

**Proceedings of the First Session of the Assam Legislative Assembly
assembled after the first General Election under the Sovereign
Democratic Republican Constitution of India**

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 10 A. M. on Monday, the 10th March 1952.

PRESENT

The Hon'ble Shri Kuladhar Chaliha, B.L., Speaker, in the Chair, the nine Hon'ble Ministers, two Deputy Ministers and fifty three Members.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Finance Minister is now to present the Budget of the Government of Assam for the year 1952-53.

**Presentation of the Budget for the year 1952-53 and
Budget Speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister**

The Hon'ble Shri MOTIRAM BORA: MR. SPEAKER,
Sir,

I consider it a great privilege and a unique honour to present before the Hon. Members of this august House the Annual Statement of Budget Estimates of Receipts and Expenditure of the State of Assam for the year 1952-53. Before, however, I go into the details of receipt and expenditure I have to crave the indulgence of the Hon. Members to allow me to make some references to the background of our financial structure. In my last year's Budget Speech I made pointed reference to the manifold problems which this frontier State has to contend with and also drew the attention of the House to the clear exposition of our peculiar case by our present Hon'ble Chief Minister in his previous Budget speeches. It is needless to repeat before the Hon. Members how Assam has been made a victim of an inequitable financial arrangement and how systematically she has been given a step-motherly treatment, as this has become a past history now. While the needs of a poor, undeveloped frontier State like Assam, frequented by devastating earthquakes, floods and other natural calamities and with a population in varying stages of advancement, requiring constant attention and endeavour, to be brought to common level, are immense, the revenue yield of the State is so very meagre that it is hardly sufficient to meet the growing needs of an ordinary administration, far less that of a welfare State. The needs and demands of this backward State—to enable her to march ahead with other sister States of the great Indian Republic—have become so pressing and irresistible everyday that we can hardly ignore them now and if we do so, we do it at our peril. The inevitable result of this is that the gap between revenue and expenditure in this State is steadily widening. In

my last year's Budget speech I expressed the hope that the Finance Commission to be set up under the Constitution would be constituted soon and we might expect some equitable distribution of revenues between the Centre and the State as a result of the recommendations of the Commission. The Commission has been set up in the meantime and it is likely to visit Assam in April next. We have presented the case of Assam before the Commission in the form of a comprehensive memorandum and other supplementary information and details as required from time to time. The Commission is expected to give its final recommendations before very long and the people of Assam are eagerly waiting for that day when Assam will be relieved of the hardship of an inequitable financial arrangement, as a result of wise dispensation of justice by the learned and august Commission.

Last year I referred to the question of settlement of the amount payable by the Union to Assam under clause (a) of the Second Proviso to Article 275 of the Constitution being the amount equal to the average excess of expenditure over receipts in respect of the administration of the six autonomous districts during the two years immediately preceding the commencement of the Constitution. I am glad to tell this House that after prolonged correspondence and discussion in Delhi the Government of India have ultimately agreed to pay us a sum of Rs.40 lakhs on this account annually. I take this opportunity of expressing our gratitude to the Government of India for the spirit of accommodation shown by them in arriving at a compromise of this knotty and intricate problem.

Hon. Members are already aware that in 1948-49 the Government of India approved of our Post-war development scheme, estimated to cost a sum of Rs.12 crores over a five-year period and to be financed by the Government of India. A large number of schemes under the plan were already started and several of them were in the process of implementation when in November 1949 the Government of India announced stoppage of all post-war grants. But it was not found possible to abandon all the schemes already started which were so essential to a backward State like Assam suffering from after-effects of partition and other chronic maladies. As such this Government had to carry on these schemes even out of the poor resources of this State. The continuance of such schemes has been costing us over one crore of rupees. We have been pleading with the Government of India for assistance at least to enable us to bear this extra burden, but our attempts have not been successful.

Sometime back the Government of India appointed a Planning Commission to draw up plans for the development of the country spreading over a number of years. Accordingly this Government submitted plans to cost about 36 crores of rupees, over a five-year period, starting from the current year. After discussions at Delhi our schemes to the extent of Rs.12½ crores were approved by the Planning Commission and it also recommended that Government of India will bear 11 crores out of these 12½ crores and the balance of Rs.1½ crores will be met out of our resources. On the assurance given by the Planning Commission that we can proceed on the basis of its recommendations we approached the Government of India for their share of the financial assistance this year. But the Government of India have replied that they have given up the system of giving grants-in-aid for development purposes and would consider the possibility of giving a loan for the implementation of such schemes, which can be considered so productive that by their own productiveness they will be able to repay both the interest and the principal. Placed as we are and having not even the sufficient necessities for existence as a progressive and separate autonomous State, we have very few schemes which may be called productive in the sense that they will produce revenues to enable us to repay the loan with interest. Our schemes were for the betterment of the lot of the people and were also meant to have the necessary institutions required to train our personnel to carry out our development projects. Hence the offer of loan by the Government of India is of no assistance to us. The only scheme which may be able to repay the loan with interest is the Umtru Hydro-Electric project and examination of this scheme in all its bearing is being done by us to see whether we should approach the Government of India for a loan for this project. Meantime budget provision is being made for necessary expenditure on this scheme in the next year.

Most of the schemes included in our recommendations to the Planning Commission are already continuing schemes started in the days of post-war activities. Hence though the Government of India have declined to offer financial assistance to us, it has not been possible to give up those schemes. As a result, the whole burden of carrying out those schemes still lies with this Government. Our schemes included a large number of communication and embankment projects. Though Government of India have declined to give financial assistance towards their implementations it has been found necessary to start work on 23 road and embankment projects costing about 54 lakhs even at the risk of laying the whole burden on the available resources

of Assam as it has been considered that these schemes are so very essential for the development of our country that they cannot be deferred for a moment. I take this opportunity of appealing to the Government of India once again, and with your good wishes, at least to give us the necessary financial assistance from the next year onwards so that this undeveloped frontier State may not be left far behind other progressive units of the Indian Union in the matter of development and betterment of the lot of the people.

The schemes of development to be undertaken under this Five-Year Plan in our State include among others a scheme for the generation of electrical power by harnessing the waters of the Umtru river, improvement and extension of the principal technical institutions in the State, namely the Assam Medical College, the Assam Veterinary College and the Assam Forest School, the extension of the Reid Chest Tuberculosis Hospital, the establishment of a quinine factory and a factory for the distillation of Resin, the Rehabilitation of the Co-operative Movement, the extension of the Rural Panchayat scheme, the extension of the scheme for the nationalisation of road transport, a scheme for the construction of buildings to house the Gauhati University, improvement of 731 miles of roads and construction of 3,800 rft. of major bridges over nine rivers now served by ferry boats, schemes to check erosion caused by rivers and land reclamation schemes in the backward areas. The total outlay on the development schemes during the five-year period will be about 16 crores, including an outlay of 2.38 crores in respect of development schemes in the autonomous districts and 1.22 crores in respect of schemes in the areas inhabited by Tribal people in the plains. We consider that by their votes in the general Election the people have given us a mandate to implement these schemes. I assure the Hon. Members that we shall spare no pains to go on insisting on the Union the need for financial assistance to implement these schemes and on our part we are determined to carry the schemes into effect within the next few years.

For carrying out schemes of development in the six autonomous districts under clause (b) of the Second Proviso to Article 275 of the Constitution the Government of India agreed to a contribution of only 24 lakhs this year. In my Budget speech last year I mentioned that due to causes beyond our control we had to surrender the best part of the grant of Rs.24 lakhs in 1950-51 and hoped that Government of India would increase the grant of Rs.24 lakhs this year in consideration of the surrender made by us in the previous year. Our

Hon'ble Chief Minister took up the matter personally at Delhi and as a result of persuasion and negotiation this year the Government of India have agreed to increase the grant to Rs.39 lakhs. It is expected that we will be able to spend this amount very usefully this year. For the next year the Government of India have agreed to pay only Rs.24 lakhs. We have repeatedly brought to their notice that this Rs.24 lakhs would be insufficient even to carry out the schemes that have already been started. I hope I will have the support of the Hon. Members in my appeal to the Government of India to increase the grant to at least Rs.40 lakhs so that the schemes which have already been started may be carried to completion without any difficulty.

Under the First Proviso to Article 275 of the Constitution the Government of India are to give aid to Assam for carrying out schemes for the development of the plains tribal areas. Though we have submitted schemes for that purpose and have been pressing the Government of India for grants-in-aid to implement those schemes the Union Government have not been able to extend any aid for the purpose, on the plea of financial stringency. It passes my comprehension how the Union Government can, on the plea of financial stringency, get out of an obligation imposed by the Constitution itself. However, let us hope that the Government of India, with a huge surplus in the current year, will be enabled to give us sufficient aid for the next year in fulfilment of their obligation under the Constitution.

In my last speech I had stated before the House that we considered the problem of development of tribal areas and improvement of the condition of the tribal people as our great responsibility and as a sacred trust, and we still hold to that view steadfastly. It is this realisation of our duty and responsibility towards our tribal brethren that has made us to spend an extra sum of Rs. 30,000 for educational grants to schools located in plains tribal areas in the current year. Further, a sum of Rs.1 lakh for water supply and a big sum of Rs.20 lakhs for improvement of communications in the tribal areas have been sanctioned by this Government. These grants are exclusive of the usual expenditure in those areas under these heads. Hon. Members of this House will therefore be pleased to see how we feel and how we act for the development of our tribal friends in the plains. From a cursory glance at the Budget provisions of the current year it will be seen that for expansion of education among the tribal people a lump sum provision was made to provincialise 10 Middle Vernacular Schools situated in tribal areas. But by following a policy

of strict economy and curtailment of expenditure, instead of the 10 schools provided for in the Budget we have been able to provincialise 6 more schools in the tribal areas. Though the Union Government is not coming forward to discharge their responsibility imposed by the Constitution in the matter of development of tribal people living in the plains this Government cannot forget the moral responsibility imposed on us to bring the lot of our tribal brethren of the plains to the level of the other advanced population, within as short a time as possible. Provisions made in the next year's Budget for this purpose will convince our tribal brethren that this Government are very serious and very sincere in this matter in bringing about an all-round improvement in the condition of our tribal people.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am extremely sorry that I have to present the Budget to this new House with a very heavy deficit. In spite of my best efforts to make both ends meet I have been wholly unsuccessful. The lot of the Finance Minister in a State like Assam, which is beset with all kinds of natural and unnatural calamities, is really pitiable. While other sister States are forging ahead with development projects the Finance Minister of Assam cannot find the wherewithals to meet the ordinary needs of the administration! I have made serious efforts to balance the Budget even by bringing in new measures of taxation. But, I do not find any new avenue of taxation to lay my hands on and the existing avenues are also incapable of bearing any more burden. While the present Hon'ble Chief Minister was in charge of Finance before me, he had also repeatedly shown in his several Budget speeches that there was hardly any scope for further taxation in this State and that even the existing taxes have reached the point of inelasticity. By means of reorganisation and by taking vigorous steps to prevent evasion of taxes it is no doubt true that some improvement in revenue collection has been achieved. But it is only a drop in the ocean! Unless the Union Government on the recommendation of the Finance Commission come to the aid of this State by sharing with us the revenue which is legitimately due to this State no improvement in the condition of our people can be achieved.

Before I go into the financial position of our State in some detail for the years 1950-51 to 1952-53 I would like to give a brief review of the important trends of development and activities of the Government for the quinquennium ending in the current year.

Revenue

It is well-known to the Hon. Members that in Assam we have a very large number of landless people, a large number

of people having no economic holding and a large number of people whose lands have been damaged or eroded by floods and earthquakes. This Government have been very anxious to meet the needs of the landless people and ever since 1946 instructions and circulars have been issued to our district officers for settlement of waste lands with landless and flood-affected people of this State. Besides settling waste lands with such people a large number of reserves have been made available and thrown open for settlement and large areas of land have also been requisitioned from surplus tea garden lands for cultivation of crops by our landless cultivators. The area made available for settlement from the *Sarkari* waste land is 40,000 bighas and the area of requisitioned land upto the end of January 1952 has been over 1,40,000 bighas. Nearly 30,000 bighas of V.G.R.'s and P.G.R.'s have been settled with landless people of this State in the current year on permanent basis besides throwing open several thousand bighas of grazing grounds on temporary basis in aid of the grow-more-food schemes. While the Government were thus trying to tackle the problem of landless people of Assam, the last great earthquake with successive disastrous floods came upon us all of a sudden and with all their velocity and uprooted thousands of families in our State. The problem of rehabilitation of these distressed people with all its natural complications has almost baffled our sincere and serious efforts. In the year 1951, 23,667 bighas of waste lands had to be found out and settled with 'quake and flood-affected people in the Subansiri Circle of the North Lakhimpur Subdivision. In the Dibrugarh Subdivision two big reserves, Garumara and Tangeri by name and covering an area of 1,18,000 bighas, have been opened for rehabilitation of the affected people of the Sisi mouza. From the other reserves in those areas of Lakhimpur district not less than 28,000 bighas have been sliced off and settled with flood-affected people. The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur has further been directed to find out land to rehabilitate another of 5,500 families who have been uprooted from their homes and he is taking necessary action in this behalf. The Hon. Members will see that the complex problem of the landless people has been made more complicated and baffling by the natural calamities that have occurred in our State in the last few years and influx of refugees has intensified it still further. The efforts made by the Government for successfully tackling this problem will be intensified still more and Government propose to make a new drive towards this end very soon. Government are convinced that peace and prosperity of the country are dependent on an equitable solution of this vexed problem of landless people. The incentive to

produce more and thereby to make our State a surplus one, is also intimately connected with this problem. Sometimes it has been brought to the notice of the Government that at the time of distribution of lands actual landless people are discriminated against by some officers. Government have given very serious consideration to this matter and steps are being taken to prevent such mal-distribution as far as possible. Local Committees have been formed in some places to scrutinise the list of persons proposed to be settled with lands, to ensure against mal-distribution.

Hon. Members are probably aware that in the matter of acquisition of Zemindaries in our State to bring about an equitable distribution of land among the people, we have not been able to make much headway. So far as this Government are concerned there is no laches on our part and every possible effort is being made to do away with this feudal relic of an old age and thereby to bring in an era of social equality and economic prosperity. A date was fixed by our Government to take possession of the Zemindari estates in the district of Goalpara and officers were accordingly deputed for the purpose. But on the date previous to the date of taking possession came an order from the High Court staying our hands. The matter is still *sub judice* and we have not been able to proceed with the work of acquisition of zemindaries in our State for this reason. I can assure the Hon. Members that the Government are determined to proceed on with the work of acquisition at the earliest available opportunity.

The Non-Agricultural Urban Areas Tenancy Bill as passed by the Assembly in September 1950 was submitted to the President of the Union for assent, but it has been returned by the Government of India with the opinion of the Attorney General pointing out certain defects in the Bill. The Bill is being redrafted accordingly and will be placed before the House when the preliminaries are completed.

While on the subject of revenue, I should like to tell the Hon. Members of this House that there is an absolutely wrong impression in certain quarters outside Assam, that there are still plenty of waste lands in Assam, which can be allotted to people coming from outside. By quoting actual facts and figures on this matter, this Government are trying hard to dispel this wrong idea but the wrong impression still persists. These quarters do not know how the question of landless people has become a very serious problem threatening peace and tranquillity of the country and how with our best efforts we have not been able to find out land for all landless and distressed people. An unfortunate

attempt to foist more people on Assam is still persisting and I take this opportunity of declaring before this House that such an attempt may create complications and troubles, which it may not be possible for this Government to tackle successfully.

Hon. Members are certainly aware of the devastation caused to standing crops and other properties of our people by the successive floods of the last year. In some places like Pani Dihing mouza, the whole country side has been made unfit for cultivation due to heavy deposit of silt. The devastation was so widespread and the demand for relief in various shapes has been so pressing that it has become something like a new problem to this Government. To cause partial mitigation of the sufferings of the people Government have sanctioned gratuitous relief of over Rs.1,98,000 in the current year and agricultural loan to the extent of over Rs.17 lakhs, besides starting of test relief works in some centres costing about 45,500 rupees. The provision of agricultural loan made in the current year's budget was found altogether insufficient and recourse had to be taken to meet the demands by drawing substantially on the Contingency Fund.

Embankment and Drainage

In a backward country like Assam, where agriculture dominates the economic life of the people but where methods of agriculture are still primitive and Nature plays the most important role on production of food, the importance of embankment and drainage works are being realised by our people every day. Protection of crops from floods and reclamation of waste lands to increase more food in the State are considered as very important measures demanding immediate attention of Government. The Government have realised the necessity of a comprehensive embankment and drainage scheme in the State. The Drainage and Embankment Department of Government have therefore been appropriately expanded and various embankment schemes and flood protection measures have been taken in hand and executed since 1946 at an estimated cost of 12 lakhs of rupees. As a result of these schemes near about 66,000 acres of paddy land have been reclaimed in our State up till 1949. Since 1949-50 the Department has undertaken 45 embankment and drainage schemes under the Grow-More-Food programme estimated to cost about 120 lakhs and likely to benefit a total area of 3,60,000 acres. Some of these schemes have been completed, some are nearing completion while others are on the start. As Government have already decided to give topmost priority

to the production of food in our State, they contemplate giving a more vigorous drive to the Department of Embankment and Drainage in the near future to make the Grow-More-Food programme successful. For the information of the Hon. Members of the House, I may state that another list of new schemes is under active consideration of Government under the five-year development plan.

While on the subject of embankment I think I will not be out of place here to make mention of the severe erosion caused by the Brahmaputra at Dibrugarh. The great town has been very seriously threatened by the river and permanent protection measures have become very essential for the preservation of the town. A scheme for permanent protection of the river bank at an estimated cost of Rs.60 lakhs was prepared for a length of 8,000 running feet of the bank by Central Water Power Commission and is under consideration of the Government. It is estimated that on this basis the cost of permanent protection of the entire town bank extending over four miles, may be about two crores of rupees including cost of compensation for properties. Thus the amount that will be needed for the permanent protection of the town is a very big one and I leave it to the Hon. Members as well as to Government of India to judge whether Assam can bear such a burden without a substantial aid from Government of India. Pending consideration of the permanent protection measures, temporary protection works have been undertaken in the town of Dibrugarh by the Public Works Department during last two years at a cost of over two lakhs of rupees.

Medical

The policy of this Government is to give more medical facilities to the rural areas of Assam and in pursuance of this policy the number of dispensaries and the stock of medicine therein have been steadily increased from year to year. Even in the current year 15 hospitals and dispensaries have been added, bringing the total number of existing dispensaries and hospitals to 391. The bed strength of the hospitals has been raised from 2,058 to 2,427 during the current year. Up-to-date equipments and laboratory facilities are being provided in most of the civil hospitals and during the current year a sum of Rs.3,50,000 was given to the Local Boards for purchase of medicines and equipments as against 2,15,000 given last year. The number of subsidised dispensaries has also been increased in the current year by 12 bringing the total number to 100 in our State. As an experimental measure 6 Ayurvedic dispensaries have been subsidised in rural

areas also. The Medical College is fast developing into a first class institution. It has been able to earn very high and complimentary remarks from very high and outstanding medical personalities of India. The number of beds in the Medical College hospital has been raised from 150 to 425. Government have not grudged to make substantial grants for the improvement of this institution. As will appear from the provisions in the Budget placed before the Hon. Members the same liberal policy will be pursued in the next year as well.

Public Health

The Public Health Department is giving more attention now to the work in hills and backward interior places to make medical aid available to the backward areas, where there are no other medical facilities worth the name. Its fight against *Kalo-azar*, cholera, leprosy, yaws, etc., has been as relentless as in the past and it is proposed to make its activities still more embracing. With this end in view Government have given very sympathetic consideration to several schemes of this Department to alleviate human miseries.

Public Works Department

In my budget speech last year I indicated that we have decided to resume work on roads which were started under the Post-war Plan and which had to be abandoned due to the stoppage of post-war grants. I also indicated that some of these roads will be financed out of our share in the Petrol-tax reserve, and some will be financed out of our own revenues. Work on all these roads is making good progress. In addition, in the current year work has been started on some other roads as indicated earlier. Furthermore to improve procurement of rice and paddy construction of 31 roads has been undertaken—4 through the agency of Local Boards and 27 through the Public Works Department—at a total estimated cost of Rs.11,60,000.

The construction of the hill roads to be financed out of Government of India's grant for development of Hill Districts is also making satisfactory progress. The expenditure on the roads in the current year is estimated at about 15 lakhs of rupees.

So far as buildings are concerned the first phase of work estimated at over 28 lakhs started in 1947 for the Medical College buildings has been completed and work is continuing on the second phase started in 1950 and estimated to cost over 36 lakhs of rupees. The new Secretariat Building is completed except for sanitary and heating arrangements which are expected to be completed towards the end of this year.

This Government are also doing the work of construction of the Shillong-Agartala road along the new alignment to be financed entirely by the Government of India and also such Central roads as Imphal to Pallel. The road to connect Indian Union with Assam through Cooch-behar has been opened for traffic. Metalling and surfacing is in progress. In the National Highway system metalling and surfacing of 61 miles of road between Jorhat and Khowang and 16 miles between Makum and Digboi is going on. Preliminary work has also been completed for the construction of a wider bridge over the Kallang river at Nowgong.

The Public Works Department has also been entrusted with the construction of some roads required for rehabilitation of refugees at an estimated cost of 10 lakhs of rupees. Preliminary work is under way. The Public Works Department had also to restore communication on the roads damaged by the great earthquake and to construct alternative alignment in places as necessitated by the earthquake. The phase of temporary repairs being over, permanent restoration is progressing very satisfactorily and in the current year the estimated expenditure is over 100 lakhs of rupees.

Supply and Food

As regards the food position Hon. Members are aware that the past year has been one of unprecedented difficulties. During the year 1950 various natural and other calamities like earthquake, floods, drought, pests and communal disturbances resulted in heavy losses of foodgrains. The total loss in production of Winter and Autumn rice due to earthquake, floods, drought, communal disturbances and diversion of paddy lands for growing money crops (particularly jute) was estimated by the Department of Agriculture to be 4,41,500 tons. In addition, losses in granaries were estimated to be 19,078 tons. On the other hand there was a heavy increase in the number of population to be fed due to various factors. Hindu refugees began to pour in large numbers and displaced Muslims returned to Assam as destitutes and too late for the cultivation season. The people residing in the border areas of Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills in particular who do not grow any foodgrains and were entirely dependent upon supplies from the adjoining areas now forming parts of Pakistan have now become a liability on this Government. With the population to be fed increasing in leaps and bounds and production going down we started the year 1951 with little or no reserve at all. We started with an opening stock of 6,330 tons (in terms of rice) with

Government and the Industries against 22,212 tons of the previous year. For improvement of local procurement, the Procurement Plan in the State was radically changed on the recommendation of the Rao Committee and "Monopoly Procurement Scheme" with well-defined areas was introduced entrusting the execution thereof to the District Officers. Rigid movement and price control measures were taken and known heavy surplus areas were cordoned off to stabilise prices and to facilitate Government procurement. Numerous checkgates with arrangements for barricading the roads and water channels were established to stop illegal movements. In view of the high prices of all essential articles of life as compared to rice and paddy Government increased the controlled prices of rice/paddy by nearly 28 per cent. in this State with effect from 1st March 1951.

Apart from the measures mentioned above Government also undertook mass seizure of paddy and rice with the assistance of Armed Force in all the plains districts after cordoning the selected areas. Many of the measures taken may not have been liked by a section of the public but Government were compelled to take all these measures in the broader interest of the State as a whole and for equitable distribution of all the available resources of the State.

This Government realised the seriousness of the problem facing the State before the commencement of the year and urged Government of India to commence imports from the beginning of the year 1951 but as the Government of India could not give any appreciable help the situation in Assam steadily worsened even in March/April and was further aggravated due to heavy loss of Autumn paddy—first due to drought and then due to extensive floods. Prices began to rise everywhere and demands for Cheap Grain Shops came in increasing numbers—from all corners of the State. While due to low procurement Government was unable to meet the requirements of the Indian Tea Association gardens located in the Districts of Sibsagar and Cachar and the Dibrugarh Subdivision, this Government was compelled to allow these tea gardens to go into the open market from 23rd April 1951 to 15th June 1951 to cover the time lag of arrivals of foodgrains coming on Trade account from Pakistan. But this inevitably led to further rise of prices and the position became almost desperate and the tea industry was also faced with an unprecedented crisis. Up to July 1951 only 57,525 tons of food, including 25,287 tons of wheat and 3,000 tons of Milo came to Assam from Government of India, Manipur, Tripura and through the Rice/Coal deal with Pakistan. But as the position was going

out of control in spite of all the measures taken, utmost pressure was put on the Central Government for more liberal allotments and quicker transport. In spite of various difficulties Government of India had ultimately to increase our allotments and made arrangements for speedy transport. For quick movement the tea Industry had to arrange expensive air transport for a considerable time. The Government had to open as many as 487 Cheap Grain Shops in rural and non-rationed urban areas to meet scarcity and substitute 50 per cent. rice with Atta on account of shortage of rice. In order to keep down prices and make rice available to the common man at a reasonable price this Government decided to sell imported rice at partially subsidised rate of Rs.25 per maund for the urban areas and at fully subsidised rate for rural areas at the Government issue price of locally procured rice. The estimated loss on this account is about Rs.35 lakhs for 1951 only. The Government have also decided to subsidise rice coming on coal/rice barter deal to the extent of Rs.2-10-0 per maund and the estimated loss is approximately Rs.75,000 for a period of four months only.

As a result of all the measures taken and continuous flow of foodgrains from outside the State, though not to our full satisfaction, the position has gradually eased and came under control, but we are not yet out of the woods. Apart from the damage to the Autumn paddy already mentioned, considerable damage has been done to the winter paddy by floods in July and September 1951 and the damage has been estimated at 1,02,451 tons paddy. So the prospects of procurement for the current year also are not too bright and the situation requires constant vigilance. We have started the year 1952 with an opening balance of approximately 27,000 tons of foodgrains with Government and Industries but local procurement has not been satisfactory up till now. Government have also taken steps for setting off of paddy grown by tea garden labourers against their cereal ration but in spite of everything we may have to depend a good deal on imports unless production can be substantially increased.

For effective administration and improvement of the Supply position Government have established :—

(a) An Enforcement Branch to deal with Supply and Textile offences ;

(b) A Border Security Force to check smuggling and to protect the Procurement staff working in the Pakistan bordering areas.

Further a sum of fifteen lakhs of rupees has been sanctioned in 1950-51 for improvement and construction of feeder

roads in the paddy surplus areas for marketing facilities and better Government Procurement. Government also sanctioned another 9 lakhs of rupees in 1951-52 for the same purpose.

The position of other controlled commodities is as follows:—

(a) *Iron Materials*.—Besides the annual periodical allotments of iron and steel goods the Government succeeded in obtaining an *ad hoc* quota of 500 tons of C. I. Sheets for helping the procurement drive. Owing to failure of our controlled stockists and transport difficulties movement of iron materials has been rather slow but steps have been taken to improve matters and some improvement can be expected soon.

(b) *Sugar, cement and salt*.—The allotments of sugar, cement and salt by the Government of India have been adequate though the transport bottleneck sometimes causes temporary local difficulty.

Textile

During the period when Textile was procured and distributed on Government account, cloth worth Rs. 3 crores 49 lakhs 55 thousand was purchased and the sale proceeds up to October 1951 amounted to rupees 3 crores 88 lakhs 50 thousand. A stock balance of about 11 thousand of rupees was still left, but the complete disposal of these stocks is under way. Now cloth and yarn are procured through usual trade channels subject to certain Government control. A new feature of Textile control is the creation of a Police Enforcement Branch for Textile and Supply.

Industries, Co-operation, Sericulture and Weaving

In the matter of Co-operative Societies the policy pursued by this Government is a policy of liquidation of all unhealthy Societies, and encouragement of the formation of Co-operative Societies on sound and scientific lines. Amongst nearly 4,000 Co-operative Societies at present existing in our State there are various types of societies, the more important of these being 847 Credit Societies, 986 Trading Societies, 895 Consumer Societies, 119 Weaving and Spinning Societies, 32 Fishery Societies and 13 Farming Co-operatives. Since about 2 years there have been numerous applications for the registration of Farming Co-operatives. These have immense possibilities in an agricultural country like Assam but it is not easy to go ahead in this matter without proper inquiry and adequate personnel with practical training.

The Co-operative Department played its due part in the relief work in the earthquake and flood-affected areas in North

Lakhimpur. The North Lakhimpur Central Trading Co-operative and its affiliated branches organised transport facilities for the distribution of essential commodities in the distressed areas.

The policy of Government is to give more stress to harness the services of the co-operatives to organise and develop our cottage industries and necessary instructions have been given to officers of the Department to work on these lines.

The Garo Hills Central Trading Co-operative along with its affiliated societies has taken full advantage of the monopoly given to it by the Government to deal with the Garo cotton. In the first season of its working in the Winter of 1950-51 besides enabling the Central Trading Co-operative to earn a net profit over 70 thousand and paying commission to the primary trading co-operatives in the cotton growing areas, the growers were able to get prices from Rs.34 to Rs.50 per maund as against Rs.16 to Rs.36 per maund in the previous year.

Relief and Rehabilitation of Refugees

The work of relief and rehabilitation of refugees in the State of Assam is now proceeding according to plan. When this Department was first constituted the main attention of Government was concentrated on short-term relief of refugees concentrated in their thousands in the relief camps. When the influx was at its height, the number of refugees and displaced persons sheltered in the camps was over 80,000. The relief camps organised for the relief of these unfortunate persons numbered 28 and a large amount of money was spent on relief in those camps. As time passed on the inmates of the camps were dispersed to different places and by the end of September last the last relief camp was closed and the work of temporary relief virtually ended.

Hon. Members are probably aware that the relief and rehabilitation of refugees in the district of Cachar are not done by us. The rehabilitation works in that district are the direct charge of the Government of India. The number of refugees in the State of Assam excluding Cachar is over 1,83,000 according to the Census of India and this Government are concerned with the relief and rehabilitation of these people. A large number of these persons migrated to Assam from Pakistan under comparatively peaceful conditions and could therefore bring with them some amount of money. These persons could rehabilitate themselves much more easily without any direct financial aid from Government. Among the new refugees also a considerable number could get themselves absorbed in the

economy of the State through their own efforts supplemented by some measure of State aid and public co-operation. The number of old and new refugees who could be absorbed in this way in the economy of the State will be about 75,000. The rest of the refugees requiring Government assistance will number more than a lakh and out of this number the Rehabilitation Department have been able to rehabilitate more than 50,000 of them in the State of Assam up till now, in agriculture and other small industries.

The total amount of loan issued to these persons is near about Rs.45 lakhs. Several schemes for the permanent rehabilitation of a large number of agriculturists have been sanctioned by Government at a total cost of Rs.55 lakhs approximately. Four of these schemes are in the process of implementation, providing for the permanent rehabilitation of over 5,200 families in the districts of Kamrup and Nowgong. The refugee market at Gauhati is now nearing completion. It is intended to rehabilitate a large number of non-agriculturists who besides getting a stall in the market will be given a piece of land for residential purpose not far away from the market and the scheme for construction of a small township near Gauhati for this purpose has also been sanctioned and the construction work is about to start now. There are two other schemes for refugee markets to rehabilitate some petty traders at Haiborgaon in the district of Nowgong and Nalbari in the district of Kamrup. These schemes have also received recent sanction from India. The Rehabilitation Department is trying to establish 3 more townships, one at Shillong for about 350 families, the second at Pandu for 500 families, and the third at Rupshi for about 1,000 families, and the schemes prepared by our Government are at present under consideration of the Government of India. The selected rehabilitation centres for refugees are sought to be developed by providing means of communications and drinking water, in addition to small irrigation projects. Care has been taken to see that the refugees and their children do get facilities of education and medical aid and for this purpose necessary arrangements are being made by the Department. The Government are contemplating to provide 100 ring-wells in selected areas. At present there are among the refugees in Assam destitutes and unattached displaced women and children, besides old and invalid persons, whose number also will be pretty large. The Government are not unmindful to these unfortunate people and 3 refugee centres for them called destitute homes have been established at Nowgong, Gauhati and Rupshi where free food and cloth are supplied to them besides residential accommodation. The able-bodied among such refugees are being taught useful arts and crafts

and provision for primary education for the destitute children has been made there. The Jorhat Industrial Training Institute is providing great opportunities to the refugees to learn various arts and crafts and the Dhai Training Institute at Nowgong is imparting education to refugee girls in Nursery and Midwifery. The School at Shillong is offering facilities to the refugees for training in Hand-made Paper Industry and allied arts and crafts. Government are also taking a great interest in the matter of education of refugees in different branches of learning which obtain in the State and particular care is taken to see that refugee students are not discriminated in such institutions. Under the scholarship scheme of the Rehabilitation Department a sum of Rs.84,000 has been distributed to deserving refugee students upto the end of September last besides substantial block grants to school which accommodate substantial number of students.

In the matter of relief and rehabilitation of displaced Muslims the Government are also very keen to see that the work does proceed apace and according to plan. Substantial amounts of money have already been given as loans to help in the rehabilitation of these unfortunate displaced Muslims of our State. Several officers were particularly entrusted to look after their rehabilitation and various concessions are being given by Government to those displaced Muslims to get them rehabilitated and absorbed in the economy of the State as early as possible. Besides quick rehabilitation of Muslims in the State the Government of Assam have constituted an Evacuee Property Management Committee to administer the properties left by Muslim evacuees. Hon. Members will be glad to learn that in the matter of rehabilitation of these people the work is proceeding according to plan and Government are doing and will endeavour to do whatever is humanly possible to restore them to their previous condition. For the information of the House, I may tell the Hon. Members that the same sympathy and earnestness that have been the characteristic features in the work of this department will be continued in the future and if everything goes on according to our plan, the work of relief and rehabilitation of refugees and displaced Muslims is expected to be nearly over in course of the next year. Hon. Members must have noticed that the Refugees in Assam are behaving very well and co-operating with the Government in every way. There had not been any clash between the Refugees and the Government and the people here as had been the case in many other States. That alone should refute the baseless allegations still made in some interested quarters that the Government and the people of Assam are apathetic to the Refugees.

Rural Water-supply and Communication

Since 1946 this Government have been taking keen interest in the problem of water-supply and communication in the rural areas of Assam and substantial amounts have been placed every year at the disposal of the local bodies for the improvement of rural communication and rural water-supply. For the current year a sum of Rs 7,50,000 was allotted for improving the supply of water in the rural areas and for the next year a sum of Rs.5,78,000 has been set apart for the purpose. There are also large numbers of ancient tanks in our State which if reclaimed will be a source of good drinking water to the people. This Government therefore propose to start on a campaign of renovating such tanks from the next year. Provision has been made for the purpose in the next year's budget.

In the current year's budget a sum of Rs.7,50,000 was originally kept for grants to local bodies for improving rural communication. This was in addition to the normal grant given to the local bodies for communication. Subsequently another sum of Rs.5 lakhs had been given to the local bodies to meet the demand of the people. A further sum of Rs.1,25,000 to the municipal bodies for the same purpose has also been sanctioned. For the next year despite financial difficulties Government are setting apart a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs for the improvement of rural communication in addition to the normal grant of Rs. 2,40,000 to the local bodies. Hon. Members will appreciate that though the problem of rural communication and rural water-supply is a pressing one, the amount spent by the Government for the solution of this problem ever since 1946 has not been negligible considering the available resources of our State.

In respect of municipal bodies Government have been pursuing a policy of helping them with loans at reasonable interest for improvement of water-supply and communications. In the current year over Rs.15 lakhs have been allotted as such loans and it is proposed to make a further provision in the next year for the same purpose.

Some local board roads in our State were damaged by the last great earthquake. To enable the local bodies to repair and restore such damages, in the current year a sum of Rs.6,83,000 had been provided as non-recurring grant to such bodies. After a good deal of negotiations the Government of India have acceded to our repeated requests by agreeing to bear 50 per cent. of this expenditure, the other 50 per cent. being borne from the State revenues. It is expected that with this

additional help, besides the normal grant annually given, the local boards will be in a position not only to repair all the earthquake damages but also to maintain their roads in a proper condition.

Law and Order

In the year 1951 the anti-terrorist campaign was successfully completed. This has freed the country side from the reign of terror to which terrorists subjected the law-abiding and peaceful people. The Village Defence Organisation which was formed to ensure the Co-operation of the people in maintaining law and order has proved very popular. This shows that confidence has returned to the people and they are ever ready to co-operate with the police. The organisation is being expanded.

The relationship between the police and the people had been one of cordiality and co-operation. Courtesy weeks have been launched to imbibe the police force with ideas of service and courtesy towards the people.

The Government are aware of the need of proper training of our police force to make it efficient. Accordingly an officer of the rank of Deputy Inspector General has been specially charged with the duty of training. To make the force mobile and effective under the present-day conditions, vehicles and modern weapons have been gradually provided. The process of modernising our force is making satisfactory progress.

The general Election had been a momentous event. However it passed off most smoothly and peacefully. It demonstrates not only the organising ability and efficiency of our officers and the men but also the healthy spirit of popular co-operation and love of peace.

Rural Development

It has been the policy, and a matter of constant anxiety, of this Government not only to develop the rural areas but to allow the people of the rural areas some sort of training in the art of local self-government to enable them to administer their own affairs and to make it possible for them to make united and co-operative efforts to better their own conditions. With this end in view the Rural Development Department was started by Government when Congress came into power and Rural Panchayats have been established since then. By the end of 1950-51 we had 29 rural panchayats. In the current year another 22 have been added bringing the total number to 51. For the next year provision is being made for a sum of Rs.6,80,000 for giving aid to these existing panchayats and a further provision of Rs.8,85,000 is also being made to establish

59 new panchayats. Thus the total amount provided for next year for grant to rural panchayats will be Rs.15,65,000.

The self-help enterprise scheme sponsored and started by this Government under the Rural Development Scheme has been proving very popular and useful and has been yielding very encouraging results. People have been helping themselves with new roads, wells and other beneficial activities with the assistance given from the self-help enterprise fund. The spirit of mutual help and co-operation has been fostered and encouraged by this to such an extent that in some places people have ceased to wait for Governmental efforts and are coming forward to take up beneficial activities by themselves. Government are taking full advantage of this healthy spirit of public service of the people and substantial provision for this has been made in the Budget. I believe this Rural Development Department has a great future before it and through the efforts of this Department supplemented by the active co-operation of our people the decaying villages of Assam can be resuscitated and renovated with new life and beauty, and the co-operation of all social workers is earnestly solicited by the Government in this noble venture.

Forest Department

Assam is noted for the beauty and variety of her forests. The prosperity and the revenue earning capacity of the Forest Department of Assam depended largely on the existence of the market, now gone to Pakistan. Ever since partition there had been serious difficulties in the way of sending timber and other forest goods to Pakistan market and for transportation of timber to markets inside the Indian Union but outside Assam. Hence there has been a setback in the revenue yield of the Forest Department. The position has however been partially improved by capturing the market of railway sleepers. Now greater emphasis has been placed on research on forest products of Assam. Accordingly the Utilisation Branch has been strengthened, specimens of materials have been supplied to the Forest Research Institute at Dehra Dun and visits from experts on paper, pulp, timber, timber seasoning and timber treatment have been arranged. The plan for a resin and turpentine factory in Shillong has been finalised and the plant is now being erected. Serious damage of our forest wealth and means of communication in the forest areas was caused by the earthquake but by the current year Government have not only restored all the damaged communications but have taken effective steps to remedy the position created by the havoc of the earthquake.

Statistics Department

In the Department of Statistics the progress of the intensive work of analysing and preparing the report of the rural economic surveys was satisfactory. The report of the enquiry in the Sibsagar District is now in the press and the preparation of similar reports for Nowgong and Lakhimpur Districts is under way. Crop-cutting experiments by the method of random sampling are being carried out on winter paddy, autumn paddy and potato. Similar crop-cutting experiments have been conducted on the jute crop also on experimental basis during the current year in the districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgong. During the current year the family budget enquiry on the employees of rice and flour mills was completed and another progressive survey of the cost and standard of living of tea plantation labourers has been started. In the current year the Department also carried out two important surveys—Sampling survey of manufacturing industries sponsored by the Government of India and the rural credit survey of the Reserve Bank of India on agency basis.

Agriculture

The activities of the normal Agricultural Department are generally confined to carrying out researches and the distribution of improved seeds and the demonstration of improved methods of Agriculture. Over and above the normal activities of the department, in the current year the department has taken up research on brassica, being financed by the Indian Central Arecanut Committee and a cocoanut nursery scheme for supply of improved cocoanut plants to be financed by the Central Cocoanut Committee has been started. The scheme has already been started in the Kahikuchi farm and an arecanut nursery scheme has also been started at Jorhat. This scheme is financed by the Indian Central Arecanut Committee. The fruit preservation scheme jointly financed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the State has continued to provide a fruit technical laboratory which has recently been responsible for establishment of a few farms dealing with fruit products. A scheme has also been launched for the production of improved varieties of jute seeds.

Grow-More-Food

Besides the normal and other works mentioned above, the Agricultural Department is giving special attention and emphasis to Grow-More-Food activities and 19 Grow-More Food Schemes are under operation at present. During the current year the department carried out 955 minor irrigation

projects through the assistance of the public who contribute 50 per cent. of the cost and these minor irrigation schemes have become very useful to our people. Nine power pump irrigation sets are working during the year in Nowgong and Cachar Districts and cultivation of Boro paddy is receiving widespread encouragement and impetus from the people in these districts. These pumps have irrigated an area of over 1,400 acres and demand for such pumps has very greatly increased which goes to prove how our cultivators are getting used to new methods of mechanised cultivation.

The completion of seven major irrigation projects has served to assist our cultivators substantially in growing more foods. In the present year 1,148 tons of improved paddy seeds were multiplied in the districts and distributed to cultivators for further propagation. In addition over 35 tons of wheat, about 74 tons of pulses and 11 tons of potato seeds were distributed to the cultivators. There was remarkable improvement in the production and popularisation of compost production in the rural areas and about 1,28,000 tons of compost were prepared and applied to the field. Composting of town refuse was taken up in the town of Jorhat, Gauhati and Nowgong and 3,381 tons of compost manure were pitted. The use of bone-meal as a manure is being popularised among the cultivators of the plains and over 534 tons were sold to them. Two hundred and seventy-two tons of oil-cake were distributed among the cultivators to encourage double cropping. Under the Tea Garden Land Utilisation Scheme, this department has been able to assist in bringing 55,171 acres of surplus lands of the tea gardens under cultivation of food crops.

Recently the Government of India with the assistance of the Ford Foundation of America have been starting a scheme for the establishment of pilot and development projects in different States of India not only to intensify and improve food production but also to ameliorate conditions of the villages in various ways. We have been asked to submit schemes for the establishment of such development projects in our State. It is estimated that each development project would cost about Rs.1,54,000 in the first year of which Rs.1,29,000 will be available from the Ford Foundation and the balance of Rs.25,000 will have to be found out by the State. We have framed the necessary schemes and have forwarded them to the Government of India with the request to allot us at least 3 such projects to be situated in three different districts of Assam. Such projects will, besides improving agricultural methods and the living conditions of the people of the areas under operation, train up necessary personnel to multiply such

development projects in other parts of the State. A few days back, the Government of India sanctioned only one project for Assam to be started in Kamrup District this year. They will also lend the services of an American expert to work the Scheme. We sincerely hope that at least 2 more projects will be sanctioned next year.

This Government are fully aware that much more shall have to be done to grow more food in Assam to solve the serious food position. With this end in view it is proposed to give a new food drive and to carry out necessary re-organisation in the structure of the department. It is hoped that with popular support it will be possible within a period of about 2 years to achieve something more tangible and more useful for the permanent solution of the food problem of Assam.

Labour

Due to the scarcity of rice and introduction of Atta as a part of the food ration there had been some discontentment and restiveness amongst the tea garden population in the current year. The situation was exploited by anti-social elements to their own advantage. As a result there were as many as 968 industrial disputes of which 55 were settled through normal course and only 4 were sent up for adjudication. The rest were settled amicably by the officers of the department. The number of strikes also rose from 10 in 1950 to 38 in 1951 and the number of men-days lost rose from 6,598 in 1950 to 25,055 in 1951. The department had been able with the support of the Assam Branch of the I.N.T.U.C. to meet the situation and avoid any major disaster.

With substantial grants-in-aid from the Government, welfare centres were started through non-official agency like Hindusthan Mazdoor Sevak Sangha, Provincial Kasturba Gandhi Trust Fund and Assam Ex-Tea Garden Labourers and Assam Tribal Labour Organisation. For labour welfare work we have been fortunate in getting 2 lakhs of rupees as lump sum grants from the Central Tea Board. It is proposed to spend this money partly by opening self-contained Welfare Centres and partly by meeting the cost of two training centres, one for male and the other for female. The carrying out of these measures will involve an additional recurring expenditure of over Rs.60,000 to the State Government. This is indeed a heavy burden on the poor resources of the State but considering that labour welfare measures are so essential for the good of the State this Government have not at all hesitated to sanction these schemes.

The Hon. Members are aware that the Plantation Labour Act has been passed by the Parliament. It compels the employers to provide approved types of houses, recreational facilities and education for the children of the employees. The necessary rules under the Act are being framed. The Minimum Wages Committee for plantation labour set up by the Government has submitted its recommendations. The report is under active and sympathetic consideration of the Government now. The Assam Maternity Benefit Act has also been amended to provide for extra benefit for expectant mothers employed in tea estates.

The industries have accepted the proposal of this Government to construct improved houses for their labourers and have already completed construction of about 10,500 houses of approved specifications. Government are also considering a proposal to advance loans to the various industries to enable them to complete the housing programme.

Ever since 1941 the Government have been taking special care for the improvement of the educational facilities available for the *ex-tea* garden labour population and have been establishing schools in areas inhabited by them whenever possible. Special Scholarships for students of this community have been granted and in the next year's budget provision is made to add 4 more Middle English Scholarships for boys and one Middle English Scholarship for girls, 3 Middle Vernacular Scholarships for boys and 6 Primary Scholarships for boys and girls belonging to the *ex-tea* garden labourers. This Government are very conscious of their obligation towards labour and the labour policy of this Government is always sympathetic and liberal. The same policy is proposed to be pursued in future to make labour more contented and prosperous by raising their standard of living and ensuring a fair return of their toil.

Transport Department

It was proposed to take over the Nowgong-Silghat and the Gauhati-Goalpara lines in the current year but due to transport difficulties and difficulties in securing proper materials all the vehicles could not be made ready in time. It is now proposed to take over the lines from April next. Government will also take over the Dhubri-Jogighopa route with effect from September next. Due to long time taken by the Railways to transport potato from Pandu to Calcutta and consequent deterioration of the potatoes, there had been a fall in the earnings from the potato trade by Transport Department. Despite this handicap in the year 1950-51 the net profit derived

by the Government from the operation of the State Transport department came to Rs.16,35,659 as against Rs.12,79,459 in the previous year. By the end of September last Government have derived a net profit of Rs.40,12,466 from the transport department run by the Government.

The profit thus earned does not appear to be unsatisfactory—especially if we look at the amount of investment and the amount in the depreciation reserve fund. For the information of the Hon. Members I may mention here that steps are being taken to prevent loss in future from the potato trade and utmost efforts are being made to run the Commercial concern more efficiently and in a business like way.

Tribal Areas

Along with the general election in the current year the elections to the Autonomous Councils in the 5 Scheduled Districts have been completed. The Tribal people had been eagerly looking forward to the elections to the District Councils ever since the coming into force of our Republican Constitution. The magnitude of the organisation that had to be built up and the manifold difficulties which had to be surmounted before the elections of the District Council and Regional Council on the basis of adult franchise could be held will be obvious to anyone conversant with the conditions in the interior of the Tribal areas. The Tribal territory covers an area of nearly 28 thousand square miles with a population of over 12 lakhs. 583 Polling Stations had to be opened over those vast stretches of this country where communications are virtually non-existent. The reports received indicate that the elections were marked by great enthusiasm and between 40 to 50 per cent. of the electorate exercised their franchise.

With a view to stabilise these Councils and also to provide representation to important interests and minorities not adequately represented through election, Government have decided that for the first constitution of the District Councils one-fourth of the number of members will be nominated by the Government. Before these nominations are finalised Government hope to consult the important political and other interests in the Autonomous Districts and will give due consideration to their views.

An important step in the administration of the Tribal Areas has been the constitution of the United District of Mikir and North Cachar Hills. The new administrative district was constituted solely with a view to ensure better and more efficient administration of the areas inhabited by the Mikir people and the people of the North Cachar Hills and care has been

taken to see that the interests of these two sets of people are not prejudicially affected. The constitution of the new district will not affect the status of Mikir Hills and the North Cachar Hills as separate Autonomous Districts with their own District Councils for the administration of the local affairs of those two areas.

I have already indicated that the Government of India was, on a personal intervention by our Hon'ble Chief Minister, pleased to increase the grants in the current year for the development of the Autonomous Districts to 39 lakhs. In addition a special grant of Rs. 10 lakhs has been sanctioned by the Government of India in the current year for the development of the Naga Hills. A major portion of this grant has been spent on subsidies to self-help schemes, such as improvement of communication undertaken by blocks of villages. The other schemes financed out of this grant include establishment of dispensaries, grants-in-aid to schools, building grants to some existing schools, financial assistance to deserving students and improvement of water-supply in some villages. Hon. Members are no doubt aware that a lot of new schemes for giving wider educational facilities to Tribal areas were sanctioned involving a cost of about Rs. 1 lakh in the current year. I will not worry the Hon. Members by giving the details of these schemes which are already detailed in the list of new schemes of the year 1951-52. All these schemes have been implemented. In addition, for the next year new educational schemes for 6 Autonomous Districts have been provided for through the list of new schemes to cost about Rs. 2 lakhs as per details given in Appendix A to the Memorandum on the budget. They include such schemes as the provincialisation of Pfulero Aided M. E. School in the Naga Hills, provision for the provincialisation of the Dalo M. E. School in the Garo Hills and opening a lot of primary schools in the Autonomous Districts. I have already indicated previously that in the current year we have started a lot of new hospitals and dispensaries in these Autonomous Districts and that the scheme for the development of communication in the 6 scheduled districts is making very satisfactory progress.

Hon. Members know well that there has been much damage caused in the Naga Hills as a result of the allied operations during the last Great war. Though under the Assam Relief Measures some compensation for the damage was given in the Naga Hills, the payment was neither adequate nor systematic. In December 1950, our Hon'ble Chief Minister personally took up the matter during his visit to the Naga Hills. As a result of the representation made to

the Ministry of Defence, Government of India were pleased to sanction an extra grant of 30 lakhs for the payment of war compensation to the residents of Naga Hills whose property was subjected to loss or damage during the Allied Operations. The work of assessment and distribution of compensation is making satisfactory progress.

The policy of Government towards our brethren of the Hills ever since Congress came to power has been unequivocally declared on several occasions. We are pursuing that policy with steadfastness and will not allow any consideration to deflect us from pursuing that policy in future. A glance at the provisions in the budgets for the welfare of the people of the Hills will unmistakably show the sincerity of the Government in this direction. I feel that what is most necessary in dealing with our people of the Hills is a human understanding and sympathetic appreciation of their feelings and sentiments and I hope that these will not be found wanting in our officers entrusted with the administration of the tribal areas.

Government have taken care to see that our officers are fully alive to these things. The tribal problem needs a cautious, tactful, delicate but firm handling and I can assure the House that these things will not be found wanting in the Government.

Education

In my last year's budget speech I had dialated at length on the enormous strides we have made in the field of education since 1946. In 1944-45 the expenditure on education in Assam including Sylhet was only Rs.50,67,000; in 1951-52 the expenditure in Assam excluding Sylhet is estimated to be Rs.1,68,60,000 while for the next year it is estimated at Rs.1,84,91,000.

In the current year the scheme for teaching Assamese to teachers from the Hills has been started. 40 trainees from different hill districts of Assam are receiving training at Titabar and they have shown considerable interest and keenness in the matter.

A new principle has been enunciated in the current year for giving grants to aided colleges. The idea is to make the basis of distribution of grants to colleges equitable and reasonable as far as possible. For giving effect to the new principles the amount meant for grants to aided colleges has been increased in the current year by Rs.1,38,000. For the next year with a view to encourage teaching of science in private colleges provision is made for the sum of Rs 34,000 for giving grants to such aided colleges as may start classes in B.Sc.

In the current year aids were granted to several new High and Middle Vernacular schools with a provision of Rs.40,000 made in the budget. For the next year also an extra provision of Rs.20,000 is being made to give grants to schools which have not received grants so far, and to enhance the grants to certain schools which have not received the full quota of the grant. The grant to Middle Vernacular Schools under the local bodies has also been raised in the current year by Rs.22,000.

In the current year besides expansion of the area of compulsory primary education 350 venture primary schools situated mostly in Plains Tribal areas have been taken over. Provision is also made for expansion of the compulsory area next year and a sum of over Rs.70,000 has been budgeted for this purpose.

At present while students studying in Class VI of the Middle English Schools have to pass a compulsory public examination for securing admission in Class VII of a High school, students of Class VI of the High schools have not to pass such examination to get promoted to the next class if they pass the school examination. It is desirable that all students of a particular standard should pass a similar examination for securing admission into the next higher standard of education. It has also been noticed that students who are not academically fit for going up to the high school standard get promoted to Class VII. As a result there is much loss in school years and wastage of expenses of their guardians. It was therefore considered desirable to make a public examination compulsory for all students of Class VI in all schools, and a provision of Rs. 60,480 is being made available next year for the purpose.

Honourable Members are probably aware of the fact that our N. C. C. Cadets earned the highest distinction in the Republic Day parade in Delhi this year. I take this opportunity of congratulating the authorities concerned for this remarkable achievement. It is proposed to expand the N. C. C. Scheme next year and a liberal provision is being made in the next year's budget. The expansion of the N. C. C. scheme is expected to serve a very useful purpose by instilling among our students a sense of discipline, which, it is complained, is lacking much now-a-days and I hope the Hon. Members will give ready support to this measure.

In the current year the number of free and half-free studentship tenable in the Cotton College has been increased by 15 and 20 respectively, and 16 more scholarships have been added. It is proposed to award 2 scholarships for training in the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur and 2 scholarships in the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, from next year, and provision is being made accordingly. I may add

here that while the expenditure on scholarships was Rs.2,42,642 in 1950-51 it rose to Rs. 2,80,000 in the current year, and it is estimated to exceed Rs. 3,10,000 in the next year. I have already indicated the several education measures we are taking for the autonomous districts, the Plains Tribal areas and for the children of *ex-tea* garden labourers.

The scheme for the development and the buildings of our University was put both under the Post-War Schemes and the Planning Commission Schemes. Due to the Government of India stopping Post-War Reconstruction grants and their not coming up with assistance for the Planning Commission Schemes, the University buildings scheme has not made satisfactory progress. This Government are, however, determined to go on pressing the Government of India and themselves doing all that is possible.

Hon. Members will agree with me that education in free India has become a vital problem of the State. To rebuild our country according to our own ideals and aspirations and to reconstruct a new edifice in place of the old dilapidated house, the importance of education cannot be ignored for a moment. The necessity for re-organisation and re-orientation of education policy of the country has become very great and urgent and Government are ever conscious of it. In the matter of tackling this almost baffling problem Government expect co-operation of all well-wishers of the country; and I have ample faith and confidence in my country men that it will be readily forthcoming.

After this brief review of the activities of the Government I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Members to the budget figures. For that purpose I begin with the accounts for the year 1950-51 as revealed in the Actuals.

In the revised budget for 1950-51 we anticipated a revenue receipt of Trs.9,86,13 and a revenue expenditure of Trs.9,94,23, thus making for a revenue deficit of Rs. 8,10,000. In actuals, however, while the revenue receipt dropped to Trs.9,62,09 the revenue expenditure came down to Trs.9,27,65 resulting in a surplus of Rs. 34,34,000. The surplus of Rs.4,35,000 as anticipated in capital accounts did not materialise fully and the actual surplus was Rs.2,28,000. The net effect of these variations was to increase our opening balance to Trs.3,20,92 as against Trs.2,28,54 as anticipated. The details are explained in the memorandum on the budget estimates.

Revised Estimates, 1951-52 — The 1951-52 Budget anticipated a revenue receipt of Trs. 9 62,40 while in the revised it is estimated at Trs.10,24,83. The revenue expenditure as estimated in the budget was Trs. 10,60,24 while in the revised

it is estimated at Trs.10,87,68. Though there is considerable improvement on the receipt side there has been increase of expenditure also. However, the deficit of Trs.97,84 as estimated in the budget is expected to come down to Trs.62,85. Due to this deficit in the revenue account and deficit in the capital account as shown in the Memorandum, the opening balance of Trs.3,20,92 is expected to close with Trs.2,88,19.

Budget, 1952-53.—I regret again, that I have been compelled to present before the House a budget with a considerable deficit. I have already stated that our needs are so pressing that deficit or no deficit we have to meet at least a portion of these needs. For the year 1952-53 while the revenue receipt is expected to be Trs.10,05,43 the revenue expenditure is estimated to be Trs.12,60,08 thus making for a revenue deficit of Trs.2,54,65. Hon. Members will notice that new schemes alone account for an expenditure of about Rs.67,00,000. The details of the New Schemes adopted will be found in Appendix 'A' appended to the Memorandum. A capital deficit of Trs.4,86 is also expected, counterbalanced by a surplus of Trs.13,33 under capital expenditure under the Public Accounts. As a result the anticipated opening balance of Trs.2,88,19 is expected to go down to Trs.42,01.

The House will notice that despite our gloomy financial picture we have provided large sums for the betterment of the condition of our people, more particularly the people in the rural areas and the Tribal areas of the Hills and plains. In my last year's budget speech I showed graphically how our Government ever since 1946 have been decreasing the percentage of expenditure on routine administration and increasing the percentage of expenditure of nation-building activities. I will not tax the patience of the House by repeating them. I may assure the Hon. Members that we are not happy to have a deficit of this magnitude, but all our efforts in the direction have failed. I have examined all avenues and did not find new source of taxation to lay my hands upon. Hence, the deficit remains uncovered and can never be covered unless we get from the Government of India our due share of the revenues for which we have been crying hoarse for years.

Before I resume my seat I apologise to the Hon. Members for taking so much of their time in my introductory speech and request all of them kindly to help this Government by putting reasonable suggestions to face our financial difficulties.

I thank the Officers and the Staff of the Finance Department for the ungrudging assistance and co-operation in preparing the budget estimates and the Superintendent of the Press and his Staff for printing the budget and the ancillary matters in time. I also heartily thank the Comptroller, Assam and his Staff for giving all assistance in preparing the budget and for the advice and help throughout the year. Sir, with these remarks I beg to introduce the Budget for 1952-53 for the approval of the House.

Jai Hind

Fixation of dates for General Discussion of Budget

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Hon'ble Members have come to know that 14th, 15th and 17th March, have been fixed for the general discussion of the Budget. It will be somewhat difficult for me to fix a time limit, if necessary, for speeches until and unless I know how many members desire to take part in the discussion on a particular day. I would therefore request the Leaders of various Parties to give the names of their Party Members who desire to speak on the subject on different dates to the Assembly Secretariat before 2 P.M. on Thursday the 13th March 1952, at the latest. At the same time, I would like to inform the hon. Members that the proportion of the Speakers taking part in the discussion should be according to the strength of the Parties.

With regards to the Demands for Grant to be considered by the House, hon. Members are now aware of the days that have fixed for the purpose. I have got a time table prepared allotting the time that should be devoted to the discussion of each of the demands during this Session. Copies of the time table have already been circulated to the Leaders of Parties. I would request them to examine the same and inform the Secretary of their views, if any, on the said time-table before 2 P.M. on Thursday, the 13th March. Printed copies of the time-table will be circulated to the hon. Members as soon as it is approved. I may, however, inform the hon. Members that the last date and time for receipt of Cut Motions on Demands for Grants to be taken up by the House on the 20th March is, before 2 P.M. on the 15th March 1952.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 1-30 P.M. on Friday the 14th March 1952.

SHILLONG :

The 21st May 1952. }

R. N. BARUA,
Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.