction but had failed. The Congress Ministry also did not touch this matter. And it was left to the present Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Medical and Public Health to remove this great grievance of the public in the matter. There is no doubt that this re-organisation will intensify the public health work in the Province and will also remove the most serious anomaly which had existed in the previous regime, *viz.*, the Assistant Surgeon in the Public Health Department was a subordinate of the Civil Surgeon although he had to work with the Assistant Director of Public Health. He was not bound to carry out the orders of the Director of Public Health, but had to take his orders from the Civil Surgeon. The Civil Surgeon was in his turn not under the Director of Public Health. So, there was a serious anomaly and the work had actually suffered. Then there was duplication of work. For instance, the vaccination papers had to be verified and checked once by the Assistant Surgeon of Public Health and again by the Assistant Surgeon of the Subdivision. They were again checked by the Civil Surgeon, and then by the Assistant Director of Public Health, and finally by the Director of Public Health. Now, that anomaly and that dislocation of work will be removed, with the result that it will be possible to devote whole-hearted attention to the public health work.

But, Sir, there is one difficulty in the way and unless that difficulty is removed Public Health work will not be a total success. For instance, if there is no arrangement for good drinking water it is no use having a reorganised Public Health Department; at the time of epidemics if you do not get good water for saline injection or if you cannot ensure supply of good drinking water and insist on the people of the area to take it then it is useless merely to give a man medicine and try to treat him. It is difficult to treat and cure a case of cholera, but it is easier to prevent the occurrence of this disease. So, unless her brother Minister, I mean the Minister-in-charge of Local Self-Government, helps the Minister-in-charge of Medical and Public Health in this matter, the re-organisation scheme may not prove as successful as it is otherwise bound to be.

Sir, I welcome this as a piece of noble act done for the sake of humanity, and this step taken by the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Public Health, which she has been able to take, on account of the undoubted influence she exercises in the Cabinet, will be appreciated by the people of this Province with gratitude and, if I may add, affection.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, better late than never, and with this view let us extend our co-operation and support to the re-organisation scheme which has been presented before the House by the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Public Health. Sir, since after the devastating malaria which broke out at Baniachong last year I have got practical experience as to how this dual control of the Public Health work has been affecting the people of this Province. There had been a long clamour in this House for the separation of the Medical and Public Health Departments, and at last we find that wisdom has dawned in our Minister-in-charge to have it done. But, from the criticisms of the previous speakers I can gather that this is not all that they expected. The scheme ought to have been more extensive and a good beginning should have been made. It is said that a thing well begun is half done, and a better beginning should have been made in this case. It is

stated in the Explanatory Note that "under the scheme now envisaged, the District Health Officers will work directly under the Assistant Director of Public Health of the Division ; and the Subdivisional Medical Officers of Health will work under the direct orders of the District Health Officers. Other Sub-Assistant Surgeons who will be called Rural Health Officers and the Rural Health Inspectors and Assistant Rural Health Inspectors will work under the control of the District Health Officers or the Subdivisional Medical Officer of health". Now, according to the present scheme the Rural Health Inspectors, whose number will be about 61, will receive a pay of Rs.40 only, and it is proposed that each of these Inspectors will be in charge of one thana. A thana in my Subdivision ordinarily comprises a population of 90,000 people. Can any one imagine that these Inspectors with an initial pay of Rs.40 only in these hard days will put their whole-heart in the work ? If we want efficient work from our employees let us give them adequate salary, particularly in these days of high cost of living.

Then, what should be the duties of these people ? We do not find that these people will be given definite instructions to carry on certain duties and responsibilities. They are also not expert hands in public health. My Friend Dewan Sahib has stressed certain points. He has said that the bazar areas in each Subdivision are very insanitary places from where most of the epidemics start. Drastic measures should be taken to improve the sanitation of these areas.

There is also another dual system of administration. The Public Health Department will at once say that this primarily concerns the Local Board whereas Local Board will say that there is no sufficient fund to make any reasonable improvement on bazar areas. That is we want that there should be provision for this. There is no denying the fact that there are big bazars in the rural areas.

Then again, some of the hon. Members have said that the enemy No.1 is malaria ; but I say, during the present day, small-pox has become the enemy No.1. Wherever we go we find that small-pox has spread and a number of people have died. In the last week's Gazette it has been stated that in Habiganj there were 5 attacks and 4 deaths of pox but I know that in a family of my relation 75 per cent. of the people have died. I am surprised to see how these figures are collected by the Department and how these reports are published in the Gazette. I would like to warn the Department that they should be more careful about the small-pox epidemic. Now-a-days it is ravaging the countryside. It is noticed in every week's Gazette that some of the areas of the countryside are declared small-pox affected areas. In this respect I find that the Department has failed to cope with its duties.

Sir, the most dangerous enemies of the people now are malaria and pox. The Department should see that these two enemies are wiped out from the Province. With these observations, I beg to resume my seat giving the Khan Bahadur his chance to make his own observation.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, sitting here as I do behind the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge who has been pleased to bring up this Motion, I cannot but support the Motion (*Laughter*). I am however afraid that the cost provided is too inadequate. I am inclined to think that the Hon'ble Minister has come with a very modest demand because she was perhaps afraid, lest Finance would let her down if she would come with all that she had wanted.

I agree with Dr. Terrell when he said that in the Assam Valley there should be at least 3 Assistant Directors. The hon. Members know that there are six Districts in the Assam Valley and some of them are separated by a big river. On several occasions hon. Mr. Dawson has placed before the House the difficulties of Tezpur in so far as transport is concerned. I, therefore, suggest that instead of having two Assistant Directors, provision is made for three Assistant Directors. It has also been pointed out by my hon. Friend Mr. Nirendra Nath Dev that Rural Health Inspectors should be qualified men. This is so ; but I doubt whether Inspectors with any qualification worth the name will be available for a pay of Rs. 40 per mensem, at least in these hard days. I, therefore, hope that the Hon'ble Minister will please see her way to have more money so that the Department may be made as efficient as possible. I think, after what the Hon'ble Finance Minister has heard,—I am sorry

he is not here—from all sides of this House, he will think thrice before he says 'no' to any demand with which the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Public Health Department may approach him for improving the present scheme.

Mr. Marak is disappointed because his Garo Hills has not been included in this scheme. I do not really know why the Khasi Hills and the Garo Hills have been excluded.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Also Lushai Hills has been excluded. Similar is the case with the North Cachar and Mikir Hills.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: The North Cachar and Mikir Hills also should have been included in the scheme, if there is no objection; and I cannot think, there will be objection from any quarters, if this scheme is also extended to the partially excluded areas.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if so many hon. Members have said so many words to bless this new scheme of the Hon'ble Minister, I think, I have got very little to add. I will only bring one or two points to the consideration of the Hon'ble Minister. Sir, we visualise that this Department will play a major part in the building of the nation. Indeed the modesty of her budgetary demand has been outraging to many persons with advanced ideas. I do realise that this Department should command a Budget no less than that of Education or Com- to give direction for what should be a balanced diet for an ordinary man, for our agriculturists and industrial labour.

There was another question raised by Dr. Terrell about the administration of the Pure Food Act. In these days when adulteration is going so strong, I think, the Hon'ble Minister would do well to look where the snags are in the administration of that Act. It seems, Health Officers look after the question of pure food in towns but in villages there is no body to look after this question and even in towns the Health Officers cannot take the responsibility on their own shoulder for launching prosecution against the violation of the provisions of that Act. He is to go through the Chairman of the Municipal Board. Unless the Health Officers are given power to lodge complaint directly for offences under this Act, I am afraid, there would be delay and it would leave room for various manipulations. Sir, with a view to arming the officers of the Public Health Department with these powers, it is necessary that some modification should be made in the provisions of the Assam Pure Food Act. Again it is also apprehended by some of the hon. Members that there may be chances of overlapping of the activities between Medical and Public Health. So the demarcation between Public Health and Medical should also be clearly and definitely made. The Public Health Department deals with question of the public, whereas Medical deals with ailments of individuals or otherwise. Medical comes in where Public Health deals with ailments of lines, I think, the demarcation between the two Departments may be made. Of course, there are certain specific diseases which may be tackled by the Public Health Department in so far as those diseases are considered as social danger. In this connection, I may refer to one disease which, I am afraid, is not being given due attention which it deserves. I mean, the venereal disease. This disease takes a heavier toll in manpower and eludes public notice.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Is it the duty of the Public Health Department?

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: My submission is this, that this disease should also be brought under the Public Health Department.

All of us know and perhaps the Hon'ble Minister of Public Health knows more than any of us, how during a war this disease spreads in war affected countries and especially in this Province of Assam it is spreading its invisible tentacles and people are shy to take recourse to medical treatment, perhaps, due to ignorance and also partly due to poverty. In Bengal free clinics for the treatment of venereal disease have been started. In our countryside the illiterate and poorer section of the people are losing in vitality on account of the surreptitious attack of this fell disease. Therefore, if possible, a survey may be made and all steps be taken to save our future generation from the clutches of this disease.

I would conclude by saying a word about the pay and prospects of the employees of the Public Health Department. Sir, the Public Health Department employees take an additional course of training besides their medical education but their prospects are not better, even worse than the Medical Department. For example, once a Health Officer is always a Health Officer. He has no chance of private practice, nor of a lift to higher position although he has got special training in addition to his medical qualification. In view of this disadvantage that he has to suffer in comparison with the employees of the Medical Department some compensatory allowance may be given to build up a tradition for the service.

With these words, Sir, I congratulate the Hon'ble Minister for having brought the Motion before the House.

Babu BIPIN BEHARI DAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Public Health Department is a nation-building Department, there is no doubt about it. I congratulate the Hon'ble Minister for bringing such a Motion before the House, but in this connection, I would like to say one thing which has not been mentioned by any of the hon. Members who have already said much about this Department. It is this. Water-hyacinth which is found everywhere in the Province of Assam, is highly injurious to the health of the people. If any real good is to be done in this Department, a well-thought-out plan should be drawn up by this Department, for the eradication of water-hyacinth just like the Opium Prohibition Campaign, which was taken up in this Province. Otherwise, the very intention of the Department will be frustrated. In many places where drinking water was formerly available, the water is now full of water-hyacinth. Unless it is removed, good drinking water is not possible to be obtained for poor villagers. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to take up this matter in right earnest, as it will do real good to the people. Then, in this connection, I think that it would not be out of place to say that there is a crying need for a medical school at Sylhet. If the Hon'ble Minister will come forward with a.....

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: On a point of information. Will it be a Public Health Medical School?

Babu BIPIN BEHARI DAS: The Hon'ble Minister is in charge of both the Departments, Medical and Public Health and so I appeal to her to take immediate steps to start a Medical School at Sylhet according to the assurance given by the Government long ago.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: We are to discuss matter of Public Health now not Medical.

Babu BIPIN BEHARI DAS: With these words I support the Motion.

The Hon'ble MISS MAVIS DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am glad to find that the scheme for re-organisation of the Public Health Department is so popular and is supported by all sections of the House. There has been a little confusion with regard to the Health Inspectors and the Assistant Rural Health Inspectors. These are not newly created posts but they are an amalgamation of the 41 Epidemic assistants, 9 Vaccination inspectors and 30 Sub-Inspectors of Vaccination. We do not propose to keep the qualification so low that the Rural Health Inspectors will not be fit for the duties which they are expected to carry out. If you will notice at the top of page 3 of the Explanatory Note, Sir, you will find that we mention here that we propose ultimately to have only one cadre of Rural Health Inspectors and these should be of such quality that they will be able to take up their duties efficiently and actively. I have especially omitted putting in an educational qualification as suggested by Mr. Deb because I do think that examinations are no real test of knowledge. A Class IX boy can be just as good as a passed-out Matriculate and so why should he be debarred from getting one of the posts of Rural Health Inspectors? Every one will get opportunities during their training to acquire the necessary qualification and if they are found fit they shall be employed.

Several Members have made several suggestions which I hope will be incorporated in the new working of the Public Health Department. Special mention has been made

of the working of the Assam Pure Food Act. We propose that these Rural Health Inspectors will be given the power to seize the adulterated articles of food and drink under the Assam Pure Food Act. I also hope that in Public Health work, eradication of water-hyacinth will find a place. It is not possible to completely sever the Public Health from the Medical Department. It is true that Public Health deal with the preventive side whereas Medical Department deals with the curative side, but in times of epidemics we shall have to consult officers of the Medical Department so as to combat such epidemic. Mention was also made of providing good drinking water to the different villages. I am afraid, Sir, that there are too many Baniachongs in Assam and our people have not yet been educated in sanitary habits. In my last visit to Baniachong I saw with my own eyes that people used the dirty, stagnant water for drinking, washing, etc., although there was a tube-well quite close by. I would request the hon. Members of this House to help in educating the people in hygienic habits. It is only in that way that we can improve the health of our public.

I thank hon. Members for their kind support of this Motion and I hope, Sir, that with the reorganisation of the Public Health Department its works will be intensified.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am putting the Motion as a question.

The question is:

“That this Assembly recommends to Government that, with a view to improve the administration of the Public Health Department and to utilise the staff more fully and efficiently in the eight plains Districts of the Province, the Department may be reorganised from the 1st April, 1944 effecting the following changes:—

- (1) Duties and responsibilities of the Civil Surgeons and the Sub-Divisional Medical Officers in respect of Public Health administration to be withdrawn and placed (i) under the present Assistant Surgeons of the Public Health Department to be designated as the District Medical Officers of Health and (ii) under Senior Sub-Assistant Surgeons to be designated as the Sub-Divisional Medical Officers of Health.
- (2) The areas of jurisdiction of the present Assistant Directors of Public Health to be reduced by creating a third post of Assistant Director of Public Health and the jurisdiction of the eight plains Districts be redistributed as follows:—
 - (a) Southern Public Health Division comprising the Districts of Sylhet and Cachar with Headquarters at Sylhet,
 - (b) Western Public Health Division comprising the Districts of Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang with Headquarters at Gauhati, and
 - (c) Eastern Public Health Division comprising the Districts of Nowgong, Sib-sagar and Lakhimpur with Headquarters at Jorhat.
- (3) The present cadres of Epidemic Assistant, Vaccination Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors to be abolished and two new cadres of Rural Health Inspectors and Assistant Rural Health Inspectors to be created in their place on the scales of pay of Rs. 40—3/2—55—2—75 and Rs. 30—3/2—45 respectively and the existing subordinate staff to be absorbed in these new cadres.
- (4) A direct chain of responsibility from the Director of Public Health down to the most junior officers of the Department to be maintained in respect of all public health aspects and not through the Civil Surgeons and the Sub-Divisional Medical Officers as at present.”

The question was adopted.

The Assam Municipal Amendment Bill, 1944

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty to move the Assam Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1944. I see there are some amendments to this Bill tabled by Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee, but as he is absent the amendments, cannot be moved. So the Hon'ble Minister may at once move that the Bill be passed.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I beg, Sir, to move that the Assam Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1944, be passed.

I think, Sir, I have said during the consideration stage of the Bill the reason for which the Bill has been brought in and I think I have got nothing further to add.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, I rise to oppose this Bill. I do not understand why Government has taken over the Municipality of Gauhati when they do not try to improve the condition now obtaining in the town. I consider, Sir, that in this matter Government has proved themselves absolutely unworthy of managing the affairs of the Municipal Area of Gauhati. We always used to hear before lots of complaints against non-official management of the Municipality, but when the Government themselves have undertaken to carry on the Municipal Administration in Gauhati they have cut much more sorry figure than any non-official body in any town or any Subdivision or even a small town like Polashbari and in spite of my several requests, Government has remained absolutely indifferent in this matter. It is all the more shameful when this Municipality, the premier citizen of Assam, namely the Prime Minister of the Government of Assam is (or should be) resident of that town, is so much neglected by the Government of Assam.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: Sir, I find that my hon. Friend, Mr. Chaudhuri, raised a very different matter in connection with this Bill. I should say, Sir, that he is entirely wrong in saying that Government have not done anything to improve the condition of the Gauhati Municipality. I hope the hon. Member knows that the Gauhati Municipality was in a very unsatisfactory condition in all respects and its management was so bad that Government had to supersede it. At the time of supersession, Sir, the Gauhati Municipality had more than a lakh of rupees as its debt. They made the conditions of the road very very bad. Metal became very thin and has become such that these roads cannot stand any heavy traffic. The perpetual neglect towards the improvement of the machineries in the waterworks also was apparent and in spite of repeated asking by the Executive Engineer they did not care to undertake any work of repairing the machineries in the waterworks. These were the conditions prevalent before the supersession of the Municipality. Anyhow, Sir, it is not the proper occasion for me to give the whole history now but as Mr. Chaudhuri has referred to that I had to give a few points in reply to his statement. Government is doing all that is possible for them to improve the conditions of the Municipality. As there is no other criticism I hope the Hon'ble House will accept the Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

“That the Assam Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1944 be passed.”

The question was adopted.

* 1. Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE to move: That in Sub-clause (i), after the word, “Board” occurring in lines 4 and 5 of the new Sub-section (2), the words “at a meeting” shall be added.

2. Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE to move: That in Sub-clause (i), after the word, “Board” in line 2 in the third proviso of the new Sub-section (2), the words “at a meeting” shall be added.

3. Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE to move: That in Sub-clause (ii), in lines 2 and 3 of the new Sub-section (3), the words “or the Board, as the case may be” shall be deleted.

Clause 3

4. Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE to move: That in line 2 of the new Sub-section (i), the words “or the Board, as the case may be” shall be deleted.

Clause 5

5. Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE to move: That in the line 3 of the new Sub-section 236D after the word “appeal” and before the “full stop”, the words “to the Provincial Government” shall be added.

6. Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE to move: That items (a) and (b) of the new Sub-section 236D shall be deleted.

7. Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE to move: That in lines 9 and 10 of the new Sub-section 236D, the words “or the Deputy Commissioner as the case may be” shall be deleted.

The Assam Standard Weights and Measures Bill, 1944

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to introduce the Assam Standard Weights and Measures Bill, 1944.

Sir, I beg to move that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the following Members :—

Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri,
Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee,
Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett,
Babu Nirendra Nath Dev,
Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy,
Srijut Dhirsingh Deuri,
Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury,
Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury,
Maulavi Abdur Rahman, and
The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge.

Four will form a quorum and the report of the Select Committee should be submitted on or before 31st July, 1944.

Sir, the Statement of Objects and Reasons annexed to the Bill has described fully why we are going to undertake this piece of legislation. The problem of marketing agricultural commodities has become very complicated owing to the diversity of weights and measures used in this province. A seer of 80 tolas may be in use in some parts of this province but seers having different weights are being used in different places. The basket known as 'doon' is very extensively used in this province and there is a great variation in the capacity of these measures. This Sir, leads to the exploitation of the poor cultivators by middle men who deliberately use inaccurate weights. The lack of bargaining power of the cultivators is mainly responsible for the adoption of these unfair methods. Sir, a money-lender's 'doon' is usually much bigger in size than the standard one and the borrowers know it. Moreover, there is a tendency to use different kinds of weights and measures for the purchases and sales and it is always for the advantage of the buyers. The Assam Banking Enquiry Committee found out a trader who bought with a 9 *kathiya doon* and sold retail with a 8 *kathiya doon*. Sir, grading of commodities is not at all possible in the absence of standardisation of weights and measures or duly marketing is not possible if there is no grading of commodities.

The Bombay Government took up a comprehensive measure to tackle this problem and the Bombay Act came into force in the year 1932. Much time and labour have been devoted to draft this Bill and I hope hon. Members will find this acceptable. With these words, Sir, I commend my Motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

That the Assam Standard Weights and Measures Bill, 1944 be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the following Members :—

Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri,
Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee,
Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett,
Babu Nirendra Nath Dev,
Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy,
Srijut Dhirsingh Deuri,
Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury,
Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury,
Maulavi Abdur Rahman, and
The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge.

Four will form a quorum and the report of the Select Committee to be submitted on or before the 31st July, 1944."

Mr. R. A. PALMER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been pressing for some considerable time for the introduction of this measure and we now welcome its somewhat tardy appearance. The importance of it cannot be overstressed especially at the present time of organised marketing. The policy of the Bill is non-contentious and I hope all sections of the House will join in sending the Bill to a Select Committee where the details can be adequately dealt with and the measure brought speedily into force.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Assam Standard Weights and Measures Bill, 1944 be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the following Members:—

Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri,
Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee,
Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett,
Babu Nirendra Nath Dev,
Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy,
Srijut Dhirsingh Deuri,
Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury,
Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury,
Maulavi Abdur Rahman, and
The Hon'ble Minister-in charge.

Four will form a quorum and the report of the Select Committee is to be submitted on or before the 31st July, 1944."

The question was carried.

The Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1944

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to introduce the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1944 and I beg to move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

There are only two clauses operating in this proposed Amendment Bill. Yesterday I have stated before the House that we have been enjoined by higher authorities to transfer as many vehicles as we can to producer gas installation, as there may be shortage of petrol. Now those who have seen producer gas installation must have noticed that it is a bulky affair and any vehicle so installed at once become heavy. Under our present Assam Motor Taxation Act the fee that is to be paid is according to weight.....

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: On a point of information, Sir, what is the average weight of such gas installation?

* The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The average weight is somewhere nearly 10 tons. Therefore, if we insist on one hand that people should switch off from using petrol to producer gas and if we do not give them certain concessions, they will be penalised doubly. So, the first proposal that I have made in this Bill is to exempt the weight of this installation for purposes of taxation.

The next provision that has been made in the Bill is that, as we urgently require as many vehicles to be propelled by producer gas as possible, we want to give an incentive and we propose that such vehicles be given an exemption of 50 per cent. of the normal taxation. These measures will encourage many owners to switch off to producer gas. This relieves the pressure of the limited supply of petrol. I hope hon. Members will be good enough to lend their support to these measures.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1944, be taken into consideration."

I take it that no debate is going to be made on this Motion. So I am putting this as a question before the House.

* Speech not recorded.

The question is :

“ That the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1944 be taken into consideration.”

The question was put and adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Bill will come up for consideration again clause by clause on the 25th of March, 1944 and the time for tabling amendments to this Bill is upto 3 P.M., of the 21st March 1944.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 A.M., on Monday, the 13th March, 1944.

SHILLONG :
The 12th April 1944. }

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

A. G. P. (L.A.) No. 211—122+2—19-4-1944.

have been established in Bengal ?

(b) Do Government propose to take similar measures to eradicate venereal diseases in this Province ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN replied :

36. (a)—Government have no information.
(b)—Not for the present.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: The answer is “Government have no information”. May I know what is the machinery of getting the information ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We receive official intimation from different Provincial Governments. Up till now, we have not received any information from the Bengal Government on the subject.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Will Government take it from me that they have started clinics for the treatment of the disease ?

Correction slip to the Assam Legislative Assembly Debates (March Session, 1944), dated the 11th March 1944, published in the Assam Gazette, dated the 19th April 1944, Part VI-A.

Correction slip No. 1.

At page 214—

(1) For the word and figure “10 tons” occurring in the speech of the Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla in paragraph 4 of the discussion under the head “The Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1944”, read the word and figure “10 cwts.”

(2) Before the words “The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla,” put “*” and insert the following as a footnote—

*Speech not corrected.

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