

**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 Tuesday,
the 14th March, 1944.

PRESENT

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

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(To which oral answers were given)

STARRED QUESTIONS

Officers of class III of the Assam School Service

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked :

*45. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether it is a fact that there are many officers in class III of the Assam School Service who, though getting more pay for their longer length of service, are still junior to those who are getting lesser pay for their shorter period of service ?
- (b) How seniority in the said service is counted ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

45. (a) & (b)—Officiating periods of service are allowed to be counted towards increments but not towards seniority which is determined by the date of substantive appointment. Thus some officers get more pay for total longer period of service but that does not entitle them under the rules to be treated as senior to those appointed substantively earlier than them.

Total quantity of Standard Cloth in the Province

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKE & JEE asked :

*46. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The total quantity of Standard Cloth received by the Government during 1943 and January 1944 ?
- (b) The stock of Standard Cloth in hand, on the 16th February 1944 ?
- (c) The quantity of Standard Cloth sold by the Government during the year 1943, subdivision by subdivision ?
- (d) The price paid by Government per yard and the price realised per yard ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

46. (a)—Eight million yards approximately.
- (b)—Four and half million yards approximately.
- (c)—A statement is placed on the table.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO STARRED QUESTION No.46(c)
ASKED BY MR. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE AT THE BUDGET SESSION
OF THE ASSEMBLY, 1944.

Quantity of Standard Cloth sold by Government

Names of the Subdivisions		Quantity in yardage sold during 1943	
1.	Dibrugarh Subdivision...	25,469	yards, including issues to other subdivisions within its area.
2.	Jorhat	8,014	yards.
3.	Nowgong	15,672	..
4.	Tezpur	1,32,289	.. including issues to other subdivisions within its area.
5.	Gauhati	3,223	..
6.	Dhubri	2,88,478	.. including issues to other subdivisions within its area.
7.	Tura	2,627	..
8.	Shillong	19,255½	..
9.	Sylhet	12,72,528	.. including issues to other subdivisions within its area.
10.	Silchar	43,379½	.. including issues to other subdivisions within its area.
11.	Kohima	6,500	..
12.	Aijal	1,931	..
13.	Sadiya Frontier Tract	198	..
14.	Balipara	778¾	..
15.	Tirap	Nil.	..
16.	Manipur	Nil.	..
17.	North Lakhimpur Subdivision	3,310	yards.
18.	Sibsagar	3,452	..
19.	Golaghat	19,000	.. including issues to other subdivisions within its area.
20.	Mangaldai	14,745	..
21.	Barpeta	19,418	..
22.	Goalpara	26,133	..
23.	Jowai	214	..
24.	Mokokchung	Nil.	..
25.	Lungleh	Nil.	..
26.	North Cachar Hills	1,437½	yards.
27.	Habiganj	17,224	..
28.	Karimganj	46,999	..
29.	Sunamganj	49,824	..
30.	Maulvibazar	39,002½	..
31.	Hailakadi	12,645	..

(d)—The latest copy of the schedule of prices showing the Mill prices and retail prices, is placed on the Library table. The difference between Mill prices and retail prices is 6¼ per cent. The Central Government appropriate to themselves 1¾ per cent. and the balance goes to the local Government to meet the contingent and other charges.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, may I ask one supplementary question to starred question No. 46(c). It appears from the statement that Habiganj got only 17,224 yards of standard cloths. May I know why such a small quantity of standard cloth was allotted for such a vast area like the Habiganj subdivision?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, some quantities were received direct for Habiganj, whereas the bulk came from the headquarters of the district.

Production of coal in the Province

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

*47. Will Government be pleased to state the total quantity of coal mined in the Province during the years 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1943 separately, Colliery by Colliery?

*48. Will Government be pleased to state the quantity of coal and coke imported in the Province during the years 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1943 separately, Valley by Valley?

*49. (a) Is it a fact that there is a great shortage of coal, coke and wood fuel in the Province specially in the Surma Valley?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state what step or steps they have taken or intend to take to remove the present difficulty?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

47.—A statement is laid on the table.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO STARRED QUESTION No.47
ASKED BY MR. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE AT THE BUDGET SESSION
OF THE ASSEMBLY, 1944.

Total quantity of Coal produced in the Province during the year

Name of the Colliery or Quarry	Total quantity of coal produced during the year				
	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
	Tons	Tons	Tons	Tons	Tons
1. Ledo Valley Colliery ...	69,383	52,638	43,333	43,697	...
2. Baragolai ,, ...	1,18,374	1,29,158	1,30,654	1,09,163	...
3. Namdang ,, ...	48,496	39,635	43,678	49,233	...
4. Tipong ,, ...	1,849	440	4,533	15,092	...
5. Lekhapani ,, ...	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	...
6. Kongon and Barjan Colliery.	26,300	24,702	24,703	24,815	...
7. Dieli Colliery (started on 1st January 1941).	...	...	921	1,036	...
8. Ramgsonobo Quarry ...	9,928	11,755	...	...	...
9. Mawbeh Quarry ...	14	...	...	...	...
10. Shyrmang ...	71	35½	74	75	...

The figures for 1943 have not yet been received.

48.—Government have no information.

49. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Government in consultation with the Coal Companies, have taken steps to improve the supply of labour for increased Coal production. Improvement in the technique of Coal mining is also under examination by experts. Simultaneously methods of reducing consumption and use of alternative fuels for industrial purposes are being investigated. As for wood fuel steps have been taken in places to allot specific areas or quotas for Civil consumption and prices are being fixed in co-ordination with the Army Authorities.

Allotment of certain foodstuff for Habiganj Subdivision

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

- *50. Will Government please state—
- (a) The total quantity of sugar, atta and flour allotted for the Subdivision of Habiganj each month ?
 - (b) The quantity and the manner in which these articles are allotted for each of the Thanas of the Subdivision ?
 - (c) On what basis the supply of sugar is made for general public in Habiganj Subdivision ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

50. (a)—Sugar	...	...	...	...	Maunds.
					2,600
Atta and flour	...	...	...	...	655 from January 1944.

(b) & (c)—The distribution of sugar as well as of other commodities is not done on Thana basis but through selected wholesalers and retailers who get monthly quotas based roughly on the area and population they are to serve.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, is it not desirable that the selection of the wholesalers should be made in such a way that people can have easy access to them without inconvenience ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Surely, Sir, these traders will be selected in such a way that they are within easy reach of the retailers, but the whole question is a question of district and subdivisional administration and I hope the hon. Member, the questioner, will get an opportunity to discuss this in the Food Committee.

Presentation of the Supplementary Statement of Expenditure for the year 1943-44

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to present the *Supplementary Statement of Expenditure for the year 1943-44.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It will be seen from the Provisional Programme of Business that the voting on these Supplementary Demands has been fixed on Friday, the 24th March from 2-30 p.m. Now, the hon. Members will notice that we have 24 Demands to dispose of and the time available for the purpose will be 1½ hours only ; so it is not possible for me to allot time to each of these Demands. The Leaders of Parties should consider whether there should be any limit of time fixed for discussion of each Demand. They will please make their suggestions to me, otherwise the Demand will be taken in the order in which they have been placed. The time has been fixed by His Excellency and I do not think he will extend it.

*Appendices B and C.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Sir, in case extra time is required, our suggestion to you will be to extend time from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. on that particular date, *i.e.*, 24th March 1944.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I cannot extend the time. The time has been fixed by His Excellency the Governor. Questions may take half an hour or so; at any rate we shall not be able to get more than one and a half hours for the purpose. Just at 4 p.m. all discussions will have to terminate when guillotine would be applied and the Demands be placed before the House. That is the Governor's rule in this respect.

Amendments to the Assam Legislative Assembly Rules

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move for leave to amend the Assam Legislative Assembly Rules. The draft of the proposed amendments is before the House. Sir, I think the hon. Members may perhaps remember that the proposed amendments were discussed threadbare during the last November Session of the Assembly when the said amendments were brought before the House by a similar Motion moved by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, as unfortunately on the day on which the Motion was taken up, the House was so much depleted that the total number of hon. Members then present in the House and who were in favour of leave being granted was not more than thirty-five and as Mr. Mookerjee had raised objection to the Motion, the necessary leave of the Assembly

†Amendments to the Assam Legislative Assembly Rules made under sub-section (1) of section 84 of the Government of India Act, 1935

1. That in sub-rule (2) of Rule 12 the following shall be added, namely:—

“(vii) when His Majesty is at war with any foreign State, refer to any matter the nature of which would be calculated to disclose information likely to assist the enemy”.

2. That in Rule 30—

(i) the following sub-rule shall be inserted as sub-rule (2), namely:—

“(2) When His Majesty is at war with any foreign State no question shall be asked the asking of which would be calculated to disclose information likely to assist the enemy”;

(ii) the existing sub-rule (2) shall be renumbered as sub-rule (3); and

(iii) in sub-rule (3) as so renumbered for the word and figure “sub-rule (1)” the words and figures “sub-rules (1) and (2)” shall be substituted.

3. That after Rule 41 the following shall be inserted as Rule 41A:—

“Restrictions on subjects for discussion—

41A.(1) When His Majesty is at war with any foreign State no motion shall be made on any matter the discussion of which would be calculated to disclose information likely to assist the enemy.

(2) If any doubt arises whether any such motion is or is not within the restrictions imposed by sub-rule (1), the Governor shall decide the point and his decision shall be final”.

4. That in Rule 76—

(i) the following sub-rule shall be inserted as sub-rule (2), namely:—

“(2) When His Majesty is at war with any foreign State no resolution shall be moved the discussion of which would be calculated to disclose information likely to assist the enemy”;

(ii) the existing sub-rule (2) shall be renumbered as sub-rule (3); and

(iii) in sub-rule (3) as so renumbered for the word and figure “sub-rule (1)” the words and figures “sub-rules (1) and (2)” shall be substituted.

5. That after Rule 87 the following Rule shall be inserted as Rule 87A:—

“Restrictions on subjects for discussion—

87A.(1) When His Majesty is at war with any foreign State no motion for adjournment shall be made the discussion of which would be calculated to disclose information likely to assist the enemy.

(2) If any doubt arises whether any such motion is or is not within the restrictions imposed by sub-rule (1), the Governor shall decide the point and his decision shall be final”.

6. That for Rule 121 the following Rule shall be substituted, namely:—

“(1) The Secretary shall cause a full report of the proceedings of the Assembly at each of its meetings to be prepared. A copy of such report when confirmed and signed by the Speaker shall be the record of the proceedings of the Assembly.

(2) When His Majesty is at war with any foreign State the report as confirmed by the Speaker shall be sent to the Governor before it is published and, if the Governor acting in his individual judgment certifies that any portion of the report contains information likely to assist the enemy, that portion of the report shall not be published or cited until he so directs.

(3) Copies of the report of the proceedings, with the omission of the portions, if any, certified by the Governor under sub-rule (2) shall be sent to each Member and to the Governor and Governor-General”.

could not be had. Sir, the subject matter of the proposed amendments was so thoroughly discussed then that I feel that I have little to add now. From the debate which followed the Motion it appears to me that there were some misgivings in the minds of certain hon. Members that by accepting the amendments we were going to curtail further the rights and privileges of the House particularly of you, Sir, who is the custodian of those rights and privileges than what was accepted by the general consent of the House. I would now, Sir, point out that these misgivings or apprehensions on the part of certain hon. Members, were not based on reasonable facts. Sir, since the time the House accepted the Motion moved by hon. Mr. Whittaker leading to the expunging of certain information regarding Civil Defence and Communications which might be of any use to the enemy from the records of the proceedings of the House, it may be said to the credit of every individual Member of the House that they have endeavoured to refrain from making any such discussion which would be in the nature of giving any valuable information to the enemy and you too, Sir, have rendered assistance in order to implement the wish of the House. Sir, the hon. Members by their very conduct have practically observed what is required of them in the proposed amendments. But having done so, the hon. Members have always, I am sure, subordinated their individual liberty to the greater interest of the State or the public safety. I, therefore, find, Sir, that there can be no reasonable ground for objecting to the amendments being placed in our Rules. Sir, it might be argued that the substitution of rule 121 by the proposed amendment would be tantamount to surrender of the right of the Chair to His Excellency the Governor by invoking the assistance of the Governor. Surely, Sir, we only make His Excellency to share responsibility with you as the custodian of the rights and privileges of the House of which His Excellency the Governor may rightly be deemed to be a part. It may also be borne in mind that a correct record of the proceedings of the House will be maintained, but only such portions of the same which will seem to be of any assistance to the enemy will not be published or sent to the hon. Members until the Governor so directs. Sir, it was also raised that neither the British Parliament nor the Central Assembly has adopted any such amendment to the Rules for the conduct of their own business. But, Sir, their position is different from that of ours. They have in their midst representatives who can speak with authority on matters relating to defence and give proper guidance in such matters. Moreover, Assam is a front line Province and is practically in the battle zone. So we must be extremely careful in all our debates and deliberations irrespective of the considerations of the doings of other Legislatures. I would, therefore, Sir, appeal to the House to do what public safety demands us to do. With these remarks, I commend my Motion to the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is that leave be granted to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Legislative Department to amend the Assam Legislative Assembly Rules and the amendments proposed are as follows:—

'1. That in sub-rule (2)' of Rule 12 the following shall be added, namely:—
'(vii) when His Majesty is at war with any foreign State, refer to any matter the nature of which would be calculated to disclose information likely to assist the enemy.'

2. That in Rule 30—

(i) the following sub-rule shall be inserted as sub-rule (2), namely:—

'(2) When His Majesty is at war with any foreign State no question shall be asked the asking of which would be calculated to disclose information likely to assist the enemy ;'

(ii) the existing sub-rule (2) shall be renumbered as sub-rule (3) ; and

(iii) in sub-rule (3) as so renumbered for the word and figure 'sub-rule (1)' the words and figures 'sub-rules (1) and (2)' shall be substituted.

3. That after Rule 41 the following shall be inserted as Rule 41A:—

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41A.(1) When His Majesty is at war with any foreign State no motion shall be made on any matter the discussion of which would be calculated to disclose information likely to assist the enemy.

(2) If any doubt arises whether any such motion is or is not within the restrictions imposed by sub-rule (1), the Governor shall decide the point and his decision shall be final.'

4. That in Rule 76—

(i) the following sub-rule shall be inserted as sub-rule (2), namely:—

'(2) When His Majesty is at war with any foreign State no resolution shall be moved the discussion of which would be calculated to disclose information likely to assist the enemy ;'

(ii) the existing sub-rule (2) shall be renumbered as sub-rule (3) ; and

(iii) in sub-rule (3) as so renumbered for the word and figure 'sub-rule (1)' the words and figures 'sub-rules (1) and (2)' shall be substituted.

5. That after Rule 87 the following Rule shall be inserted as Rule 87A:—
'Restrictions on subjects for discussion—

87A.(1) When His Majesty is at war with any foreign State no motion for adjournment shall be made the discussion of which would be calculated to disclose information likely to assist the enemy.

(2) If any doubt arises whether any such motion is or is not within the restrictions imposed by sub-rule (1), the Governor shall decide the point and his decision shall be final.'

6. That for Rule 121 the following Rule shall be substituted, namely:—

'(1) The Secretary shall cause a full report of the proceedings of the Assembly at each of its meetings to be prepared. A copy of such report when confirmed and signed by the Speaker shall be the record of the proceedings of the Assembly.

(2) When His Majesty is at war with any foreign State the report as confirmed by the Speaker shall be sent to the Governor before it is published and, if the Governor acting in his individual judgment certifies that any portion of the report contains information likely to assist the enemy, that portion of the report shall not be published or cited until he so directs.

(3) Copies of the report of the proceedings, with the omission of the portions, if any, certified by the Governor under sub-rule (2) shall be sent to each Member and to the Governor and Governor-General'.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, During the last November Session when these amendments were brought before the House I objected to these amendments being moved. Sir, the arguments that I advanced at that time still hold good. The Hon'ble Minister, in his speech, has admitted that the hon. Members of this House are helping the Government so that nothing is discussed here, the publication of which may be helpful to the enemies. He has also admitted that you are also assisting us at the time of discussion so that we may not discuss any such matter which may give the enemy valuable information. Sir, when we all have agreed to this principle and acting accordingly I fail to understand the object of moving these amendments. The present argument is that if our proceedings pass through the hands of His Excellency the Governor, and he can expunge some portions of our discussions which he thinks so necessary in that case he will act as a safety valve and there will be no more fear of secrets being out. If we all commit a mistake, and, Sir, you also commit the same mistake, it is quite possible that His Excellency may also commit that mistake. What is the answer to that? There is no end of it. Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has said that when we put any Question we must be on our guard so that we may not ask such Questions the answer of which when published will be useful to the enemy. Sir, moreover on the floor of this very House more than once some portions of some answers were expunged either by you or by the Hon'ble Premier for this reason. At the time when we put our Questions we take special care. But still in some cases one or two Questions are disallowed by you on the ground that they will disclose some information and so they should not be allowed to be answered. Every body is doing his best, but still why this move!

Sir, the Hon'ble Premier in the last November Session disallowed three of my Motions though I could not know the reasons why they were disallowed.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Not disallowed, but he did not give his assent. (*A voice*: That was in the ordinary course of business).

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes, Sir, in the ordinary course of business the Motions which are not relating to political matters are always given assent to. But if there is anything relating to political matters they are at once refused.

As regards the Adjournment Motions, and other Motions, Sir, the Hon'ble Ministers will get chances to point out to you if they think that the discussion of any particular Adjournment Motion or other Motion will be detrimental to the interest of our Province or country and you will disallow them. The Hon'ble Minister has also said that there are some who think that your powers will be curtailed. Those who, after going through the amendments, do not think that your powers are being curtailed I think they do not understand the real meaning of the amendments or the Motion. Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has also admitted that we have voluntarily curtailed our powers for the safety of the Province and country. And he wants us to further curtail our rights and powers. If we are convinced that by agreeing to these amendments we shall be really doing some service then we shall have no objection to accept these amendments. But, Sir, in the long speech of the Hon'ble Minister there was not even one sentence which could convince us that by accepting these amendments we would really be doing some good to our Province. The only thing that I could not understand from the Hon'ble Minister's speech was that when the proceedings would pass through the hands of His Excellency the Governor, who shall have the right to get such portions expunged as he thinks necessary, that would be quite sufficient for us to think that our purpose, namely, we are helping the Province, would be served, and then there would be no more chance of giving out any information to our enemies so that they might be benefited by those informations. With this colourless argument we cannot support the amendment. On the other hand I think we shall be failing in our duty if we do not oppose these amendments to protect our as well as your rights. With these words, Sir, I oppose to leave being granted to move the amendments.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is one aspect of this question that I would like to bring before the House, particularly before my hon. Friend, Mr. Mookerjee. I think probably there is the suggestion that a Member might give away information which, he knows, is of value to the enemy, in his anxiety to get the truth of a matter. But, Sir, that is not the danger. Unfortunately at the moment there are a large number of films and books coming out, dealing with spy stories with lovely ladies or tough men living exciting lives. But, Sir, security and intelligence is nothing like that in actual fact. It is a very prosaic business; the way it is done is by men who are trained sitting at intelligence headquarters and receiving a mass of what may appear to be entirely irrelevant information from various agents. The day when you expected an agent to be able to send in complete particulars of what the enemy is going to do or what he has in mind no longer exists. Now, Sir, agents are trained to pick up any bit of information whether it means anything to them or not. They send it to their headquarters and the trained experts at headquarters will look through this information. Probably 99 per cent. of it will be valueless, and the other 1 per cent. by itself means nothing, but combined with other small items that have come in from other agents, it goes a great way to help the enemy to put the picture

In this connection I would like the House to hear a true story which happened in this war. It was so long ago that it can now be told. The House will remember that at the end of year 1940 a very large Italian Army had advanced some 30 to 40 miles into Egypt and seriously threatened Alexandria and the Suez Canal. General Wavell, as he then, was in command in the Middle East, and he decided that something must be done although he was greatly outnumbered and he decided to attack the enemy. In view of the fact that he was greatly outnumbered and was inferior in arms as well, he knew that secrecy was even more essential than usual. He got out a plan

of attack and told only three other people, *i. e.*, only four including himself, knew that an attack was actually going to be made. Our own army had recently been carrying out training exercises and they were told that there was going to be another training exercise. I repeat that only four men knew that there was to be a real attack. When they went out, not even the Brigadiers knew the secret till they were well out in the field. It is now known to every one that the attack was extremely successful and it drove the Italians out of Egypt and drove them far back into Libya. But this is the interesting point: when they captured the Italian headquarters they found an intelligence report which stated that an attack was going to take place by the British. How did that information get through? Only four men knew about it. It was worth checking up. It was then discovered that the information came from hair-dressing saloons, restaurants, hotels and golf-clubs in Alexandria. It came from wives of soldiers living there, it came from their casual conversations—"I am afraid I shall not be able to come to-morrow, my husband will be leaving as his leave has been cancelled." "Could you do my hair for me as my husband cannot take me out for a swim?" "We shall have to cancel the tea party because my brother will not be here. His leave is being cancelled." Now the ladies who gave that information did so casually and innocently, but somebody else had overheard it. When the trained Italian intelligence experts began to receive these reports they said, "It is funny that in every case leave is being cancelled, persons are being re-called from leave. What does that mean? It must be the real thing."

Now the point which I want to bring out here is this: those ladies who were quite unconscious in giving out that information had no idea of the truth, they had no idea that they were doing any wrong and were endangering the lives of their relatives and friends. Moreover they had no idea that enemy agents might be nearby. The meetings of this assembly are not held in camera. There are persons who come in to listen, there are people coming on business, and though a remark made here if repeated outside may mean nothing in itself, added to other information it gradually draws up a picture for the enemy. While these amendments will go a long way, I would like the hon. Members to remember what I have said in addition to seeing that the amendments receive their very sympathetic consideration.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEB: Sir, even after hearing Mr. Lewis I do not think I can lend my support to these amendments. If the country is full of enemy agents who are more ingenuous than our own, it is for the Military to see how best they can check enemy agents from coming within the country. As the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Motion has himself admitted, there has already been created a healthy convention that Members generally do not put in such Questions and Motions as would be prejudicial to the safety of the country. There is therefore absolutely no reason for bringing in such amendments. The Hon'ble Minister has also admitted that the Central Government or the Government in England have not got any such rules to guide themselves. The only ground he put forward was the fact that Assam was a front-line Province. But, Sir, you are there to look after this matter. The Government said that they were going to ask His Excellency to share your responsibility. But I do not think, Sir, you ever sought the help of the Governor in discharging your responsibilities. You are quite competent to look after your business. Otherwise it is for you to tell the House that you need the help of His Excellency the Governor in this matter. But up till now we have heard nothing like that from you. So, Sir, I think that by allowing these amendments to be passed we shall to a great extent curtail your powers and responsibilities. From that point of view we cannot support any such Motion.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: I have nothing to add to what I have already said, Sir. No new points have been raised, and so there is nothing for me to reply.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: As there has been objection to leave being granted it is necessary for the hon. Members who are in favour of leave being granted to rise in their seats.

(42 Members rose in their seats.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: As 42 Members have risen in their seats, leave has been granted. Under the rules the requisite number is to be only more than 35.

Now, under rule 106 of the Assembly Rules these amendments will be automatically referred to a Select Committee, a part of which is prescribed by rule 106 itself, and the other part consisting of six Members is to be elected by the House by means of single transferable vote. Therefore I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to move his next Motion.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that the Assembly do elect six other members to the Select Committee to be constituted under rule 106 of the Assam Legislative Assembly Rules to consider the amendments.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Question is:

"That the Assembly do elect six other members to the Select Committee to be constituted under Rule 106 of the Assam Legislative Assembly Rules to consider the amendments."

The Question was adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now, it is necessary to decide when the Select Committee should meet and submit their report. So, it will be necessary to move another Motion appointing the time by which the Select Committee should submit their report, and also fixing the quorum for a meeting of the Select Committee. I would like to ascertain the views of the House whether it would be possible for the Select Committee to meet during this Session. I think there would not be any time for that. Even if the Select Committee meet and submit their report before the Session is over there will be no time to have those Rules placed before the House because there are only two days on which Government business will be transacted, *viz.*, 24th and 25th instant. On the 24th we have got to dispose of all the Supplementary Demands, and the time will be only two hours. On the 25th we shall have a very heavy day. There is then another difficulty. Even if the amendments be passed on that date they would not come into force on that very day, because under rule 108 it is necessary for the Chair to sign those amendments, and announce to the House that the amendments have been so signed. Unless this is done, the amendments would not come into force. So, I think there will be no time to dispose of these amendments finally before the Session is over. I think, therefore a Motion may be made prescribing the time by which the Select Committee should submit their report.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that the Select Committee should submit their report by the 31st August next, and that five Members will form a quorum.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Question is:

"That the Select Committee to consider the amendments to the Legislative Assembly Rules should submit their report by the 31st August, 1944, and that five members will form the quorum of the Select Committee meetings."

The Question was adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now, under Rule 106 I shall be the Chairman of the Select Committee, and the Members will be the Deputy Speaker, the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge, a Chairman of the Assembly to be nominated by me and six other Members to be selected by the Assembly by means of single transferable vote. With regard to that we have adopted a Motion now. The following six Members have intimated their candidature for election, *viz.*, Mr. A. Whittaker, Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee, Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Md. Ahab Chaudhury, Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali, Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy, and Srijut Surendra Nath Buragohain. As the number of candidates is equal to the number of Members required to be elected by the House, I declare all these six Members to be so elected. So there will be no need to hold an election.

From the Panel of Chairmen for the present Session, I nominated Babu Akshay Kumar Das to be a Member of the Select Committee.

GRANT No. 10

(25.—General Administration)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 26,19,000 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 "25—General Administration."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 26,19,000 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 '25.—General Administration'."

Now, there are as many as 43 cut Motions tabled to this Demand. The time allotted to this Demand is only 1½ hours. From the question hour we got 10 minutes more and we have got another 30 minutes because the Demands were to be taken up from 12-30. So we have got 40 minutes extra. Out of this extra 40 minutes I would like to take 15 minutes for Grant No. 21—Veterinary—because the time as originally allotted is only 15 minutes. That was quite insufficient having regard to the number of cut Motions tabled to this Grant. The remaining time will be devoted to the General Administration having regard to the number of cut Motions.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 6,000 under grant No. 10, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—H—Ministers, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Private Secretary at page 51 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, by this Motion I want to raise a discussion about the policy of the Government regarding the General Administration of the Province.

Sir, we can hardly forget that we are living in a virtual war zone and as a result additional burden and responsibilities have been imposed upon us for our internal and external security. It is worth while to examine our position under the stress of war conditions.

Of late, we are feeling a steady deterioration in our administrative machinery. Many of its parts seem to be out of joint and marks of stagnation and decay are discernible all over the body.

The Hon'ble the Prime Minister, who has always proved a very capable administrator, has got little time to look into the detailed working of the department. He is not only in charge of General Administration, but he is the Home Minister of Assam, the Provincial Leader of National War Front and above all he is in-charge of the Supply arrangement of the Province. These are departments each of which may well require the whole-time duties of one Hon'ble Minister. It is not only curious but unkind as well that his Hon'ble Colleagues, some of whom have very little work to do did not impress upon him the necessity of a re-distribution of portfolios. We have explicit faith in the ability of the Hon'ble Prime Minister and if he is relieved of his additional burden, in no time he will be able to re-establish the lost reputation of the department.

Sir, the poor Province of Assam has been compelled to maintain the white elephant of a Commissioner at an enormous expenditure. But we wonder how are we utilising his services. The Prime Minister would surely enlighten us about the nature of duties performed by this glorified high official. What are his connections with the Government and the District Officers, we do not know. Why did not the Government transfer the office of the Commissioner to Shillong so that he could be of some use to the Government? Is it impossible to combine the post of the Member, Revenue Tribunal with that of the Commissioner? These are questions which are agitating the public mind. Such a step would have meant a great saving of the rate-payers' money.

Sir, speaking about the District Administration, the very first thing that we are reminded of is the wide prevalence of corrupt practices that is witnessed in our day to day administration in the District and Subdivisional establishment. It is being practised on a scale unheard of in the past. As usual, the victims have always been the poor villagers—whose life has been made more miserable. It is common knowledge, Sir, that you cannot hope to get a license for a tin of kerosene, a bag of sugar, *atta* or

maida, unless you offer illegal gratification at least in three places. This is not the case of a particular place or district but it appears to have become the general rule everywhere in all parts of the Province. I would like to refer to the Motion (No. 32†) tabled by Mr. Buragohain to the same purpose. The Deputy Commissioners are conscious of the same. The Subdivisional Officers know it very well. It was brought to the notice of the Hon'ble Ministers in the course of their long tours. But none have advanced to take any action. Sometimes similar charges have been levelled even against the highest officials of the Province. But the matter has either been connived at or shelved. I do not narrate these things to censure the Government. My sole intention is that Government should wake up to the reality of the situation. The present state of things is effecting the public morale and should not be allowed to continue any further. I would appeal to the Hon'ble Prime Minister to realise the seriousness of the situation and take adequate steps for overhauling the department. This will mean our best contribution to the war efforts.

I would like to say something about the recruitment policy of the Government of Assam. We strongly protest against the practice of appointing retired Government Officers in very responsible positions—in some cases even in spite of their indifferent health. From the economic point of view also it cannot be supported. Nowhere it has added to the efficiency of the administration. What is worse, it is only fomenting discontent amongst our permanent officials. As regards new appointments, our grievances do not go by merit alone, but by the amount of support one can possibly secure from the persons in high authority.

Sir, of late, many places and properties have been requisitioned in the different parts of the Province by the military authorities. In many cases, entire villages had to shift elsewhere. Perhaps the civil administration could not stop the military operation. But it has lamentably lacked in giving adequate protection to these helpless people by providing suitable land. They did not try to exercise their influence to extract adequate compensation for the loss suffered.

We feel that we are living under the shadow of the Defence of India Rules. There is no circumstance, in which, some provisions of these rules cannot be invoked. Unnecessary harassment has been the cases in many instances. I would appeal to the Government to make a judicious and rational use of the rules.

Regarding the Publicity Department, the only thing that I would like to impress, is that the Supply Department should make the fullest use of it. Government policy regarding purchase and supply, prices of controlled articles and matters incidental thereto should be broadcast as widely as possible. This will check corruption and profiteering to a large extent.

Finally, Sir, I would refer to cut Motin No. 7 standing in my name. Thereby I wanted to raise a discussion about the necessity of paying the village Chaukidars from the Provincial revenues—thus releasing the tax under the Bengal Chawkidari Act available for the spread of Primary Education. My intention is too obvious to require any further elucidation. It is in the fitness of things, Sir, that the Chaukidars who are recognised as the village police should be paid from the Provincial revenues. This will place a very big fund at the disposal of the Hon'ble Minister, Education to enable him to start compulsory Primary Education in the Province. With these words Sir, I commend my Motion.

†32. Sri Jut SURENDRA NATH BURAGOHAIN to move:—

That the provision of Rs.11,55,388 under Grant No. 10; Major head—25 General Administration, Minor head—District Administration,—S—General Establishment (total) at page 59 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100. (To raise a discussion about the failure of the District Officers to deal adequately with corruption rampant among their Subordinates.)

*7. Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURI to move:—

That the provision of Rs.6,000 under Grant No. 10, Major head—25—General Administration Minor head—H.—Ministers, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total) at page 51 of the Budget be reduced, by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100. (To raise a discussion about the necessity of paying the village Chaukidars from the Provincial revenues—thus releasing the tax under the Bengal Chawkidari Act available for the spread of Primary Education.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER Motion moved :

"That the provision of Rs.6,000 under Grant No. 10, Major head—25. General Administration, Minor head—H.—Ministers, Sub head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Private Secretary at page 51 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100 *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

I am prescribing a time limit for speeches on cut Motions. An hon. Member moving a Motion would get 7 minutes; any other hon. Member speaking on the Motion will get 5 minutes and the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge will get 7 minutes to reply. Of course for this Motion, I shall allow more time. And of course I shall take in to consideration from time to time during the discussion on demands for grants, the circumstances that may require to relax this time limit for speeches.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a cut Motion on rather similar lines to those of my Friend who was just talking—from one point of view, namely, the continued existence of the black market in the Province and the inadequacy of existing measures for coping with this evil.

It is perfectly true that small traders are receiving exemplary punishments for offences under the various ordinances connected with price control, but we hear very little of what is happening to the big men who are mainly responsible for the black market operations which at present threaten to undermine the very existence of the people. I admit quite frankly that the spread of consumers' co-operative shops has very largely eased matters so far as retailing is concerned, but I am at present more concerned with the big distributors from whom retail shops have to obtain their requirements. It is well-nigh impossible these days to buy salt, sugar, mustard oil, *gur*, potatoes, onions, flour, *atta*, *suji* and many other essentials of life at any price—never mind about controlled price—in any market save the black market.

As an instance I will quote the following example to illustrate what I mean. A well-known retail merchant in this town bought spun wool at a fairly high price from a wholesale supplier. Under some ordinance or other, this merchant was compelled to dispose of his stock at Rs. 20 per pound. He has done this, but cannot get more supplies from the wholesaler under Rs.30 a pound. Obviously there is something very far wrong with the machinery. It is no use fixing maximum market prices unless a reasonable expectation of commodities coming on to the market within this price exists.

So far as rice and paddy go, it cannot be denied that Government's price control policy, so fearlessly carried out, has helped matter; but I am not satisfied that the district judiciary is sufficiently alert in dealing with the big men to whom, in my opinion, more attention should be paid.

Unfortunately, there is a wide-spread feeling of impotence among the people, and they have come to admit the black market as a necessary evil. Quite honestly it is difficult to see what other attitude they can adopt unless they are guaranteed a more secure existence. Unfortunately, people are not anxious to inform against black market racketeers, for, they argue, if the black market is shut down, there appears no reasonable prospect of essentials forthcoming at all. Furthermore, informers fear intimidation and reprisals from big dealers, who, because of the economic set up of India, could very well exert such. If necessary, a special staff of investigators must be employed to deal with this evil, and these must be paid well enough to ensure that it will not be necessary for them to live on bribes.

I thus support the motion before this House, and ask that Government shall take steps to deal with this menace rapidly.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: I have got a cut Motion in my name. It is No. 38*. Will you kindly allow me to move it?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It does not deal with the question of policy. I shall allow hon. Member to move his Motion, but not now.

*38. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY to move:—

That the total provision of Rs.26,19,000 under Grant No. 10, Major head—25.—General Administration at page 49 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100 *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To urge upon the Government the necessity of obtaining representation for Assam in the Port Haj Committee for safe-guarding the interests of the Assam Haj Pilgrims.)

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Cut Motion No. 18* stands in my name May I speak on this ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Very well.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS : The object of this cut Motion is to enable us to express our concern over the health of the Hon'ble the Prime Minister owing to the over-great burden of responsibility which he is now carrying. Let us look at this burden just for one moment. He holds the Home port-portfolio—probably the most exacting of all ; since the holder of this port-portfolio has, on many occasions—all too frequently—to make most unpleasant decisions—decisions which can only be made after great thought and heart searching. Then, he holds the Supply port-portfolio. That in itself is almost three—procurement, transport and distribution. Added to this he carries the Publicity and the National War Front. He has now bravely shouldered the work of post-war planning and reconstruction—a post which in the United Kingdom is considered so important that they took out of the Cabinet their best Minister and put him in the House of Lords where he would have sufficient time to think. Summarising, Sir, the Prime Minister is now carrying six jobs each of which in itself is almost a full time one and it is worth recording that in England these various jobs would be carried by at least four Ministers whose salaries would total 2½ lakhs a year. The House will appreciate, I hope, that I am in no way criticising the Prime Minister's able direction of affairs. I bow to no man, Sir, in my admiration of Sir Muhammad's brain and amazing grasp of detail, but I should like to remind him that he is only human, and that the Province now requires his powers unimpaired more than at any time in the past. Further, Sir, I should like to remind him of the necessity for the head of any business, and after all the Government is a business, to see that his possible successors are trained up so that when the time comes for the head to hand over his responsibility he can do so with the satisfaction that his successor has the necessary training to enable him to carry on without loss of efficiency. This training can only be achieved by letting the younger men gradually assume more and more responsibility under the general direction of a head with wider and longer experience. An able man is tempted to keep too much in his control. Mr. Winston Churchill has been also guilty of this. It will be recalled that a few months ago Mr. Churchill's friends in the House of Commons urged him to be relieved of some of his responsibility by delegating more of the detailed work to others. Like Mr. Churchill, Sir Muhammad's energy remains that of a young man, but I hope he will not misunderstand me when I remind him that the years inexorably roll by. I should like him to accept this as a plea from his friends in this House to relieve himself of some of the detailed work he is now doing in the interests of his health, which is so important to this Province and to enable him to have more time in which to think about the great issues involved. It will be presumption on our part to suggest how the redistribution can best be done. We believe however that redistribution to achieve the desired result is possible within the present cadre of the Ministers.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : Does the hon. Member wants that there should be additional Ministers ?

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS : I repeat, Sir, within the present cadre of Ministers.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I like to say something on the cut Motion, regarding the administrative policy of Government.

Sir, His Excellency the Governor broadcast a message to the public, at the very outset of the inauguration of the Provincial Autonomy in the Provinces in India, about the purpose of the policy that was going to be the administrative policy in the Province. In his message His Excellency said :—

“On this day, the 1st of April, 1937, the dyarchical system of Government, which has subsisted since 1921, comes to end, and Assam, like the other provinces of British India, enters upon a new phase of a political and constitutional history. From hence-

* 18. Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS to move :—

That the provision of Rs.75,470 under Grant No. 10, Major head, 25.—General Administration, Minor head—H.—Ministers (total) at page 51 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To suggest a redistribution of portfolios.)

forth the whole field of administration, except so far as concerns the totally excluded areas, will be in the hands of the Council of Ministers, responsible collectively to the Legislature and charged with the duty of advising the Governor as to the orders which will issue in his name."

Sir, regarding food situation in this Province, other hon. Members have already spoken and I need not repeat them. So I am going to draw the attention of the House to an edirection of administration, namely, administration of justice. You know, Sir, in the partially excluded areas like Garo Hills, Khasi Hills and Mikir Hills, there are certain rules and regulations for the administration of justice and police. These rules and regulations was put before a conference of the partially excluded areas. The conference was held twice and it pointed out some defects in these rules and regulations and recommended for their changes. Further, Sir, I have repeatedly pointed out the necessity of translation of these rules and regulations in respective vernaculars of the hills. These hill people are ignorant, I mean illiterate, and they cannot read and write. As these rules and regulations are in English, they are quite futile to them. So I suggested to the Deputy Commissioner and also the Commissioner, Mr. Gunning, while he was visiting Tura, that these rules and regulations should be translated into vernacular and should be distributed to *Laskars*, *Sardars* and *Nakmas* for their use. Even the most enlightened persons such as the Indian Civil Service officers, Chief Justices, Judges and so on consult law books for their guidance when they hear cases and before they pass their decision. But our *Laskars*, *Sardars* and *Nakmas* try cases without any guidance whatsoever; their words are orders. In this way justice is grossly neglected in our Hills.

With these words, Sir, I beg to request that the Government would kindly consider these points and see to these rules and regulations, which are for the use of the illiterate Administrative Officers in the districts

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAİN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I have a cut Motion down in the list, being No. 32*, of which reference has been made by the hon. Mover on the subject of corruption, I may be permitted to say a few words about this.

Sir, the hon. Mover has already mentioned that this corruption is rampant in the districts and the District Officers have not been able to deal with them. It is common particularly among those officers who are employed in the Supply and other allied departments that have been created during the stress of the war condition. Our ignorant people in the countryside have been virtually oppressed by these officers who are armed with large powers under the Defence of India Rules and various orders that have been promulgated by the Government of India and also by this Government. I may mention to the House of one rumour which is very current in my Valley that one Extra Assistant Commissioner-in-charge of Supply in a particular district headquarters has shown his reluctance to move away from his present post even on promotion and mention has been made in the editorial columns of a certain newspaper of that Valley that fortune of a life-time has been made by such officers who have been employed in this department. Sir, that being the position, is it not up to the Government to improvise a set of rules, by which certainly they should be armed, to deal with these problems? Can they not reinforce the present Government Servant's Conduct Rules and deal with them? Certainly, when we have framed a set of Defence of India Rules to deal with the political and other problems that may crop up under the present war situation, there should not be any difficulty for this Government to frame some rules under certain provisions of the Defence of India Rules so as to arm themselves with necessary powers to deal with corruption.

* 32. Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAİN to move:—

That the provision of Rs.11,55,388 under Grant No. 10, Major head, 25.—General Administration Minor head—District Administration—S.—General Establishment (total) at page 59 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To raise a discussion about the failure of the District Officers to deal adequately with corruption rampant among their subordinates.)

I hope the Government will certainly do something and take this matter in right earnest to stamp out the corruption that is really ruining and scaring the people in the country side.

With these words, I support the cut Motion moved by the hon. Mover.

Mr. N. DAWSON: I think I have a cut Motion, Sir, No.21*.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, many hon. Members have already described in an able manner the chaotic conditions which now obtain on the railway, but I should like the opportunity of impressing upon the Government the necessity of taking action so that some improvement may be made in the running of mail train between Rangapara and Rangiya, a section of the line with which this Government is very directly concerned. For many years the Government has paid a subsidy for this section and is still continuing to do so. I refer in particular to the section from Tangla, Belsiri, Rangapara. What the conditions are regarding the payment of this subsidy I am not exactly aware. But what I do know is that this Government is getting a very poor return of its money in the form of public service and in fact it is true to say that in this particular case the Government is subsidising inefficiency and neglect. Apart from the general discomfort and filthy conditions which are so common over all the sections of this railway I should like to draw Government's attention to the running of the mail train between Rangapara and Rangiya, a distance of approximately one hundred miles. This mail train carries passengers and mails booked for Calcutta and is supposed to connect with the Assam Mail at Rangiya every evening. But I can assure you, Sir, the most noticeable feature of the running of the mail train between Rangapara and Rangiya is the regularity with which it misses the connection at Rangiya. The result being that the unfortunate passengers have to spend twenty-four hours at Rangiya in extreme discomfort in the hope of catching the Assam mail on the following evening. Sir, occasional delays are excusable, but there can be no excuse for these continual delays over a comparatively short distance of about 100 miles. In fact there is no effort to stick to any regular time-table in the running of this particular train and I do think that it is high time for this Government to make a vigorous protest to the Central Government.

There is an instance of another inefficiency in this particular line. A friend of mine and I went to Rangapara one morning and asked for tickets for a station only two stations distant. The booking clerk could not find out the name of the station in the railway guide nor did he know the amount of fare to be paid. He consulted the Railway Directory for about fifteen minutes, but was still unable to find out the name of the station although, as I have said, it lay only two stations distant. As the train was about to leave, and as we were proceeding on urgent business, my friend and I had no alternative but to travel ticketless. When we arrived at our destination we could see no Station Master, nor were we asked for tickets. Now, Sir, I personally have no objection to this cheap method of travel, but if these conditions continue, the time may soon arrive when this Government will be asked to increase its subsidy.

Sir, in view of the subsidy which it is paying, I hope Government will protest vigorously against the conditions over this section of the line.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to take part in the Motion. The mover of the Motion as well as a good number of other hon. Members have stressed one point which is uppermost in my mind too, *i.e.*, regarding the acquisition and requisition of private persons' lands in the name of defence project by the Military Department. A number of cut Motions appear in the list which speak the seriousness of the matter. Village after village has been taken away for defence purpose.

*21. Mr. N. DAWSON to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 75,470 under Grant No. 10, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—H.—Ministers (total) at page 51 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To draw attention to Government's failure to get the Government of India to remedy the appalling conditions of rail travel in the Province at present.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member may straightaway go on when this Motion is not to censure the Government.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, very recently some of my neighbouring villages have been evicted by the Military Department for defence project. The people were not even allowed to remove all their belongings as they were not allowed sufficient time to remove them. At a very great expenditure, in course of five or six days, they had to remove their belongings. But I feel it a very strange thing that the civil Government up till now have not been able to compensate those poor people nor even they have the generosity to look to their comfort. Two of the Hon'ble Ministers were good enough to go to the locality, as I requested Government by wires to go there and see the conditions of the poor people themselves. A number of people approached the Hon'ble Ministers and put forth their grievances before them that they should be given suitable accommodation somewhere. Inhabitants of few villages have been totally rendered homeless and landless. They wanted that they should be given lands somewhere so that they might begin their cultivation. But up till now it is surprising to find that nothing has been done. Moreover, they were clamouring that they should be paid compensation as early as possible. But even the day I left for Shillong I received complaints from the people of that area that they had not been paid anything. People were assured by the district authorities that they would be paid their compensation very soon, but it is two and half months now that not a *couri* has been paid. All on a sudden the people were put to such a situation and in such extreme difficulty that they cannot make out as to where they will go and take shelter. About 5 to 6 thousand people have been affected badly by the project. There is none to look after them. Therefore, is it not the duty of our Government to accommodate these villagers whose lands have been taken up for military projects and who have thus been rendered landless and homeless? Sir, should we not expect that our Government should look to the interest of these homeless people and see whether they can be provided with cultivable lands and with lands suitable for the purpose of constructing their homes? Moreover for all humanities sake these people, once happy and merry and turned beggars over night ought to have been compensated quite adequately very early thus to enabling them to find out suitable places by themselves for their homes. The cultivation season is quite near and even now they do not know where they are and what would be their condition.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I must express my gratitude to you at the outset for giving me the opportunity to speak about the subject. The holy Haj pilgrimage constitutes one of the five cardinal pillars of the Islamic faith, the performance of which has been enjoined upon as obligatory religious duty upon the Muslims. Generally speaking, its performance has been made compulsory upon Muslims, who are comparatively well off though Muslims of even poorer classes are equally anxious to perform Haj as an optional religious duty. It is commonly observed by Muslims all over the world with characteristic religious fervour ever since the birth of Islam.

It will not be out of place, if I am allowed to quote a few lines from the Report of the President of the Khadimul Hujjaj Committee, Calcutta, I mean, Dr. M. S. Ali and give a brief account of the public agitation and Government measures leading to the Port Haj Committee Act, 1932.

The Hajj Committee at Calcutta was established in 1913 as part of efforts made by the Government of India to obtain fund for destitute pilgrims. The importance of the Calcutta Hajj Committee increased considerably from 1926 when the Calcutta Port was opened for pilgrims' traffic.

Though it is true that the Port Hajj Committee Act as passed by the Central Legislature in 1933 was a definite improvement over the old legislation concerning the welfare of the Haj pilgrims there are in my opinion still more serious loopholes which should be remedied in the interests of the Hajj pilgrims. One of these loopholes is the absence of any provision in the Port Hajj Committee Act for representation of Assam Muslims on the Calcutta Port Hajj Committee. The statistics of Hajj pilgrims from Assam for the last five years

will convince hon. Members that the number of pilgrims justifies the demand for representation of Assam Muslims on the Calcutta Port Hajj Committee. The figures are :—

Year	From Calcutta	From Bombay	Total
1937	117	604	721
1938	201	247	448
1939	None	303	303
1940	245	166	411
1941	165	534	699
1942	Nil	Nil	Nil
1943	Nil	Nil	Nil

(For 1942 and 1943 no statistics are available.)

The Calcutta Port Hajj Committee, be it noted, was originated for the purpose of looking after the interests and comforts of all the Hajj pilgrims of Bengal and Assam who sail from this Port or temporarily stay here on their overland journey to either Bombay or Karachi ports, without any discrimination whatsoever. From the statistics given above it would be apparent that the popularity of the Calcutta Port among the Assam pilgrims in particular is every year getting more and more increased and it is naturally anticipated that in future the bulk of the Hajj pilgrims from Assam will prefer to make their Hajj sailings from the Port of Calcutta rather than from Bombay and Karachi. Moreover, Sir, most of the Assam pilgrims being generally simple minded and uneducated village folks are naturally put to great difficulties in fully expressing themselves to the members and officials of the Calcutta Port Hajj Committee with whom they come in contact and who, to add to the disadvantage, are not fully conversant with the particular dialects spoken by our pilgrims. It has of course to be admitted that these pilgrims experience similar difficulties of language in the Hejaj and in the ports of Bombay and Karachi. In 1939 Dr. M. S. Ali, President of the Central Khadimal Hujjaj Society, was taken on the Calcutta Port Hajj Committee in appreciation of his services to the Hajj pilgrims, and not as a representative of the Assam Muslims. The Calcutta Port Hajj Committee is under re-constitution and it is not yet too late for the Assam Government to remedy the injustice done to the cause of the Assam Hajj pilgrims. What we want is that the claim of Assam Muslims be recognised by law.

With these few words I beg to submit that the Government of Assam should move the authorities concerned so as to make provision at least for three Muslim representatives from Assam on the Calcutta Hajj Committee, one member from among the Muslims residing at Calcutta and two Muslims from the Muslims of the Province of Assam.

The Hon'ble Maulavi. Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, although I had a perfectly valid technical objection to the moving of this Motion, I would not take shelter under that. I am obliged to my Friend, Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury, and Mr. Lewis who have given some thought about my being heavily overworked and who want that I should be relieved of a part of my duty in consideration of my health. I appreciate the kind feeling which these hon. Members have expressed and for the little that I have done for the Province. I too feel, Sir, that, if possible, I should be relieved of all the portfolios and taken as a "Sardar" over the rest to look after the different Departments. It has been found in actual experience, Sir, that even for Departments administered by the respective Ministers there have been almost daily occasions when they had to come and consult me on various points and policies. So, whether I be with or without any portfolio I will always remain the same heavily overworked man of the Cabinet. However, Sir, as I have said, I express my gratitude to those hon. Members and I would take this matter up with my colleagues and see if they could not take some burden off my shoulders. My hon. Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury has traversed a very wide ground and if I am to deal with all the points he has raised, it will take a very long time. As he has said that he is moving this Motion only to draw

the attention of the Government and not as a censure, I will not try to reply to every one of those points, but I will confine to certain matters which have been urged in more quarters than one.

Some hon. Members have expressed their horror that at this time when people are in great difficulty, the oppressions from various quarters have been heavier still. It has been reported that the Military have been requisitioning homestead lands of poor countryside people without giving them proper notice and also without allowing them time to remove their homes and belongings. I am aware of stray cases where the Military have requisitioned lands in Assam without even giving seven days' notice. We have protested to the highest authority of the Military Department that if possible they should give at least a month's notice, but in this matter we are entirely bound by the exigencies of the Military Department. Their reply is that they are taking these lands not for any wish of disturbing the peasantry in the countryside but when they have been convinced that these lands are required for the defence of the Province and of India as a whole. They have been pleased to say, Sir, that every man who has lost his homesteads or his cultivation is being compensated, and the Deputy Commissioners have been instructed by the Provincial Government to give advance compensation before the full assessment of the amount to be paid has been calculated. In many cases such compensations have been given to my personal knowledge. I am sorry to hear that the cases of those people about whom Mr. Abdur Rahman has spoken before the House have not been met up till now. But I can state boldly on the floor of this House a fact which has been admitted by my hon. Friend that as soon as we received telegrams of protest from people that their lands are being acquired by.....

Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS: On a point of information, Sir, will Government please inform whether the families who have been deprived of their homestead and valuable lands in the Domka-Chokabousi and Rupshi Mouzas in the Barpeta Sub-division have been properly compensated?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I was just mentioning about those people whose case has been represented here by Mr. Abdur Rahman and I was stating that as soon as we received telegrams from the people of the locality, two Hon'ble Ministers proceeded there with the idea that lands should be made available for these people for their settlement and compensation be promptly paid. These two Hon'ble Ministers were in the locality about the middle of January last and I am assured by one of them, whose business it was to see that compensation is paid and settlement of land is made with those people, that he left such instructions to the local officers and it pains him and myself to hear that the people have not received any compensation or settlement of land. I can assure the House that we will take this matter up immediately.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: That is not the solitary instance.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The general policy has been, Sir, that immediate advance payments be made to those people whose lands have been requisitioned for the Military. While I was, towards the end of January, in a particular district where people have lost their hearth and home and who approached me for settlement of land, I personally went to the forest reserve to find out lands for them. When I pointed out some lands in a particular reserve in consultation with the Subdivisional Officer who knew that area, the people objected to take settlement of that land saying that that was a timber land and that it will take them two years to make it suitable for cultivation. They prayed to me for reed land so that they could uproot the *nals* and make it fit for cultivation without much labour and I asked the Subdivisional Officer to settle such land. However, Sir, in individual cases there may have been delay, but the general policy has been that in cases where people have lost their home-lands on account of acquisition of their cultivation and where unfortunately people have been evicted from their homesteads, they would be compensated promptly and that the full compensation would be paid as early as possible. I have not fully grasped what my hon. Friend the Kavirai has mentioned. Probably he has complained that in his locality people have not been fully compensated. But it connotes that they have been partly paid and I am sure the local officers will carry out the general instruction that has been given by the local Government.

Another kind of oppression that has been mentioned is the corrupt practice in certain quarters and it pains me that the officers of the Supply Department have been characterised at present to be the blackest evil doers. We are carefully watching and ascertaining cases where rumours have been so persistent and we have asked the Commissioner to remove certain Sub-Deputy Collector and enquiries are going on in this matter. If we get sufficient evidence we are ready to punish even the highest in the land who takes recourse to corrupt practices. But, Sir, corruption has not been the monopoly in Assam alone. Hon. Members will remember that even the Government of India have felt that corruption has stalked in the land and therefore they are setting up certain machinery to deal with such corruption. Here also corruption has occurred and a case has been detected and one man has been punished in one hill district, and one of the hon. Members of this House is drafting his appeal to the highest authority.

If on the one hand we apprehend people and punish them and on the other the hon. Members who shout loud here draft petitions for getting their release, I am helpless. I expect a square deal from all the hon. Members of this House. Nevertheless it is my constant concern that there should be as little corruption as is possible. I will consider if we can have a suitable staff to deal with this matter only. Sir, if I come before the House for voting supplies for supporting an Intelligence Department to trace and track the culprits who have been indulging in this corrupt practices, I hope the House will be good enough to vote the funds.

Then, Sir, another kind of oppression has been mentioned, *viz.*, oppression to the permanent establishment because certain retired officials had been re-employed. As I mentioned in reply to a question, we had to take seven persons of this nature because we had to utilise their experience at a time when experienced officers were badly required. I am, every year calling for reports from the District Officers whether retired officers have been doing useful, efficient and continuous service, and in these I find that due to indifferent health or old age any of them has failed to fulfil his duties to the satisfaction of the District Magistrate then that retired officer will have to go.

My hon. Friend, Mr. Buragohain, in his speech recommended that Government should draw up a set of rules to deal with those officers who are either suspected of being, or proved to have been, corrupt. I see no necessity whatsoever for a new set of rules, for the Government Servants' Conduct Rules are comprehensive enough to meet such cases.

Another kind of oppression that has been mentioned by Mr. Blennerhassett is the existence of the black market. I have mentioned about this in various speeches I made previously. I am only too cognisant that our dealers, both licensed and unlicensed, have in many cases taken recourse to black marketing. We have appointed as many as 75 Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors in the Supply Department to keep a check against such method of trade. But it has been suggested that these people instead of doing their duty are filling their own pockets by illegal means. I have already stated that I will see whether we can appoint another set of officers to keep a check on our Inspectors. Mr. Blennerhassett has also said that we have only been able to catch hold of smaller fries, but what about the big dealers who contribute largely to the black market activities? Sir, our staff have been trying their level best to get hold of them, and there are instances especially at Gauhati and Dibrugarh where the biggest merchants have been hauled up for doing things illegally and selling articles at higher than controlled price. Mr. Blennerhassett also mentioned about the supply of consumers' commodities, and he mentioned wool. In Shillong itself, various cases of black-marketing in these commodities have come to our notice; one is a case of selling razor-blades and the other of selling boot polish "Kiwi" brand beyond the control price. They were detected by our inspecting staff; on account of some technical difficulty one case had to be exempted from prosecution. Unfortunately in the Anti-Profiteering and Dehoarding Order, the list of articles is not exhaustive, and in some cases the control price is far below the invoice price of the articles that were brought by our local traders from Calcutta at some much earlier period. So, we had to consult invoices before prosecuting these people.

Another instance of oppression mentioned by my hon. Friend, Mr. Dawson, is the very great discomfort under which people have to travel on the railways now. I thought he spoke generally for the Province, but he confined his criticism to the Rangiya-Belsiri-Rangapara extension of the Bengal and Assam Railway. Running of trains to scheduled timing has been an exception nowadays. We find trains running two or three hours late every day. We had protested against this to the higher authorities, but no satisfactory reply has been received. It has been alleged that all lines, especially the main line, have to do three times the work they used to do before and as there are no sufficient big passing stations there have been occasional delays, but that matters have since improved, and that station yards in the various stations have been enlarged to allow the receipt of both incoming and outgoing trains. I would again place before the higher authorities the discomfort to which the travelling public are put, especially as the Assam Government pay a subsidy for the running of the Rangiya-Belsiri-Rangapara extension.

Sir, Mr. Marak thinks that whereas the people in all civilised countries are tried, both in the civil and criminal courts, by a set of highly educated judges, in the partially excluded areas they are tried by a set of illiterate people. Nobody is more keen than myself to see that these areas are brought to the same status as the normal areas of the Province. In the pre-Reform days, while I was an ordinary member of the old Council, I had moved similar motions so far as Shillong, the capital of the Province, is concerned. Mr. Marak made a very sensible and reasonable demand that the rules on administration should at least be translated into vernacular for the use of Laskars, Nokmas, Sardars and Dolois in those areas who are to administer the rules, for, English is an unknown language to them. I will see, Sir, that this is done.

He also raised a bigger question that the recommendations of the Partially Excluded Areas Conference have not been given effect to, up till now. We are living in abnormal time. Those areas to which the recommendations of this conference relate are contributing largely to the war efforts. I consulted not only the local public men but also the officials and everyone agreed that there should be no change in the administration generally or the administration of the rules of justice for those areas during the pendency of war. In a certain locality which I visited recently where public men—one of them is an hon. Member of this House—and other reputed public men saw me—the only point that was asked for, was some legal help in the law courts. I pointed out the difficulty, but if any of the local people is trained in law, I will see that they are allowed to practice and help the litigants that come before the Court.

Lastly, Sir, another kind of oppression in the shape of non-representation of any Muslim from the Province of Assam in the Port Haj Committee has been raised by my Friend, Alhaj Khan Sahib Dewan Muhammad Ahbab Chaudhury. He has mentioned to the House, Sir, that there are three Port Committees at Karachi, Bombay and Calcutta from where the pilgrims start for their pilgrimage to Mecca. He himself had been to the pilgrimage and knows the difficulties of pilgrims in areas outside the Province. He seems to think like the Government of India who want to thrust the burden on us that we should be made responsible for these pilgrims who proceed beyond the borders of Assam, so far as their sanitary and other comforts are concerned. We have been corresponding with the Government of India on this subject. Except in Calcutta we had had no representation. The very gentleman whose report he read, an inhabitant of Sylhet, practising as Dentist in Calcutta, who is the president, Khadimul Hujjaj Society, which means "servant of pilgrimage society", after our representation to Bengal Government, has been taken in as a representative of Assam in that Committee. My Friend is asking for more—probably one from each Valley—which will be too much to expect from the Government of Bengal. They will never concede to our request that as many as three members from Assam be taken on the Calcutta Port Haj Committee. For the present, such recommendation will be a dead letter because on account of the war situation, the pilgrimage to Mecca has been stopped last year as well as this year, but I will assure my Friend that we will recommend to the Government of Bengal to give us two in place of one.

If I have not touched any point in my reply, Sir, that has been raised, I will keep it in mind as I have taken note of all the points raised by my Friends, the critics.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member press his motion?

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: In view of the sympathetic reply given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

Adjournment

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

After Lunch.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The discussion of this item will continue upto 2-30. P.M. I should like to know which of the other cut Motions are going to be moved. Practically all points which the hon. Members wanted to discuss have been discussed, but only some minor points remain. Does Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury want to move his Motion No. 2.*

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: No.
The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya like to move his Motion‡?

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA. It need not be moved now.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS I should like to move Cut Motion No. 14.
I beg to move that the provision of Rs.6,000 under grant No.10, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—H.—Ministers, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total) at Page 51 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.29,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

By this Motion I want to censure Government for not releasing the political prisoners.

Sir, I should like to bring some facts before the hon. House about the political prisoners. In Bengal, a Tribunal has been set up to examine the cases of political prisoners with a view to their release, but in Assam nothing like that has been done. In Bengal and in many other Provinces Governments have not been miserly in the release of M. L. A. prisoners even at the risk of strengthening the opposition, but in Assam, the Cabinet though enjoying a comfortable majority in the House, would not allow the M. L. A.s to function with the result that the House has lost its representative character. Most of them were arrested immediately after the August Resolution of 1942, probably by way of preventive measures, but when the movement has subsided is their any justification to detain them any longer without giving them a chance of stating their views. Sir, how long are these persons to be detained? Are they to be detained till the duration of the war, and nobody knows when the war will end. It may be of another 5 years or even a decade. Many of them will breathe their last in the jail, many will get shattered in health, their family members may as well die

*2. Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY to move:—
That the provision of Rs. 6,000 under Grant No. 10, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—H.—Ministers, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Private Secretary at page 51 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To raise a discussion about the necessity of abolishing the post of Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Prime Minister.)

‡16. Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA to move:—
That the provision of Rs.23,510 under Grant No. 10, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—H.—Ministers, Sub-head—2.—Pay of establishment, Detailed head—Clerks at page 51 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To discuss the distribution policy of controlled articles and the function of Food Committees.)

without having the chance of a last look or talk with them. Sir, the Government have powers to detain any and every person whenever it is their pleasure to do so. The Judiciary is helpless in this matter; but is there any moral justification for such indefinite detention of persons most of whom were, perhaps, the only earning members of the family and during their enforced detention many families may be ruined.

Sir, I cannot conclude without a word about the student prisoners. No facilities have been granted for their studies; no allowance has been given either for the purchase of books or for the payment of their examination fees. Far from that, even those who desire to sit for the University Examination at their own expense are not permitted to do so. I may refer in this connection to three specific cases of detenus in the Sylhet Jail. I mean, Babu Harinarain Dam, Babu Nabakumar Bhattacharya and Miss Lily Dutt. Last year all attempts on their parts to appear at the B. A. Examination from the Jail found no response from the Government. The Hon'ble Minister for Jail says that he has no information. Sir, in spite of all these petitions and telegrams from the detenus and their relatives, agitation in the local press, the Government do not get the information. I do not know how the information can be injected on this impervious Government. In Bengal all facilities have been given to the students to sit for examination. The Hon'ble Premier says that 60% of the political prisoners have been released, but in the Sylhet Jail we find not even 10% has been set free. So I doubt whether the figures supplied to him are correct. These prisoners are pining and wasting their time in Jail for what offence? Will not Sir Muhammad, as the Head of the popular Ministry, assert himself and earn the unstinted gratitude of the people of the Province by releasing the political prisoners?

With these words, Sir, I commend my Motion to the acceptance of the House.
The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut Motion moved:

“That the provision of Rs.6,000 under Grant No.10, Major head—25—General Administration, Minor head—H.—Ministers, Sub-head—1—Pay of Officers (total) at page 51 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.26,19,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100”.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.75,470 under Grant No.10, Major head—25—General Administration, Minor head—H.—Ministers (total) at page 51 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.26,19,000 do stand reduced by 100.

Sir, I find there are some security prisoners in the Province. Though they are not released, their families are not being granted any allowances for their maintenance. For example I will mention the names of two prisoners here. They are (1) Maulavi Ibrahim Ali and (2) Maulavi Mobarak Ali, B. L. I understand, Sir, their families cannot be maintained unless Government grant them allowances. I do not know exactly whether they applied to the Government for allowance, but the fact is neither they know where their families stay at present nor their relatives are in the know of their whereabouts. That being the state of affairs, Sir, I would request Government to consider their case sympathetically and take necessary steps in the matter.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I wish to add only one point to what my hon. Friend Mr. A. K. Das has said just now. Last year, Sir, I understand that one of the candidates from Silchar was allowed to appear in the examination whereas none from Sylhet were allowed to sit for the examination. It is not that Government is not giving this facility to the student prisoners but why this differential treatment has been made to the examinees of these two districts? I cannot understand this, Sir. So far as the examinees in the Sylhet Jail are concerned, I brought it to the notice of the District Authorities this year being requested by the guardians to approach the Government and I understand that nothing has been done as the Jail Authorities here are not willing to make any arrangement for these examinees inside the Jail compound. Sir, in this connection, I think that if the Jail Authorities are not willing, Government can grant parole only for the examination purpose to these examinees. They have

submitted their fees, they will get their admission cards, but these admission cards will come through the Jail Authorities concerned and if the Jail Authorities make no arrangement for holding the examination inside the Jail, the student prisoners will lose a year and also their money. I know of one examinee who had to appear last year in the usual course, but as nothing was done last year, this year also he has submitted his fees and unless something is done this year he is going to lose another year and the fees. Sir, if Government is unwilling to grant parole and is still willing to help the examinees, they may be sent to the examination hall under police escort. There are various ways of helping these examinees and if the Government really want to help them they can do so in many ways. I think, Sir, I will get this assurance from the Hon'ble Prime Minister that he will make some arrangement so that the examinees can appear for their respective examinations.

As regards other points, Sir, namely, allowances to the families of the political prisoners and release of the political prisoners, enough has been said on the floor of this House several times and only the other day we were told by the Hon'ble Premier that in some cases allowances have been granted. But the allowances that have been granted are so inadequate that even the Hon'ble Prime Minister, I am sure, had he been in any other position than that he is occupying at present, would have called it a mockery. Now-a-days an allowance beginning from Rs.25 to Rs.60 is nothing for even a very moderate family. Sir, my request to the Hon'ble Premier is that adequate allowances should be granted to one and all to maintain their families and that he should not depend entirely on the District or Subdivisional Authorities in this matter, but through some other responsible and unbiased authorities he should try to find out the real condition of the families of these unfortunate prisoners, who are being detained in Jails without any trial so that adequate help may be given and innocent security prisoners may be released very soon.

Sir, with these words, I support the Motion of my hon. Friend, Babu Akshay Kumar Das.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA. Sir, I find that three points have been raised on this Cut Motion by the hon. Members who have taken part in the discussion.

The first is that the hon. Mover wants to follow the example of Bengal in setting up a Tribunal to examine the cases of the political prisoners.

The second is that student prisoners should be given every facilities for preparing and appearing in the University Examinations.

The third is that adequate allowances should be given to the families of the prisoners.

As regards the first point, Sir, I see no necessity to follow the example of Bengal. I mentioned the other day that almost every week I review cases of these political prisoners. I asked both the District Authorities as well as the head of our Intelligence Branch to keep me informed of these unfortunate people who have been detained and if I find suitable reasons for releasing any one of them, I at once pass orders for release. Very recently I have passed orders for releasing two more of these prisoners from the Sylhet Jail.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI. May we know the names of these released prisoners, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA. I remember only one name, Sir, and that is Achinta Kumar Bhattacharyya; the other name I forget.

This morning cases of another 16 prisoners were placed before me. I went through their records and although the District Authorities have not recommended their release, in the case of one of them I have asked for further particulars as regards the activities of the prisoner just to see whether I can release him. In this way, Sir, I have been constantly considering the cases of these prisoners and therefore I see no necessity for a Tribunal for examining their cases. My hon. Friend, the Mover, mentioned about the case of Miss Lily Dutt. I think he will be surprised to know that this particular prisoner was released by me more than a month ago and if she wants she can easily appear in the examination as a

free student and not under Police escort or parole as suggested by my Friend Mr. Mookerjee. So far as the student prisoners are concerned, I have allowed three facilities to prepare for the examination, *i. e.*, if they want books to be brought from outside we have allowed them to do so. I have ordered the jail authorities to give the students all facilities for preparing for examination and help them with stationery.

As regards appearance in the examination we authorised last year all the jails where there were such examinee detinue prisoners to arrange for their examinations. Mr. Mookerjee has rightly pointed out that although such examination was held at Silchar, no such examination was held in the Sylhet jail. The reason, Sir, is that the number of examinees appearing from the Silchar jail was larger than in the Sylhet jail and the authorities of the Sylhet jail reported to us that they were not in a position to hold any examination for want of accommodation consistent with all the vigilance that are wanted by the University. This time also both the Sylhet and Silchar jails expressed their inability for making any arrangement for the examinations. Up till now, the cases of a few students have been brought before me and I will consider whether they can be allowed to appear at the examination as suggested by Mr. Mookerjee.

Next, Sir, the question of allowance. This is not the policy of Assam alone. This is an all-India policy, and an All-India policy has been to give bare maintenance allowance to those who are needy and those who apply. As soon as an application is received by me I ask the district authorities to enquire into the means of the family and wherever I have found that the family is in want, I have ordered payment of allowance. Only two or three days back I mentioned to the House that about seventy-five families are in enjoyment of an allowance. The inadequacy of the allowance has been mentioned by Mr. Mookerjee. Well, I may concede that. Probably, if these people were outside jail they might earn more than what I have been able to give. But it is up to them to give an undertaking that they will not join any subversive movement and they will be set free and they will earn more. I have ordered release even to those cases who were members or are suspected to be implicated in the sabotage movement. Only yesterday, my Friend Mr. Nirendra Nath Deb brought the case of a detinue to my notice saying that his wife is ill and it will be an act of humanity if I release the prisoner either on parole or permanently. Immediately, I passed an order granting parole to the prisoner and have asked for a report from the proper quarters whether with impunity, I can release him.

Another case of a detinue who is suspected to be suffering from T. B., a man coming from Habiganj, was brought to my notice by my Friend Mr. Abdur Rahman. Immediately, I have given permission to that person to remain beyond the parole period at Shillong so that he may be thoroughly examined by the experts. Unfortunately the expert himself was ill and I had to extend his parole period. Only yesterday, the same young man appeared before me with a report from the examining doctor that T. B. germ has been detected and I have passed orders releasing him to be treated at Calcutta. So, I have given full consideration to every case that has been brought to my notice.

Sir, I think, I have met all the points of those Members who spoke on this subject and I hope they will see that there is nothing to censure Government but to appreciate what little I have been doing and to encourage me to do much in future.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Will the hon. Member press his Motion?

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: In view of what I have heard from the Hon'ble Premier, I do not press my Motion for division.

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

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

The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs.26,19,000 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 “25.—General Administration.”

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 2.

(7.—LAND REVENUE)

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.18,77,700 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 "7.—Land Revenue."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.18 77,700 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 "7.—Land Revenue."

There are thirty-seven Cut-Motions.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.2,59,521 under Grant No.2, Major head 7.—Land Revenue, Minor-head—Charges of Administration—A.—General Establishment, Sub-head—1.—Pay of officers, Detailed head—Sub-Deputy Collectors at page 27 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100 *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.18,77,700 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir; I want to move my Cut-Motion† No.37.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: When the question of policy is going to be discussed, I think, the hon. Member may take part in Mr. Bari's Motion.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: No, Sir, he wants to go in one place and I want to go just the opposite. I want the withdrawal of the land settlement policy and he wants to intensify it.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Very well, I shall see.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Sir, by this Motion I want to raise a discussion about the Land Settlement Policy of the Government of Assam. In view of the alarming food situation prevailing in the Province at the moment and in view of the unsatisfactory state of our provincial finances, the question should be examined afresh in the list of circumstances that have been forced upon us by the exigencies of the war conditions.

Here in Assam, the policy of Land Settlement has a history of its own. It is dismal and peculiar, unheard of in any other part of India. Here, the common good of the people and the country was never recognised as the cardinal principle in the settlement of land. Here we were never actuated by the common intention of expanding the wealth and resources of the Province as a whole. Here petty jealousy and hatred has been the only motive force guiding the policy of Land Settlement. This short sighted policy had its repercussions on the general life of the Province. The policy so long pursued redound to our shame and disgrace and contribute to the ultimate deterioration of our finances.

First of all, I would refer to the invulnerable Line System—which is still intact in spite of the repeated onslaughts from more than one quarter. By this artificial barrier, British Indian subjects have been denied the right of settlement in British Indian territory. By this ingenious device millions of acres of fertile cultivable waste land have been kept reserved and uncultivable within the line. By this lawless law we have denied to hundreds of thousands of our fellow beings the elementary rights of earning a living by the sweat of their brow. The Advocate General of Assam has questioned the legality of the system. To an unbiased mind it will appear not only illegal but immoral as well.

†37. Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI to move:—

That the total provision of Rs.18,77,700 under Grant No.2, Major head—7.—Land Revenue at page 27 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.2, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.18,77,700 do stand reduced by Rs.2.

(To urge the withdrawal of the Land Settlement Policy recently adopted by Government particularly with reference to opening of Grazing Reserves for Settlement purposes.)

*Speech not corrected

The second outstanding feature in the Land Settlement Policy of the Government of Assam is their innumerable reserves. Vast tracts of land have been marked out as Forest Reserves without any expectation of an early yield of timber. We have our Professional Grazing Reserves comprising thousands of acres of land without a corresponding gain. In the Game Sanctuary Reserves, we have shown enough consideration for the rhinocs and the wild buffaloes. But we have lamentably lacked in showing compassion to human beings. The result has been that Assam in spite of its immense undeveloped resources, is amongst the poorest of the provinces in India.

Look at the vast quantity of cultivable fallow land in the districts. On a rough estimate ten millions bighas of such land are lying uncultivated. In the district of Nowgong alone about four lakhs of bighas may be available for extension of cultivation. The estimated cultivable waste land in Darrang amounts to 9,60,000 bighas, and in Kamrup 8,10,000 bighas. In the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur a total acreage of over 1,800,000 bighas may easily be brought under the plough. If this vast quantity of land were settled, the revenue of the Province would have increased by a respectable percentage. Not only that, the agricultural resources of the Province would have largely been augmented. Should we leave this vast potential wealth undeveloped only to spite those unfortunate persons whose forefathers happened to live in Bengal?

Sir, we are spending lakhs of rupees on the Grow More Food Drive. Certainly the Government of India does not want that the Drive should end in propaganda alone. What it is worth if sufficient lands are not released for successful prosecution of the campaign? Unless our Land Settlement Policy is thoroughly revised, how can we expect to achieve any amount of success?

The other day Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan narrated the woeful tale of ten lakhs of land-less persons—all of them sturdy peasants, who had left their homes and hearths in Bengal and were living within the boundaries of Assam. Suffering humanity demands that these persons should be saved at all costs. And this can only be done by the abolition of the policy of segregation—by lifting the embargo that has stood in the way of prosperity of the Province.

Some six years back, the Line System Committee that was appointed by the first Saadulla Cabinet finished its labours. But it is a matter of deep regret, that even the modest recommendations of the Committee could not be put in action. The Development or the Colonisation Scheme did not bring any material benefit to these hordes of landless people. The weak-kneed and peacemeal policy that has been adopted by the Government from time to time, has only aggravated the situation. I would ask the Government to take up courage in both hands and abolish this abominable Line System.

Sir, pleading for the landless immigrants, we do not for a moment think that the expansion should be made at the expense of the indigenous population. Sufficient land may be kept reserved for them and the tribal people on the basis of the percentage of their increase during the last thirty years. Even providing for that on a generous scale, vast quantities of land will be available for settlement with the immigrant population.

As regards the policy of the Government regarding the Reserves, I beg to submit, unprofitable forest reserves should be thrown open for cultivation. The area under the Game Reserves should be drastically curtailed. There is hardly any sense in setting apart hundred square miles of land for ten rhinocs to roam about. Lastly, every available bigha of land in the Professional Grazing Reserves excluding those which are actually used for grazing purposes should be thrown open for cultivation.

Sir, I would like to refer to the Government Resolution on their Land Settlement Policy of August, 1943. Therein, the Government failed to face the responsibility with any amount of confidence. The recommendation couched in mystic words were so equivocal that the unsympathetic officers had no difficulty to frustrate the very object of the Resolution. It is no wonder that in spite of the Resolution it was not possible to settle even a bigha of land with the immigrants.

Government of India had requested the Government of Assam to bring under cultivation at least twelve lakhs of additional bighas of land in the year 1943. We would like to know from the Hon'ble Revenue Minister how far the intentions of the Government of India have been fulfilled.

Finally, I submit that the greatest contribution that Assam can make towards the successful prosecution of the war is to grow more food-stuffs for ourselves and for those who are defending the borders of Assam. With this aim in view all artificial barriers must be withdrawn. It will be an act of sabotage on the part of the Government of Assam if they impede the most vital question of food production by maintaining the Line System and their useless reserves.

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

Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS : Sir, Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury has raised a discussion about the Land Policy of Government. He has moved in one direction and I am constrained to move in the other direction. Sir, if I would have been in a position to charge the Assam Government, I would have charged them for the criminal breach of trust for holding this Land Settlement Policy, which is quite detrimental to the interest of the people of Assam. In a democratic country the Government is a trustee in respect of valuable assets of the country. In a province, the Government is a trustee in respect of valuable properties of the people.

The hon. House knows very well that land is the only valuable asset upon which depends the future well-being of the future generation. This is a property which should be preserved. This is a property which should not be used against the interest of the Province. It is for this land Hitler fights, England, America, Japan fight, and it is for this Assam is in the front line of the global war. So, on Assam all eyes have been rivetted upon. The attention of the whole world, so to say, has been focussed on Assam. And in Assam, will be decided, the fate of the whole world.

The first attack Assam has to face is from the immigrants. There is an organised attempt to make Assam a Muslim majority Province. In order to handle this smoothly the Government have passed a Resolution on the 15th of August, 1943 to settle the available cultivable waste lands and the land in excess of requirements in the Professional Grazing Reserves to the landless people. Who are the landless? How long the cry of landlessness will continue, can the Government answer? Villages after villages have been sacrificed for the interests of the immigrants. The tribal people, the indigenous people have fled away from their homes being oppressed and molested by the immigrants and Government is giving no help to those people. Sir, Rupakuchi, Basmura, Palhaji, Katagar, Doumani, etc. in the Barpeta Subdivision, these villages which were reinhabited by the indigenous people and the tribal people have now become the habitations of the immigrants. The waste land has become a myth.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member should finish.
Srijut. GHANASHYAM DAS: Now the cry is for the Professional Grazing Reserves. After that what will be the cry—all the Ministers' home—is'nt that, Sir? Sir, the Government have deputed a special officer to ascertain the exact position of the grazing reserves and how much lands there are in excess of requirements. The report of the officer Mr. Desai has been treated by the Government as a secret document. We do not know what Mr. Desai has reported. If I have not been wrongly informed, I am in a position to say that the Government have not been satisfied with his report.

So, Sir, to accelerate the speedy execution of the design of the Government as adumbrated in their Resolution of last August, they have circulated a letter on 18th February 1944, to all the executive officers in the districts and subdivisions to take up the settlement policy of the Government and have authorised them to take as many staff as necessary for that purpose.

Sir, this order of the Government has been coated with sugar and it is a bluff to the people. Sir, if the Government is actually sincere in their idea that they will be able to raise *Aus* crop this year by this settlement policy being carri-

ed out, I say in that case that this is a frantic idea. The time for sowing the *Aus* crop specially in the Barpeta Subdivision is over. The areas which the Government are going to open for settlement are low-lying area and it will be washed away by water in the month of *Baisakh*. This policy of the Government has been protested from all sides of Assam—from Dibrugarh Tribal Association, from Nowgong Hindu Mahasabha, from Gauhati in a meeting under the presidency of Srijut Ambika Giri Ray Chaudhury, and from Barpeta. Finding no remedy in the hands of the Government, some memorialists headed by Mr. Dhaniram Talukdar, Chariman of the Barpeta Local Board and others, have sent an application asking His Excellency to interfere in this matter, Sir,...

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

Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS: It has been protested inside the House and outside the House. In spite of all the protests when the Government are going to carry out this suicidal policy—suicidal to the interest of the Province, should I not attribute to this Government a charge of criminal breach of trust in respect of the valuable asset of the Province?

Sir, the Government will answer that they have been compelled to do so by the Central Government and they have been asked to furnish them with a monthly report about the settlement. This is not very convincing. Do the Government say that they are not masters of their own property? Can the Central Government interfere in provincial matters? If the Central Government only exchange things for things, commodities for commodities, atta and sugar for rice, what do they intend to give us for our land? Immigrants for land! A burden to consume our resources in shape of famine relief grants. Do they intend to kill Assam in respect of present and the future?

Sir, if that be the case, if the Assam Government cannot convince the Central Government about this, I would rather welcome the suggestion of the Hon'ble Premier to give settlement to the soldiers to grow more food. This should be of course a temporary measure.

*Srijut DHIRSINGH DEURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have got two Cut Motions standing in my name—†Nos. 13 and 14. So, may I speak on this Motion?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes.

*Srijut DHIRSINGH DEURI: Government's policy on settlement of waste land in Assam was first enunciated by the Congress-coalition Ministry in their Resolution dated 4th November, 1939. They accepted the principle of planned settlement and adequate protection to the backward and the tribal classes in matters of settlement of lands. The Resolution provided "That in the sub-montane areas it should be possible to constitute whole mouzas or compact parts of mouzas inhabited predominantly by the backward and the tribal classes in to prohibited areas." They resigned before they could take any steps for giving effect to their Resolution. The next Ministry after assuming office took up the matter and a conference was held to discuss it. The representatives of different parties took part in the deliberation and certain recommendations were made in that conference. It was then agreed to give special protection to the tribal people. Even the immigrant representative had to admit that there was really a necessity for giving such protection to the tribal people.

† 13. Srijut DHIRSINGH DEURI to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 2,56,400 under Grant No. 2, Major head—7.—Land Revenue, Minor head—Charges of Administration—A.—General Establishment, Sub-head—1.—Pay of officers (total) at page 27 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 18,77,700 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.
(To criticise the Land policy of the Government.)

† 14. Srijut DHIRSINGH DEURI to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 2,56,400 under Grant No. 2, Major head—7.—Land Revenue, Minor head—Charges of Administration—A.—General Establishment, Sub-head—1.—Pay of officers (total) at page 27 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 18,77,700 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To draw the attention of Government for appointing a Special Officer to look after the interest of the tribal people in the matters of settlement of lands.)

* Speech not corrected.

Then the Government accepted the basic principles of the Congress-Coalition Ministry's Resolution in their Resolution of 21st June 1940. I think, this Resolution of 21st June 1940 still holds the field and now it is the duty of the Government to give effect to its recommendations.

The question now is—what steps Government have taken to give effect to the recommendations of their Resolution of the 21st June 1940? They have no doubt appointed a Development Scheme Officer to make survey of the waste lands the Province available for settlement and a Special Officer for ascertaining whether there are grazing reserves in excess of requirements at the time. They have, however, failed to appoint a Special Officer to take census of landless people in Assam. They have also failed to devise a scheme to give effect to their accepted principles of planned settlement and of giving adequate protection to the backward and the tribal classes in matters of settlement of land with them.

The present Ministry took office more than 18 months ago. During this long period, they could have appointed a Special Officer for enquiring into economic holdings of the backward and the tribal classes and for having a census of the landless among them. They cannot take shelter under the plea that they are short of officers to take up the task. It is a lame excuse. They can appoint or find out officers for finding out waste lands and for examining grazing reserves; but they cannot find out officers to make a census of the landless people in Assam. Can anybody believe this?

Sir, our Finance Minister's heart is crying for the landless people of the neighbouring Province of Bengal. It definitely appears that he is more anxious to find out people. He repeats his empty and vague assurance of giving adequate protection to the tribal classes. There is absolutely no meaning in his assurance of giving protection to these people.

Sir, Government have assured us that submontane areas and the areas predominantly inhabited by the tribal classes would be constituted into prohibited or closed areas and they would be reserved for the tribal classes only. The assurance is only in the papers. They have not yet declared which areas are being reserved for the tribal classes. On the contrary, they are giving lands to the immigrants and others in submontane areas. The tribal people are also being evicted from the lands they have been cultivating and occupying in such submontane areas.

The Government seem to be indifferent in matters of giving lands to our landless people. Their Resolution on Land Settlement, dated 24th August 1943, has not also said how Government are going to afford protection to us in matters of settlement of lands. It simply repeated the hackneyed assurance that adequate protection would be afforded to the backward and minority communities. It is difficult to understand from the Resolution whether the Government have been sticking to their accepted principle of planned settlement or they have given up that principle in the interest of the Grow More Food Campaign.

In my opinion, if Government desire to give us protection in matters of land settlement, they cannot but take a census of landless people and devise a scheme for giving lands to them. I still make an appeal to the Government that they should come forward without any delay with a definite scheme including the appointment of a Special Officer for safeguarding the interest of the tribal people according to the declared policy of the Government already enunciated.

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

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to oppose the Motion which has been moved by Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury in so far as it seeks to do away with the Line System.

The House will remember that in August 1937, my hon. Friend, the present Finance Minister, moved a Resolution to abolish the Line System, but that Resolution had to be withdrawn, and after that a Line System Enquiry Committee was formed which toured in different places and made certain recommendations. Those re-

commendations were considered by the Congress-Coalition Ministry sometime in October or November, 1939 when Resolutions were published in the Gazette which reiterated the anxiety of continuing the Line system. The matter was again gone into by the then Governor in the year 1940 when a Conference was held and there, Sir, certain conclusions were arrived at as to the mode of settlement of waste lands amongst the different communities. The recommendations of that Committee were not acted upon. In the meantime another decision was arrived at by His Excellency Sir Robert Reid, the then Governor of Assam, in his capacity as Administrator under section 93 of the Constitution Act, and a Resolution was published which reiterated that the present Line System must continue. So, so far as the continuance of the Line System is concerned, the present position of the Government is, as I have already explained, that the Line System must continue and the available waste lands shall be distributed in such a way that sufficient margin of land is left for future expansion of indigenous people, and the rest that is available may be distributed amongst the different communities according to their needs. But that is not the thing which has raised feelings of consternation and panic amongst the people now. It is the present policy of the Government which seeks, as the people say, to distribute, under the garb of Grow More Food Campaign, not only all available land but also to cut down grazing reserves and settle them with any class of persons who need them. Sir, a Resolution was published on the 24th August 1943, and in November 1943, a Special Officer was appointed to find out whether there was any surplus of grazing reserves available for settlement. Now, that Special Officer has submitted a Report about which I put some Questions, the other day in the House and my Hon'ble Friend the Revenue Minister, was pleased to promise to lay a copy of that Report on the table. But the Report could not be Ready in time but the Hon'ble Minister has been kind enough to lend that Report to me for perusal. Now, when a decision was being arrived at, the Government issued a most unfortunate order—unfortunate in the sense that it tended to create lawlessness in the country. That order was that trespassers in the grazing reserves should not be disturbed; this is an unheard of decision for any Government to arrive at just to encourage lawlessness of the people. Sir, taking advantage of that decision people from outside the Province have in large numbers, have been practically settling on the grazing reserves in spite of protests from the graziers, and in some places they have not hesitated to burn and destroy the houses of professional graziers. Now, what I particularly urge on the Government is to rescind their policy of settling land in the professional grazing reserves

Now, Sir, I had the advantage of going through the Report of the Special Officer and with the permission of the Hon'ble Revenue Minister, I will read some portions of it. A careful perusal of this Report will show that the Special Officer on the whole does not recommend cutting down of grazing reserves for the purpose of settlement anywhere.

"I had expected that the issue would be fought between the professional graziers on the one hand and landless immigrants on the other. In actual fact these parties were reinforced by others on either side and the issue became in some respects an Assamese-Immigrant issue. It was clear that the Assamese were considerably perturbed by the policy of the Government as enunciated in the Government Resolution dated the 24th August, 1943. The Assamese case was argued with some warmth and as Government will be interested in the popular reaction to their Resolution, I proceed to give below in brief the Assamese reaction. The considerations which are stated in the Resolution as having led the Government to review their Land Settlement Policy and the initiation of the present enquiry were taken up one by one and it was contended

(1) that the present urgent need....."

*The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Sir, this Report has not been placed on the table of the House and the Government Resolution on it is not there. I simply gave it to him on a personal request but not to make use of it.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: He asked the permission of the Hon'ble Minister.

*The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Not for using it in this way, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: When the Hon'ble Minister objects I do not think the hon. Member is quite right in reading it.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, let me not quote the Special Officer but let me urge my point.

That the present urgent need of growing more food.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Is the hon. Member reading from the Report?

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: These are my arguments, Sir. (*Loud laughter*). That the present urgent need of growing more food should be solved on a temporary basis without permanently jeopardising the vital interests and well-being of the Assamese population. That the desirability of increasing the revenues of the Province regardless of the resultant permanent injury to the interests and welfare of the indigenous population should not weigh unduly with a Government which call itself 'Government of Assam'.

That in so far as revenues can be increased without permanent injury to the interests and welfare of the indigenous population, it should be seen whether the apparent increase in the revenue demand is not likely to be set off by annual remissions and the cost of various relief measures which will be necessary for persons settling down in low-lying areas where crop failures will be frequent.....

*The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Sir, is he not reading the Report?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now the position is this. The Hon'ble Minister allowed him to go through the Report and if after going through the Report he adduces some arguments, which he says, are really his arguments, although they may be only some quotations from the Report, I cannot do anything. The Hon'ble Minister ought to have realised the risk of allowing him this Report.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: That the responsibility for making provision for the increased number of landless persons of Bengal is a responsibility of the Government of Bengal and not that of Assam. There will be, moreover, no end to the number of persons who will come from Bengal and claim to be landless in Assam. The Subdivisional Officers know very well and it is reported that they have told the Special Officer that every day shoals of people from Bengal—not destitutes—were coming by train and disappearing in immigrant villages.

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

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: As regards the grazing reserves, Sir, I think, I can say this much from my memory of the Special Officer's Report (*Loud laughter*).....

*The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It seems his memory is to be refreshed.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: In his opinion, Sir, as far as I remember, buffaloes and cattle play a vital part in the rural economy. The professional grazing reserves are sources of draught animals for the plough or the cart, supply of milk produce to the neighbourhood.....

*The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: May I enquire from the Chair when the next item will be taken up, I mean, the Veterinary?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: At 3-30. The hon. Members must try to finish by that time.

*The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: What is this, Sir? I gave the Report to him on a private request to have a glance at it.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: My difficulty is that the hon. Member does not admit that he is reading from the Report and the Report is not before me. I quite sympathise with the Hon'ble Minister that he did not realise the risk of allowing the hon. Member to go through the Report. No doubt the hon. Member has gone through the Report; but he says he is giving his own arguments and not quoting from the Report. It may so happen that these arguments may be the arguments given by the Special Officer.

*The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: But, Sir, he is reading from the Report.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, I see he is reading from a piece of paper. But he may say that he is reading from some other paper which is not the Report.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: There is a saying, Sir, that great men think alike. If my arguments tally with those of the Special Officer, it only proves the adage.

My point is this, Sir, according to the Special Officer's Report, as far as I remember, that the number and areas of grazing reserves is comparatively small and further reduction will be disastrous to the people. It says that grazing reserves may be large in area in one particular place but it is diminishing in area every year by erosion and encroachment. In the submontane areas most of the grazing areas are unfit for cultivation but the immigrants are encroaching in those areas and burning the houses of the graziers.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order, Srijut Rabi Chandra Kachari.

Srijut RABI CHANDRA KACHARI: Sir, in my speech on the general discussion of the Budget, I described the difficulties of the landless people of the backward and the tribal classes in matter of settlement of land with them. My Friend Srijut Dhirsingh Deuri also cited instances from Nowgong in his speech on the general discussion on the Budget. My Friend Srijut Bhimbar Deuri, a Member of the Council and the General Secretary, Assam Tribal League, described the difficulties of our people in their way to get lands for them and made certain suggestions for remedies. Strangely enough, Government in their replies to the Budget discussions in this House and in the Council, made no reference to those difficulties except repeating their old empty assurance that adequate protection would be given to the tribal classes.

It is an admitted fact, Sir, that cent. per cent. of the tribal people are cultivators and live on lands. It is also an admitted fact that majority of them are landless and more than 95 per cent. of them are in need of more lands. It is clear from Government's Resolution on Land Settlement dated 24th August 1943 and the Executive Instructions issued thereunder that all the cultivable lands available in the Province will be thrown open for settlement with those who may be coming forward to cultivate them. If that be so, and if no scheme be devised for giving lands to the landless people of the tribal classes at this time, they will lose the chance for ever and they will remain landless for all the time to come. It is really a very critical time for us. If we allow this critical time to pass without any action—all protections in future will be absolutely meaningless.

We want action and not mere repetition of assurances that the tribal classes would be given adequate protection. We should be clearly told how Government are going to give land to our landless people. We cannot remain satisfied with Government's replies that they called for tribal people who did not come forward with applications in sufficient numbers. The applications were called for more than two years ago and our people, at the time, were not sufficiently alive to the peril that was facing them. Government have been spending a good deal of money on propaganda, such as: (1) National War Front, (2) Grow More Food Campaign, (3) Publicity and (4) Mass Literacy Campaign. They can surely spend some money for propaganda among the backward and the tribal classes for applying for lands and for bringing more lands under cultivation. They could have appointed a Special Officer or Officers for inquiring into the economic holdings of the backward and the tribal classes and for ascertaining the number of the landless among them. We have seen that Government have appointed several Colonisation Officers for giving lands to the immigrants. They become short of funds and officers only when such funds and officers are needed for giving lands to the backward and the tribal classes.

Sir, the population of the tribal classes is very large and they are at present very poor, weak and ignorant. They need protection and special treatment—real and substantial. Their economic ruin in their own country and homeland—Assam, will be a great tragedy in history and a standing disgrace to the Provincial Autonomy in Assam. The problem of giving lands to the landless tribal people is a very important and urgent problem and I feel, Sir, that Government should have long before created a separate Department for it.

It is perfectly clear, Sir, that we can no longer afford to wait and remain satisfied with mere assurances and sweet words. We want action on the assurances. Government must, therefore, proceed immediately to ascertain the number of the landless people among the tribal classes in the best way they can at this time. They must also appoint a Special Officer for looking after the interests of the tribal people in matters of land settlement and devise a scheme for giving lands to the landless among them.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the fact that the Report of the Special Officer is in the hands of the Opposition Leader before it has come even before my own eyes, clearly shows that Government has got nothing to hide in their Land Policy. It will be surprising to the hon. Members of this House that the Report has not come up before the Cabinet as yet and it is only the Minister-in-charge who has seen it, but now, the whole Report has been read to the House by Mr. Chaudhuri.

We realise that there is a keen difference of opinion in this House as well as outside, as regards whether lands now remaining unsettled, but culturable, should be settled and if so with whom and whether lands which are not needed and are far in excess of requirements of the professional grazing reserves should be de-reserved, and, thirdly, whether the Line System should be abolished. The Ministry, still sticks to the conclusion arrived in 1940 in consultation with representatives of every group concerned. I presided over that Conference in which the present Leader of the Opposition also sat along with the representatives of the tribal people, Scheduled Castes and some caste Hindus. The policy that was evolved is that a sufficient reserve should be kept for future generation. After meeting this contingency, land available should be settled on a planned basis—a recommendation which was given to Assam people by Pandit Jawharlal Nehru in 1937.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: The policy laid down was that grazing reserves should not be touched.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The policy that was evolved then, is still adhered to by the present Ministry, that sufficient land should be reserved for our indigenous people. Pursuant to that policy no settlement whatsoever is given to any outsider in the districts of Lakhimpur and Sibsagar where hundreds of thousands of *bighas* of land still remain to be brought under the plough. Colonisation or settlement not only to indigenous people but also to the outsiders are to be given only in Darrang, Nowgong and Kamrup districts.

The second policy that was evolved was that the tribal people who are really backward in education and in number and who are also very simple should be protected by all means. We stick to that conclusion even now.

*Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: What about the Scheduled Castes?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The Scheduled Castes are unfortunately scattered throughout the Province. They do not congregate in one area or in a particular locality like the tribal people. Therefore, we cannot make any such reservation for them.

In the conference at that time, our immigrant friends armed with the opinion of the then Advocate General who opined that this provision of the Line System is illegal, wanted that the Line System should be abolished then and there. But in view of the opposition from many quarters, I requested the representatives of the immigrants to stay their hands in forcing the Government to abolish the Line System or bringing the matter before a law Court. I must say to the credit of those hon. Members that they immediately agreed on the assurance that the Line System would be gradually

abolished, or the rigour of this exclusion should be diminished, as time goes on, specially, in those areas which are uninhabited by the caste Hindu community—a community which is the largest in the Province, which can look after its own interest and a community which is well-organised—a community which is rich both in education and wealth. Pursuant to that conclusion arrived at amicably by all the parties, the Line System has been withdrawn from various areas in Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgong. This is being gradually relaxed in other areas where the number of immigrants is continually increasing. We have to protect the interest of the tribal people and against the request and pressure of removing the Line System in submontane areas, where the tribal people preponderate, we have kept it in those areas. In my solicitude for the indigenous people and also for those people who want to cultivate and make Assam their home, I hold it is best that amicable relations should prevail. In this Province almost 90 per cent. are “Mahabaithal” to use the term of Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. My own ancestors came to this Province 350 years ago. Now I am an Assamese of all Assamese people. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee might have come here only 13 years ago, so he is only a “Bigatasthal” or “Baithal”. Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri’s family came from Kanauz—I know as he was telling this to me once. If he wanted to convert himself into an “Atta Bhujee” or “Chatoo Bhujee” he can very easily give up his “Chaul Bhujee” status. So, Sir, if anyone wants to throw his lot and become a real Assamese, we should welcome him provided we have got lands sufficient for settlement for the future generation. That is the policy which everybody should adopt whatever Government it be. Sir, I request the hon. Mover of this Cut Motion not to insist with his plea of removing the Line System and I request the hon. Members to keep the backward of tribal people well-protected and let us live together in amity and peace. When originally the immigrants came into our Province, people thought them to be a set of turbulent and criminal people. There are black legs and *Badmashes* in every community but for that you cannot give the same label to the entire community who are called immigrants. They have settled here, they are a sturdy peasantry, they have converted jungles into smiling fields, they have converted a backward Province like Assam into one of the most fruitful and progressive agricultural Province in India. Sir, one or two words more and I will finish.

Sir, encroachment in reserves and encroachment in areas where settlement is not allowed is not the monopoly of the immigrants alone. Even the very tribal people had to be evicted from areas where they were not allowed to settle. I got a telegram about two months ago from my hon. Friend Mr. Dhirsingh Deuri protesting that some Laloong people, who are most backward among the tribal people, are being evicted from certain places. When I was at Nowgong where this occurrence is alleged to have taken place, I sent for the Deputy Commissioner and also the Colonisation Officer for learning the facts. They reported that although sufficient lands have been reserved for those people to settle near their own villages, they would not settle there, but they had gone further and encroached and squatted upon lands which have been reserved for somebody else. Many cases of this nature occur from time to time.

Lastly, Sir, as regards the Report of the Special Officer who was deputed to see whether grazing reserves have any spare lands which can be usefully utilised. What I have heard of the Report is that the Special Officer recommended that each buffalo requires ten *bighas* of land for grazing in the year. He came to the conclusion that a buffalo and ten *bighas* or bullock—is 1/3rd of a buffalo. So, he said that ‘you keep ten *bighas* for a buffalo and ten *bighas* for three heads of cattle, in the grazing reserves’. This particular matter came up before the Cabinet in which Mr. Desai, the Special Officer, was confronted with his conclusion along with the remarks of our Agricultural Expert, Mr. Woodford. Mr. Desai stated that he took this figure from the Report of Mr. Arbuthnot, the then Commissioner, who made an enquiry as early as in 1917 and found that there were vast quantities of lands available for any and every purpose. He had arbitrarily fixed ten *bighas* for a buffalo. After discussion, it has been decided that for one buffalo five *bighas* are sufficient and we have kept the same proportion

that three cattle is equal to one buffalo. On this basis, the District Officers have been asked to find out whether any portion of some of the professional grazing reserves may be released for settlement. In this, Sir, we have gone by expert evidence.

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

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: No, Sir.

(At this stage Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri objected to the leave being granted for withdrawal of the Motion.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

“That the provision of Rs. 2,59,521 under Grant No. 2, Major head—7—Land Revenue, Minor head—Charges of Administration—A.—General Establishment, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers—Detailed head—Sub-Deputy Collectors at page 27 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 18,77,700 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

I wish to know what does the hon. Member mean by demanding a division.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, we want to express our disapproval of the policy of Government by this Cut Motion. By reducing the supply to Government we shall show that we have found fault with the existing policy of the Government.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: On a point of order, Sir: The question was whether the hon. Member Mr. Bari has got leave of the House to withdraw his Motion. It was objected to. So, should not the Motion be put whether he has the leave of the House or not?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister knows that according to the Assembly Rules when leave to withdraw a Motion moved is asked for and is objected to by a single Member, no vote is to be taken on the Motion for leave and the Motion is to be put to the vote. If leave to withdraw is asked for in respect of a Resolution and is objected to, vote is taken to see whether the leave is granted or not.

The Assembly divided

Ayes—14

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Babu Akshay Kumar Das. | 8. Babu Nirendra Nath Dev. |
| 2. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. | 9. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya. |
| 3. Babu Balaram Sircar. | 10. Babu Shibendra Chandra Biswas. |
| 4. Srijut Ghanashyam Das. | 11. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury. |
| 5. Babu Kamini Kumar Sen. | 12. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mahmud Ali. |
| 6. Babu Lalit Mohon Kar. | 13. Maulavi Mabarak Ali. |
| 7. Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri. | 14. Babu Sanaf Kumar Ahir. |

Nos—34.

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|---|---|
| 1. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla. | 15. Khan Sahib Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin. |
| 2. The Hon'ble Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta. | 16. Maulavi Jahanuddin Ahmed. |
| 3. The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali. | 17. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali. |
| 4. The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty. | 18. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. |
| 5. The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhuri. | 19. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman. |
| 6. The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia. | 20. Maulavi Sheikh Osman Ali Sadagar. |
| 7. The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. | 21. Shams-ul-Ulama Maulana Abu Nasr Md. Waheed. |
| 8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman. | 22. Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett. |
| 9. The Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn. | 23. Mr. N. Dawson. |
| 10. The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma. | 24. Mr. E. H. S. Lewis. |
| 11. Khan Bahadur Hazi Abdul Majid Chaudhury. | 25. Mr. D. B. H. Moore. |
| 12. Maulavi Abdur Rahman. | 26. Mr. R. A. Palmer. |
| 13. Maulavi Syed Abdur Rouf. | 27. Dr. C. G. Terrell. |
| 14. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahbab Chaudhury. | 28. Mr. P. Trinkle. |
| | 29. Mr. A. Whittaker. |
| | 30. Mr. Benjamin Ch. Momin. |
| | 31. Srijut Bhairab Chandra Das. |
| | 32. Srijut Bideshi Pan Tanti. |
| | 33. Rev. L. Gatphoh. |
| | 34. Mr. C. Goldsmith. |

The question was lost

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is—

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 18,77,700 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 ‘7.—Land Revenue.’”

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 21

(41.—VETERINARY)

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,53,900 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 “41.—Veterinary”.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,53,900 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—‘41.—Veterinary’.”

There are some Cut Motions.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: I am not moving any of my Cut Motions,* Sir.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.15,366 under Grant No.21, Major head—41.—Veterinary, Minor head—A.—Superintendence, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total) at page 121 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,53,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, by this Motion I wish to raise a general discussion about the policy of the Government in the Veterinary Department specially with regard to the deterioration of cattle in the Province.

From the grant itself it does not appear that the Government have a correct appreciation of the utility of the Department in combating cattle diseases. I am of opinion, Sir, that they have never bestowed serious consideration for the improvement of livestock in Assam. The present system of control over our Veterinary dispensaries is anything but satisfactory.

The present system of dual control has not worked very smoothly. In many cases it has resulted in dislocation and conflict. For better management of the Department it is essentially necessary that either the Veterinary staff should be placed under the exclusive control of the Local Bodies or in the alternative, the Local Boards should be divested of the responsibility in the matter and it is made the sole charge of the Government.

On more than one occasion, we have stressed the necessity of opening more dispensaries in each subdivision. The present arrangement might serve as an apology to the outside world, but it has never been able to render any practical good to the people in the villages. The Department has never been able to check any outbreak of cattle epidemic until the disease had its full toll.

Regarding the importation of serum and vaccine, the Hon'ble Prime Minister gave an assurance that arrangements would be made for cold storage at convenient places to maintain their potency. But we regret to note that no action has yet been taken in the matter.

Except providing for a few scholarships in the Civil Veterinary College at Calcutta, we have not thought it necessary to spend any money for Veterinary Education, Research and propaganda. We have no scheme of our own. We have not shown any interest in any Cattle Nutrition Scheme financed by the Imperial Council. We did not try to diagnose the foot-and-mouth diseases which are so prevalent and responsible for 90 per cent. of the cattle mortality. If we recognise that cattle is the main wealth of the peasants, more of our attention should be bestowed on the subject.

*1. Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY to move :—

That the provision of Rs. 8,823 under Grant No. 21, Major head—41.—Veterinary, Minor head—A.—Superintendence, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Director, Civil Veterinary Department, at page 121 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,53,900 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To raise a discussion about the pay and status of the Veterinary field Assistants.)

*2. Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY to move :—

That the provision of Rs. 8,823 under Grant No. 21, Major head—41.—Veterinary, Minor head—A.—Superintendence, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Director, Civil Veterinary Department at page 121 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,53,900 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To raise a discussion about the wide-spread cattle epidemic in the districts.)

*3. Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY to move :—

That the provision of Rs. 8,823 under Grant No. 21, Major head—41.—Veterinary, Minor head—A.—Superintendence, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Director, Civil Veterinary Department, at page 121 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,53,900 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To raise a discussion about the desirability of increasing the number of Veterinary Dispensaries.)

One word more about poultry husbandry. This subject has never received due consideration in the hands of the Veterinary Department. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge how we have utilized the services of the Veterinary Investigating Officer for poultry diseases, who was financed mainly by the Imperial Council.

I also submit, Sir, that the question of indigenous fodder and their respective food value should also be investigated.

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

Mr. D. B. H. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, Sir. My object in tabling this Cut Motion *No. 9 is to emphasize a few points about poultry breeding.

In the Budget Estimates for 1942-43 tucked away at the bottom of the Veterinary Department's estimates of expenditure, I find the following significant entry:—

1 Assistant Investigation Officer	Salary scale
for poultry diseases	Rs 150—10—200
1 Peon of ditto	Rs. 12

Since the Budget Session of 1942, two years ago, a great many changes have taken place. But most important of all I think is the fact that tens of thousands of young chickens have died from obscure diseases in this Province of Assam with all that this means for the population of this front-line Province.

Now, Sir, I turn to the Budget Estimates for 1944-45, under the heading "Veterinary", and at page 121 what do I find?

The total staff maintained by this Department for the investigation of poultry diseases to-day still consists of one special investigating officer on the same salary scale, still with his loyal and devoted following of one peon and who is, I understand, illiterate.

I am, unhappily, not a breeder of chickens. I am merely one of many sufferers who attempt with no success whatever to induce a handful of indifferent quality hens to produce a modicum of indifferent quality eggs.

On the few rare occasions when, from the direction of my hen-house, I hear the peculiar noise which I am told hens make when they have performed their duty to mankind, the servants invariably reach the author of the noise first and I find—no egg.

Friends of mine, however, who are competent to talk on such matters assure me that on average an Assam hen, given the night diet, suitable weather conditions and adequate cover over their heads, can be induced by fair means or foul to part with some 50 eggs per year.

Further more, I am told that a cross between a good English and a stout Assam bird can, if in the correct frame of mind, increase this output up to the almost indecent figure of 120—150 eggs in a year.

Adopting the more respectable figure of 50 eggs per year, a simple calculation discloses the appalling fact that for every thousand chicks that die, up to 50,000 eggs never see the light of day.

Taken over the period of the last two years, when, for the whole of Assam, tens of thousands of unhappy chicks have breathed their last before they could lay an egg, the resultant loss of this precious article of diet assumes astronomical proportions, and an egg which two years ago cost perhaps 9 pias now costs 3½ annas or more, if such a thing can be found.

This, Sir, is the grim situation with which we are faced to-day, a situation besides which other war-time problems pale into insignificance.

And yet, and this is my point, to solve this gigantic problem of the disappearing egg, the Veterinary Department can only employ one officer and one peon, believed to be illiterate.

I have no doubt but that this distracted and grossly underpaid officer spends the whole of his time either rushing or, should I say, moving slowly from one end of Assam

*9. Mr. D. B. H. MOORE to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 2,014 under Grant No. 21, Major head—41.—Veterinary, Minor head—B.—Subordinate Establishment, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment, Detailed head—Assistant Investigation Officer for poultry diseases at page 121 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,53,900 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

to the other in Bengal and Assam Railway trains devoid of any light and without any water, or alternatively, tearing his hair in his meagre office in helpless rage, while chickens die in their thousands and lacs of eggs remain unlaid.

I want to know a host of questions about this breeding of poultry.

There are probably a million other people in Assam to-day who are asking the same questions or if they are not, they should be.

Here is a problem crying for solution. Let the Veterinary Department seek the immediate assistance of Mr. Hayley and the Publicity Department. Let the special investigating officer either be given an adequate staff and a decent salary more in line with the problem he is required to solve, or, in the interests of humanity, let him be granted honourable retirement on pension before we have another applicant for admission to a mental Home.

I am confident, Sir, that in this matter I can count on the support of every hon. Member of this Assembly.

Mr. NABA, KUMAR DUTTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, those hon. Members who have offered criticisms on certain problems of the Veterinary Department have afforded me an opportunity of explaining the activities of this Department in these respects and I am grateful to them for the same.

At the outset, Sir, it must be admitted that the ever increasing demand for veterinary aid is an evidence of the growing consciousness of the people about the utility of the multifarious activities of this Department. It should also be borne in mind that the normal activities of this Department have greatly been supplemented by the activities which are inevitable in a front-line Province like Assam.

Works in connection with the examination and treatment of cattle bought by the Army Department have often to be undertaken and the Department has to co-operate generally with the Army Veterinary Officers. Moreover, an A.R.P. scheme for animals has recently been introduced in this Province. In spite of all these burdens, the Department has never failed in its duties and it has always viewed protection of animals against epidemics as one of its primary concerns. The urgent need of combating the menace of rinderpest alone had become a problem. With a view to prevent cattle mortality through such diseases, as many as 85 veterinary field assistants were trained up and put in charge of such works as vaccination and inoculation. In this year's Budget, we have made provision for increasing the number of field assistants by 25, in view of the fact, that the good work done by these field assistants has been widely appreciated. We have also proposed to improve their salaries and travelling allowances. These veterinary field assistants were appointed for a short period on the expiry of which the question of making them permanent would be taken up by this Government. On account of the dearth of Veterinary Graduates, the Government have also proposed to increase the rate of stipends in the Bengal Veterinary College.

Sir, I do admit that the programme for mass vaccination of cattle against epidemics has been greatly handicapped for some reasons. The goat-tissue vaccination which is found to be very efficacious has to be procured from Bengal and in most cases the Bengal Veterinary Section cannot meet our demand. Moreover, the potency of this vaccine remains for a short period and the distribution of the vaccines in outlying areas in the present abnormal days during that short period is not possible. I can assure the hon. Members that as soon as practicable a vaccine section would be opened out to prepare the goat-tissue vaccination in this Province. It is not possible to start it now as in these abnormal days necessary appliances such as microscope, frigidaire, etc., are not readily available. Now, Sir, with regard to cattle nutrition, a scheme was introduced in this Province some two years ago and the analysis of indigenous fodder is one of the main items of the research work. Actual feeding trial has been carried on in order to find out the food value of these fodders.

Now, I turn to poultry-husbandry. Government Poultry Farms are attached to Government Cattle Breeding Farms at Sylhet, Gauhati and Upper Shillong and from these farms we supply eggs to the general public for hatching purpose. So far as poultry diseases are concerned, a scheme was introduced in this Province in May 1942 and an

officer who took training in poultry diseases, has been put in charge of this section as an investigation officer. The cost of this scheme is shared equally by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research and the Provincial Government. A general survey of the common poultry diseases prevailing in this Province was at once carried out, clinical investigations recorded and materials collected and sent to the Imperial Veterinary Research Institute.

Sir, the control of these diseases can only be carried out by conducting both field and laboratory investigations and the hon. Members will appreciate that.....

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : How is this relevant, Sir? This is not a reply to the Cut Motion. He is making advertisement of what...

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : That is with regard to poultry diseases raised in this debate. Mr. Chaudhuri should have paid more attention to the Cut Motion moved by Mr. Moore. As I said, Sir, these diseases can only be controlled by conducting both field and laboratory investigations and the hon. Members will appreciate that this can only be done by a gradual and an experimental manner.

With regard to the question of increasing the number of Veterinary dispensaries, we have made provision for two dispensaries in this year's Budget—one at Jowai and the other at Ghagmari. The latter has become a practical proposition on account of the magnanimity of my hon. Friend Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan. But the general procedure is this, that if any dispensary is wanted the proposal must come from the Local Board first, which has got to bear a certain portion of the financial burden.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : May I ask the Hon'ble Minister whether he did receive such a proposal from the Habiganj Local Board to open a dispensary within the Nabiganj Police Station and which undertook to bear the proportionate cost? May I know what action has been taken on that?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : That proposal is still under the consideration of the Government. This year, we could not provide money for more than two dispensaries. I can assure the hon. Member that the proposal will receive our best consideration, next time.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI : May I know from the Hon'ble Minister whether it will be feasible to issue pamphlets both in Assamese and in English giving instructions, how to fight against the poultry diseases?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : I may inform the hon. Member that we have issued pamphlets both in English and Assamese.

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

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : The Hon'ble Minister has provided for a dispensary at Ghagmari but has not done anything for Nabiganj.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Does the hon. Member object to the leave being granted to withdraw the Motion?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : Yes.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The question is :

“That the provision of Rs. 15,366 under Grant No. 21, Major head—41.—Veterinary, Minor head—A.—Superintendence, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total) at page 121 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs 2,53,900 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The question is :

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,53,900 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 '41.—Veterinary.”

The question was adopted.

Election of Members to the Public Accounts Committee

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: We shall now take up election of Members to the Public Accounts Committee. The voting will take place on the floor of the House as previously notified. Ballot papers will be distributed now. I may inform the hon. Members that on the last occasion many ballot papers had to be rejected on the ground that many Members could not properly cast their votes. I hope this time the hon. Members will be on their guard.

(Voting proceeded.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I hope the voting has been finished. Is there any hon. Member who has not yet done it? (After a pause) Then I take it that there is no other hon. Member who has not finished voting.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 A.M., on Thursday, the 16th March, 1944.

Shillong,

The 21st April 1944.

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.