

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

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 11 a.m., on
Saturday, the 15th March, 1941

PRESENT

The Hon'ble Mr. Basanta Kumar Das, Speaker, in the Chair, the nine
Hon'ble Ministers and thirty-eight members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Marketing Officer's tour

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI asked :

*36. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The date (with reference to the tour diary) on which the
Marketing Officer visited Goalpara subdivision during the last
2 years ?
- (b) The particular places visited and the advice rendered to people
in each case ?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA replied :

36. (a)—It is not clear which particular officer of the Marketing Sec-
tion the hon. member has in mind. The following officers, however, visited
Goalpara on the dates mentioned against each :—

1. Maulavi Mashahid Ali (Assistant
Marketing Officer) ... 1st and 2nd September
1939.
2. Maulavi Abdul Mubin Chaudhury
(Assistant Marketing Officer) ... 16th to 21st April 1940
and 6th and 7th May
1940.

(b)—Goalpara, Dudnai, Krishnai, Lakhipur, Damra, Dainadubi,
Fakirganj and South Satmara. The officers established contact with the
growers and advised them to guard against undue profiteering by middle-
men and explained the facilities that are being rendered to the growers
through the marketing scheme.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI : With reference to question
No.36(b), may I know from the Hon'ble Minister, growers of which parti-
cular crops he means ?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA : Rice and jute.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI : May I suggest that the
important marketing places of jute have been left out, such as Rangapani,
Langtisinga and Baheti ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. member is not to suggest
anything ; he is to put definite questions.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Will Government please direct the Marketing Officer to keep in view Rangapani, Langtuinga and Baheti as places which call for the Marketing Officer's duty more in my subdivision where lakhs of maunds of jute and rice are brought for marketing?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: Yes, Sir.

Erection of a sluice gate over the Dong from Dudnai river in Bamunpara village

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI asked:

*37. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether on 20th December 1940, the rayots of Bamunpara, Sarapara, Karipara, etc., prayed to the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, for erection of a sluice gate over the Dong from Dudnai river in Bamunpara village in the district of Goalpara?

(b) Whether on receipt of this petition, the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, held any enquiry on this?

(c) Whether as a result of such enquiry or for their prayer, the matter has been referred to the Embankment and Drainage Division?

(d) If so, with what results?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI replied:

37. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—Executive Engineer, Embankment and Drainage Division, has recently received the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara's report and will shortly investigate the case.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Has he at all begun his enquiry?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: He will shortly investigate.

Construction of a bridge half a mile away from the Bongaigaon Railway Station

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI asked:

*38. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether a numerous signed petition, dated the 22nd January 1941 was addressed to Government, with a prayer to direct the Eastern Bengal Railway for constructing a bridge half a mile away from the Bongaigaon Railway Station for giving way to a volume of water from the river Tekonjhara to the fields lying 4 miles across it?

(b) Whether any enquiry with regard to this prayer has been made?

(c) If so, with what result?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI replied :

38. (a)—No petition, dated 22nd January 1941, is traceable. A petition which appears to be of a similar nature, dated 2nd February 1941, has however, been received.

(b)—The papers have been forwarded to the Eastern Bengal Railway for their opinion, and the proposal has been noted by the Executive Engineer, Embankment and Drainage, for investigation.

(c)—The enquiries will not be completed for some time.

Number of Jailors and Assistant Jailors in the Province

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI asked :

*39. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The total number of Jailors and Assistant Jailors in the Province ?

(b) How many of them are from the Surma Valley and how many from the Assam Valley ? (To be shown district by district and the community to which they belong.)

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

39. (a) and (b)—A statement is laid on the table.

Statement referred to in reply to starred question No.39(a) and (b) asked by Maulavi Muhammad Amjad Ali

Total number of Jailors—7

Total number of Assistant Jailors—39

} 46 in the Province.

SURMA VALLEY

Jailors

District	Europeans and Anglo-Indians	Muslims	Hindus	Scheduled Castes	Domiciled	Tribals
Sylhet	1	3	....	....	....
Cachar	1	1	....	....	....

SURMA VALLEY

Assistant Jailors

District	Europeans and Anglo-Indians	Muslims	Hindus	Scheduled Castes	Domiciled	Tribals
Sylhet ..	....	7	13	....	*1	....
Cachar ..	....	1	....	....	....	....
Khasi and Jaintia Hills.	1	....	....	....	....	2

* Man of Tipperah but domiciled in Sylhet.

ASSAM VALLEY

Jailors:

District	Europeans and Anglo- Indians	Muslims	Hindus	Scheduled Castes	Domiciled	Tribals
Sibsagar	1				....

ASSAM VALLEY

Assistant Jailors:

District	Europeans and Anglo- Indians	Muslims	Hindus	Scheduled Castes	Domiciled	Tribals
Kamrup	2	2		
Sibsagar	1	3			*1
Darrang	1	....	....	....
Goalpara	1	1	....	....	....
Nowgong	1	....	....	....
Lakhimpur	1	....	....	....

* Kachari. † Kailharta.

Amount realised as Agricultural Income-tax

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*40. Will Government be pleased to state—

- The total amount realised from Agricultural Income-tax during the period beginning from 1st April 1940 to 15th February 1941 ?
- What amount is still to be realised for the year 1940-41 ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

40. (a)—Income-tax authorities get the information of amounts paid into the treasury after the close of a month. The latest figures available are, therefore, up to the end of January 1941 and they are Rs.11,55,708.

(b)—The estimated amount is Rs.18,10,320.

Provision of subdivisioal headquarters with Health Officers

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*41. Will Government be pleased to state:—

- Whether all the subdivisioal headquarters in Assam have been provided with qualified Health Officers ?
- If not, how many and what subdivisioal headquarters are still without Health Officers ?
- When do Government propose to provide all the subdivisioal headquarters with Health Officers ?
- Whether Government propose to extend the posting of Health Officers to rural centres with large population ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY replied :

41. (a)—The reply is in the negative.

(b)—Nine and these are :—

1. Hailakandi.
2. Maulvibazar.
3. Sunamganj.
4. Goalpara.
5. Barpeta.
6. Mangaldai.
7. Golaghat.
8. Sibsagar.
9. North Lakhimpur.

(c)—If and when funds become available.

(d)—The question is under consideration in connection with the reorganisation of the Public Health Department.

New posts created during the years 1940 and 1941

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

*42. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) What are the new posts that have been created during the years 1940 and 1941 up-to-date ?
- (b) What is the immediate and deferred financial commitment on account of such newly created posts ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

42. (a) & (b)—The information is being collected, but it will require some time to collect complete information.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : May I know from the Hon'ble Minister when he first got information of this question ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : This question, so far as I remember, was first received in the Secretariat on 22nd February, 1941.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : May I know why it has not been possible to furnish the reply as yet ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : If I repeat the question, it will be seen, what a huge amount of labour is required to supply the information ; it seeks information about new posts in every office in the province, and it is impossible to get all this information in this short time.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : There is another question on the same subject.

Reservation of scholarships to Muslims, Backward and Scheduled communities by Habiganj Local Board

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

*43.(a) Are Government aware that five scholarships are kept reserved by the Habiganj Local Board for Muslims, Backward and Scheduled communities of the Habiganj subdivision ?

(b) Is it a fact that the Deputy Inspector of Schools, Habiganj, refused such reservation and referred it to the Board for reconsideration?

(c) Is it a fact that the board stuck to its former decision and referred the matter to Government for approval?

(d) If so, will Government be pleased to state whether they have come to any decision in the matter?

(e) If not, do they propose to do it early?

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

43. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—No.

(e)—Yes.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: With regard to question No. 43 (d), may I know why Government has not come to any decision up till now?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: The matter was first dealt with in the Education Department, and this Department got it very late, and so is the delay.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Still the delay is on the part of the Government?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Yes, now it will be done soon.

Indian Police Service Examination

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked:

*44. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether it is a fact that all the candidates from Assam failed to secure qualifying marks in the last Indian Police Service Examination?

(b) If so, what is it due to?

(c) Who made the selection of candidates in this connection?

(d) Whether Government propose to fill up any vacancy in the said cadre by nomination?

(e) If so, do Government propose to take into consideration the fact that the Surma Valley Muslims are unrepresented in the direct Cadre of the Indian Police Service?

*45 Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a list of those candidates with their qualifications along with those who failed to secure permission this year and on previous occasion?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

44. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Government are not in a position to give an opinion on the subject.

(c)—The interviews were held by a Selection Committee constituted under rules framed by the Secretary of State. It was composed on this occasion of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Rai Bahadur P. L. Dhawan, C.I.E., M.A., M.I.E., (Ind.), Member, Federal Public Service Commission,

the Chairman, Assam Public Service Commission, the Inspector General of Police, Maulavi Ashrafuddin Md. Chaudhuri, M.L.A., and Srijugendra Narayan Mandal, M.L.A. The examination was conducted by the Federal Service Commission.

(d)—The matter rests with the Secretary of State, and this Government have no power to make a nomination.

(e)—Does not arise.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: With regard to question No. 44 (d), may I know from the Government whether this Government has got any authority to send their recommendation?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We have got no power to make a nomination, but a recommendation has been sent up to the Government of India on the appeal of the candidate who stood first.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: May I know from the Hon'ble Prime Minister whether the age limit from 24 to 22 years has been suddenly lowered?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: In the Rules it was stated that the age limit had been lowered. The examination is conducted by the Federal Public Service Commission. It is they who framed the Rules as to what should be the qualification of these candidates and as to how they should be selected.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Whether it is a fact that the age limit has been lowered from 24 to 22?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I will take the statement of the hon. member as correct.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

45.—The examination is not held under the authority of the Assam Government, and they cannot give these particulars.

Suspension of Judicial Works during Jumma and Zuhar Prayers.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked:

*46. (a) Are Government aware that Magistrates with rare exceptions do not stop judicial work during the time from 12-30 to 1-30 set apart by Government for Jumma Prayers?

(b) Are Government aware that on account of this disregard of Government order, Muslim litigants and Muslim lawyers find it difficult to say their Jumma Prayers?

*47. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) If the present order of the Government for suspending all judicial works during Jumma prayer time is optional or compulsory with the Magistrates?

(b) Whether Government propose to make it a point to issue necessary orders to suspend all judicial works during Jumma prayer time?

*48. (a) Are Government aware that at present no fixed time is set apart for Muslim litigants and Muslim lawyers for saying of Zuhar (midday) prayer?

(b) Are Government aware that as Magistrates go on working without any interval, Muslim litigants and Muslim lawyers find it difficult to say their Zuhar prayer?

- (c) Do Government propose to take necessary steps for suspension of judicial works by the Magistrates for at least half an hour for the saying of Zuhar prayer by the Muslim litigants and Muslim lawyers?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

46.(a)—Government have not fixed specific hours for the prayers. The orders provide that courts should so arrange their work that Muslim Government servants, witnesses and legal practitioners have facility for saying their Jumma prayers.

(b)—Government have had no complaints but if the hon. member will state the courts and the circumstances in which difficulty has been experienced, they will deal with the matter.

47.(a) & (b)—Government have not issued any order for suspension of all judicial work. As no purpose would be served by such suspension where Muslims are not involved, they do not consider it necessary to issue such an order.

48.(a)—Yes.

(b)—Government have had no reports of difficulties created in this way.

(c)—If any need for issuing any orders on the subject is shown, Government are prepared to consider doing so.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Will Government kindly now issue a circular letter to all district authorities, so that the work during this period from 12-30 to 1-30 p.m. is compulsorily suspended for the Jumma and Zuhar prayers?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As I have already stated, Government orders are to give facilities to Muslim Government servants, witnesses and legal practitioners to say their Jumma prayer, they do not propose to pass an order suspending all business in judicial courts as no purpose would be served by such suspension where Muslims are not involved.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Are Government prepared to accept it if I say that it is experienced that courts do not suspend their judicial work even when Muslim lawyers and witnesses are engaged in cases?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have answered in reply to question No.46 (b) that Government have had no complaints, but if the hon. member would state the Courts and the circumstances in which difficulty had been experienced, they will deal with the matter.

Muslim Inspector of Schools for Surma Valley Division

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY asked :

*49. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether they know that there is a persistent demand in the district of Sylhet for appointing a Muslim Inspector of Schools for Surma Valley Division?

- (b) If so, do Government propose to appoint a Muslim as Inspector of Schools in the Surma Valley Division in place of Dr. S. C. Gupta, deceased ?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

49.(a)—Only one representation requesting the appointment of a Muslim Inspector was received from the Assam Students' Conference.

(b)—The question of selecting a successor to late Dr. Gupta will be taken up shortly.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Do not Government feel it necessary that they should take at least one Muslim as Inspector of Schools in either valley ?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: We are going into the question shortly.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know whether there is a persistent demand for this ?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I have received one representation only.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it not a fact that there has been regular agitation also in the press over the question of appointing one from the Muslim community ?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: There may be. I can say this much that in the recent sitting of the Legislative Council, one hon. member made a request for the appointment of a Muslim Inspector.

Supply of Forms to Debt Conciliation Boards

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY asked :

*50. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether it is a fact that forms are not supplied promptly to different Debt Conciliation Boards ?
- (b) Whether it is a fact that some Chairmen of Debt Conciliation Boards asked the Deputy Commissioners to permit them to print the forms locally and the Deputy Commissioners concerned refused the permission ?
- (c) If the answers to Question Nos. 50(a) and (b) are in the affirmative, do Government propose to remove the inconveniences immediately ?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

50.(a)—The hon. member is referred to the reply to starred Question No. 8(b) and (c) by Maulavi Abdur Rahman, M.L.A., at this session.

(b)—The position may be as stated in the question, but Government have no information. The Deputy Commissioners would have acted rightly in refusing since it is against Government's agreement with forms contractors to allow local printing of standardised forms.

(c)—The press concerned has already been reminded from time to time. It has also received the requisite paper and so there is not likely to be any more delay in the printing and supply of these forms by the press.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I inform the Hon'ble Minister that on the day when my question came up, I could not come in time. I was two minutes late, and the question could not be asked.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Was any authority given to any other hon. member?

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, these questions were not therefore answered. The Hon'ble Minister will please answer them now.

(Starred question No. 8 standing in the name of Maulavi Abdur Rahman was then put and answered.)

REGISTRATION OF AGREEMENTS UNDER THE ASSAM DEBT CONCILIATION ACT

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked.

*8. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether it is a fact that recently under the order of the District Registrar, Sylhet, fees are levied for the registration of agreements under Section 12 (1), of the Assam Debt Conciliation Act?
- (b) Whether it is a fact that many Boards could not have the standardised forms?
- (c) If so, why?
- (d) Whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the fact that though the Act provides that the written statements can be filed under Section (1) within 30 days of receipt of the notice, the printed standardised form has no such clear provision?
- (e) Whether Government is aware that one clerk is unable to cope with the work in most of the Boards' Office?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied:

8. (a)—On receipt of representations from two Members of this Legislature a report was called for from the local officers which is awaited.

(b) & (c)—This year Government entered into new contracts for the supply of forms and agreed to supply the contractors with paper through the Central Stationery Office. The negotiations were unavoidably protracted and the printing of forms was still further delayed as the Mills were not able to provide paper promptly on account of war conditions.

(d)—The form will be amended.

(e)—Proposals for an increase of staff were received from two boards. In one case statistics have been called for justifying the proposal while in the other Government did not consider that the proposal was justified.

(Starred questions Nos. 51—53 standing in the name of Maulavi Mabarak Ali and starred questions Nos. 54—55 standing in the name of Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury were not put and answered as the questioners were absent.)

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, may I request the Hon'ble Chair to allow this question No. 54 standing in the name of Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury to be put although the questioner is absent?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I can not help the hon. member. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury is absent and he ought to have authorised any other member to put his question.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Sir, question No. 53(b) involves a law point, and as such can we not have a reply to that question?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: No, when the hon. member is absent, I cannot allow that question to be answered.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Sir, when a legal point is involved we can take judicial notice of it?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It does not matter.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, as regards the point raised by my hon. friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman, I quite agree that it is a very important matter but I can inform him that he will get replies later on in reply to a question put by Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. I have drafted in detail replies to similar questions.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Are these questions unstarred ones?

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

Candidates for Excise Sub-Inspectorship

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA asked :

*56. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The number of candidates who appeared in the examination held at Gauhati and Sylhet on 21st October 1940 for the posts of Excise Sub-Inspectors?
- (b) The number of candidates who were called for interview by the Public Service Commission?
- (c) The names of the candidates who were appointed as Excise Sub-Inspectors?
- (d) Whether the appointments were given to the candidates recommended by the Public Service Commission?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA replied :

56.(a)—63.

(b)—22.

(c)—(1) Srijut Gobinda Ram Kalita who was holding a temporary post of Sub-Inspector of Excise was appointed to a permanent post of Sub-Inspector of Excise.

(2) Babu Ajodhya Nath Bhattacharjee who was holding a temporary post of Sub-Inspector of Excise was appointed to officiate as Sub-Inspector of Excise in the chain of vacancy caused by the temporary transfer of a permanent Sub-Inspector of Excise to the Education Department (Srijut Charu Chandra Doloi Miri).

(3) Mr. Nabait Swer who was holding a permanent post of Supervisor, Umjajew Distilling Area, was promoted to a temporary post of Sub-Inspector of Excise.

(4) Maulavi Jalaluddin Ahmed Chaudhury, an outsider, was appointed to a temporary post of Sub-Inspector of Police, class 1 above.

(5)—Maulavi Md. Karim Bux, an outsider, was appointed to a temporary post of Sub-Inspector of Police, class 2 above.

(d)—Yes.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it a fact that the first two named gentlemen come from the scheduled community?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: None of them come from the scheduled castes community.

Establishment of a University in Assam

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA asked:

*57. Will Government be pleased to state:

(a) What steps have been taken for the establishment of a University in Assam?

(b) Whether the University will be established at Gauhati?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied:

57.(a)—Government propose to introduce a Bill for the purpose at this Session of the Assembly.

(b)—No decision has been arrived at by Government as yet; they will be guided by the opinion of the House in this matter.

Contract for the supply of country liquor

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA asked:

*58. Will Government be pleased to state:

(a) With whom the contract for the supply of country liquor to the Government of Assam has been settled for the year 1941-42?

(b) The names of persons or firms which submitted tenders for the supply of country liquor with their respective rates for the said year?

(c) If the Government has already selected any person or firm which will supply country liquor during the years 1942-43, 1943-44 and 1944-45?

(d) If so, will Government be pleased to state the names of persons or firms which submitted tenders to supply country liquors for the years 1942 to 1945, with their respective rates?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA replied:

58.(a)—Khan Bahadur Habibur Rahman, the existing lessee.

	Rs.	a.	p.
(b)—Messrs. Hajee Ismail Sait & Sons Ltd. ...	(per L. P. G.)	1	3 0
Khan Bahadur Habibur Rahman	1	1 0
Messrs. Assam Industries Ltd. and Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty.	...	0	15 6
Messrs. Stadco Stores	1	6 0
Babu Hemendra Nath Roy	1	1 0

(c)—Yes, Government have made a provisional selection, dependant on certain conditions.

(d)—*Inde* reply to (b) given previously so far as the period ending with March 1944 is concerned. No tender was called for supply of liquor from the 1st April 1944 to 31st December 1945.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, may I know at what rate the contract has been given to Khan Bahadur Habibur Rahman for supply of liquor to the Government of Assam for the year 1941-42?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: The contract has been given at the rate of Re 1-1, per L. P. G., to Khan Bahadur Habibur Rahman.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, may I know the reason why the contract was not given to Messrs. Assam Industries Ltd., and Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty when their rate was annas 15-6 only and why it was given to Khan Bahadur Habibur Rahman whose rate was Re.1-1?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, I will reply in detail to this question. In view of the fact that Messrs. Assam Industries Limited and Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty jointly tendered for lowest rate of annas 15-6, per gallon, Government decided to give them the contract and informed them that if they can establish a distillery within the province by November 1940 and if they agree to certain terms as regards bottling system, they will get this contract. Government was also induced to accept this contract because a local Assamese Planter Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty was a co-signatory to this tender. Within a month or two of this tender, the two partners Messrs. Assam Industries Limited, and Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty fell out and Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty informed Government that he was prevailed upon by false pretence to join in that tender. In the meantime, Messrs. Assam Industries also informed Government that in order to establish a distillery in Assam they had placed contract with certain French Company but on account of war, the French Company was not able to give them the steel necessary to start a distillery. In the tender itself it was definitely stated that people who have got distilleries of their own will be given the contract. We had reluctantly to cancel or rather not to accept the tender of Messrs. Assam Industries Limited and Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty and although the tender was called for three years, in view of the exceptional circumstances, we had to give the contract for one year only to the next best tenderer, i.e., Khan Bahadur Habibur Rahman.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, am I to understand that Government wanted to give contract to Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty on the understanding that he would supply from his own distillery?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, that is a fact.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, is it a fact that Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty put an advertisement in the "Statesman" asking quotation for liquor to be supplied to the Government of Assam during the year 1941-42?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I don't know, Sir, if Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty put an advertisement in the paper for anything.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, there was an advertisement in the "Statesman" asking for quotation for supply of liquor to the Government of Assam during the year 1941-42. As the name of the Government of Assam is mentioned there, will Government be pleased to mention whether Srijut Nandeswar Chakravarty could get the contract if he could get liquor from outside to supply to the Assam Government?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The hon. member seems to have more information than Government possess. Government have no business to suppress any statement made by private advertisers in the Press.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, is it a fact that Srijut Nandewar Chakravarty agreed to supply from outside during the year 1941-42?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, I have already stated clearly that the people having a distillery of their own would get the contract.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: With regard to question No. 58(c), Sir, may I know the firm that has been selected by Government to supply liquor for the years 1942-45?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We have already replied that Government have made a provisional selection dependent on certain conditions. Unless those conditions are fulfilled, contract will not be made. I do not like, rather it will not be in the best interest of the public to disclose the name of the firm now.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, may I know if any fresh tenders were invited for the supply of liquor for the years 1942-45?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have nothing more to add.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, may we know the name of the firm that has been selected by Government for the supply of liquor for the years 1942-45?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have already said that the selection is provisional dependent on certain conditions. It will not be possible in the public interest to disclose the name now.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: May I know, Sir, when the contract will be settled up definitely?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Within the current year, Sir.

Retention of Gazetted Officers in the executive branches in one place

Babu BIPIN BEHARI DAS asked :

*59. Will Government be pleased to state how long gazetted officers in the executive branches are kept in one place?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

59.—The practice necessarily differs in accordance with the circumstances of the service concerned. There is no hard-and-fast rule.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I enquire whether there is any rule with regard to the subdivisional heads and the district heads?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That will come up in connection with the cut motion moved by the hon. member. But I can inform him that there is no rule.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

White Memorial Hostel, Satribari

Mr. W. R. FAULL asked :

49. (a) Is it a fact that a grant of Rs.100 per month was sanctioned for the White Memorial Hostel, Satribari, Gauhati. for the year 1940-41 ?

(b) If so, has any payment yet been made ?

(c) If not, will Government please state what their intentions are ?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

49. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Orders sanctioning the payment have been issued.

(c)—Does not arise.

Subdivisional Medical Officer of Barpeta Subdivision

Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS asked :

50. Is it a fact that the present Subdivisional Medical Officer of the Barpeta subdivision is the same man who was before his present office, the Sub-Assistant Surgeon of the Barpeta Hospital ?

51. Are Government aware that the town of Barpeta suffered a serious attack of a typhoid epidemic during the last winter and that for want of a competent M. B. Surgeon the people could not get enough medical aid ?

52. (a) Are Government aware that the Barpeta Bar Association has recently sent a resolution requesting replacement of the present Assistant Surgeon by an experienced M. B. Surgeon ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to give any effect to it early ?

53. (a) Is it a fact that in the last November Assembly Session in reply to an adjournment motion moved by Mr. G. Das, M.L.A., the Hon'ble Prime Minister promised to send an experienced M. B. Surgeon to hold charge of the Barpeta subdivision ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state why no effect to it has been given yet ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY replied :

50.—Yes.

51.—Government are aware that there was an epidemic of typhoid fever at Barpeta but, they have no reason to suppose that people could not get enough medical aid for want of a competent M. B. Surgeon.

52. (a)—No such representation appears to have been received.

(b)—Does not arise.

53. (a)—No.

(b)—Does not arise.

Settlement of fisheries

Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS asked

54. Is it a fact that there is an instruction that fisheries are to be settled with actual fishermen in preference to a middle-man to the extent of a difference of 5 per cent. ?

The Hon'ble Khan Banadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

54.—No such general instruction has been issued. The hon. member's attention is drawn to rule 191 at page 203 of the Land Revenue Manual. District Officers have been asked to give preference to actual fishermen as far as possible.

Jorhat Municipal Board

Srijut RAMNATH DAS asked :

55. Will Government be pleased to state

- (a) The total number of elected members of the Jorhat Municipal Board ?
- (b) How many members were returned in the last election to the said Board from the Muslim community ?
- (c) Whether Government are aware that no member was elected from the Scheduled communities during the last election in the said Board ?

56. With reference to Gazette Notification No 279-L.S.-G. (B), dated the 26th February last, will Government be pleased to state

- (a) What communities the nominated members will represent in the said Board ?
- (b) The total strength of voters of these communities in the electoral roll of the said Municipality ?
- (c) The total strength of Scheduled caste voters in the said Municipality ?
- (d) Why a member from the scheduled caste was not nominated in the said Municipal Board ?
- (e) What was the basis of such nominations ?

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

55. (a)—Twelve.

(b)—Four.

(c)—Yes.

56. (a)—Muslims, Upcountry men and Indian Christians.

(b)—Figures are not available.

(c)—151.

(d)—Because of the small number of seats available and the superior claims of other communities and other factors.

(e)—Such nominations were made after taking into consideration the claims of communities and interests not adequately represented by the elected members and also the future sound administration of the Board.

Srijut RAMNATH DAS : With regard to question No.56(b), did Government try to know the figures ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: The time was short and this is why Government did not ask the Jorhat Municipal Board to supply the figures.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Am I to understand that the time was not short to get the figures of the scheduled castes?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: That was available in the Secretariat.

Srijut RAM NATH DAS: Have we not got enough time for replies to these questions in this session of the Assembly, Sir?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Figures have been called for and they have not been received as yet.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Figures are not available and yet it is said figures have not been sent. What is that, Sir?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Figures are not available in the Secretariat.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Is it a fact that there are more scheduled castes voters in the Jorhat Municipality than Indian Christian voters?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: It may be so but Government have no information with regard to that.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Why then did not Government make an enquiry before making nominations—whether there are more voters in the scheduled castes than in the Indian Christian community?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Statements of the number of voters in ratio have been made and Government accepted the statements of ratio with regard to that and actual figures were not deemed a necessity.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Are we to understand that figures for all the communities are available in the Secretariat?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: No, Sir, all the figures are not available in the Secretariat.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: In that case my question has not been replied.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: What is the question? Will the hon. member please repeat?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Did not the Hon'ble Minister say that due to the shortage of time the figures were not sent?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: That is not the case. The figures have been called for, but due to shortage of time they were not available to the Government at the time of answer.

Srijut RAM NATH DAS: What are the superior claims of the other communities to that of the scheduled castes?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: There are various factors—the number, the tax paid by each community and the area occupied by each community.

Srijut RAM NATH DAS: The Hon'ble Minister has said that there are various factors such as the number, the tax and the area, and in reply to the question put by my hon. friend Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta he has not denied the fact that the number of the Scheduled Castes voters in the

Municipality is greater than that of the Indian Christians. In view of that how can he take the factor of the number of the Indian Christians as having superior claim over that of the Scheduled Castes?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: May I reply, Sir? The question that a particular minority community had nomination in the previous years and other minority communities had no chance—that was also taken into consideration.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Am I to understand that no Indian Christian was nominated to that Board in the past?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I require notice of the question, Sir.

Mirpur-Shaistaganj and Shaistaganj-Teliapara portion of the Habiganj Local Board Road

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked:

57. (a) Is it a fact that the Public Works Department is taking over charge of the Mirpur-Shaistaganj and Shaistaganj-Teliapara portion of the Local Board road from the Habiganj Local Board?

(b) Is it a fact that Government propose to gravel the said road?

(c) Is it a fact that Government propose to extend the road from Shaistaganj to Teliapara?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY replied:

57.—(a) As funds are at present only available for the improvement of the road from Srimangal to Shaistaganj, the Mirpur-Shaistaganj portion only has at present been taken over from Habiganj Local Board.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Yes, as soon as funds become available.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I enquire from the Hon'ble Minister whether Government propose to widen the road in question?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: Improvement will necessarily mean widening also.

Meeting of the Nationalist Democratic Union

Kumar AJIT NARAYAN DEV asked:

58. Is it a fact that the Hon'ble Minister for Education attended the meeting of the Nationalist Democratic Union convened by Mr. M. N. Roy in Calcutta during the last Christmas?

59. Will Government be pleased to state the amount drawn by him as travelling and halting allowance for the purpose of attending the said meeting?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied:

58.—Yes.

59.—No such allowances were drawn since the Hon'ble Minister did not visit Calcutta on Government business.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : With regard to question No.59, may I draw your attention, Sir ? It is rather discourteous to the Ministry for a responsible representative of a constituency to put questions like this. I presume he has omitted the words 'if any'. The question ought to have been like this: "Will Government be pleased to state the amount *if any* drawn by the Hon'ble Minister.....". The questioner has presumed that the Hon'ble Minister has drawn the money.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Yes, I quite see the point and I agree with the Hon'ble Premier in what he has said.

Re Facilities for Assam Satyagrahis, etc.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

60. a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the publication of the United Press published on Saturday, February 8th, 1941, in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta Edition) under the heading "Facilities for Assam Satyagrahis—Ministerial measures—minimising rigours of jail life of Politicals"?

(b) Do Government corroborate the statements in the said publication namely—

- (1) All Satyagrahi prisoners in the Assam Valley both of 'A' and 'B' Divisions have been brought to Jorhat Jail and ordered to be allowed to live together.
- (2) That all facilities hitherto enjoyed by 'A' Division prisoners should also be extended to the political prisoners placed in the 'B' Division.
- (3) If so, do these facilities include (i) Bringing from outside cooked food (ii) Wearing of their own clothes (iii) Bringing in from outside other articles of daily necessity (iv) Bringing in Newspapers of their respective choice ?
- (4) The Superintendents of Jails have been instructed to give any other facilities without prior reference to Government to these Satyagrahis according to their discretions.

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

60. (a)—Government have seen the article.

(b)—No. The correspondent appears to have derived inaccurate information or an inaccurate impression of what he may have heard. When the statements came to the notice of Government the facts were explained in a communiqué of the 25th February.

Representation of various communities in Excise Department

Babu BALARAM SIRCAR asked :

61. Will Government be pleased to state the number of officers belonging to different communities, *viz.*, Caste Hindus, Muslims, Scheduled Castes and other serving in the Excise Department ?

62. (a) Is it a fact that the Scheduled Castes people are not adequately represented in this Department ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to take into consideration the cases of Scheduled Castes candidates when filling up vacancies in near future in that Department?

63. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The number of Excise Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors serving in Sylhet and Cachar districts?

(b) Whether it is a fact that all Muslim officers have been placed in charge of Circles in the districts of Sylhet and Cachar?

(c) If so, do Government propose to post some Hindu officers in charge of some Circles in these two districts as far as practicable?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA replied:

61. Two statements showing the number and percentage of posts held by members of various communities in the Provincial Excise Service and in the Subordinate Executive Excise Service are placed on the Library table.

62. (a)—No.

(b)—Does not arise.

63. (a)—There are now 6 Inspectors and 8 Sub-Inspectors of Excise including one Inspector of Excise in the Special Branch serving in Sylhet and Cachar.

(b)—Yes, except the North Cachar Hills Circle which is held by a Gurkha Officer resident of Silchar.

(c)—Yes, attempt will be made to post some Hindu officers in place of some Muslim officers in charge of Circles as soon as the Census operation is over as most of the officers are now engaged in Census work.

Debt Conciliation Board of Dhubri

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked:

64. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The total number of certificates since issued by the Debt Conciliation Board of Dhubri to the debtors to be presented to the Munsif?

(b) Of these, how many certificates have been accepted by the Munsif?

(c) What are the reasons for the rejection by the Munsif of some of the certificates?

(d) Whether Government propose to examine the reasons for the rejection of certificates by the Munsif and to take steps by amending rules, if necessary, to prevent such rejection?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied:

64. (a)—Two hundred and sixty-three under section 21(1) and 5 under 15(1) of the Assam Act X, 1936.

(b) and (c)—The question is rather vague. If the action taken is meant then the reply is that on receipt of such certificates the proceedings pending are suspended as required by law. This has been done in all cases. Those under section 15(1) are in connection with execution proceedings and section 15(2) is not obligatory.

(d)—Does not arise.

Establishment of a High School between Lakhipur and Salmara, etc.

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked :

65. (a) Are Government aware that there is not a single High School in the area extending from Lakhipur to Salmara and from the town of Dhubri to the extremities of Garo Hills with a population of about 80,000 ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to sanction a grant for establishing a High School within the above area ?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

65. (a)—The hon. member presumably means the area lying between Dhubri and Garo Hills from north to south and South Salmara and Lakhipur from west to east and in that case the reply is in the affirmative.

(b)—The question of a grant will be considered if and when a venture is made by the local people in this direction.

Special Deputy Inspector for Muslim Education

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked :

66. (a) Are Government aware that there is a great demand among the Muslims of the Assam Valley for the appointment of a Special Deputy Inspector for Muslim Education in the Assam Valley ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to consider the desirability of creating such a post from the next financial year ?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

66. (a)—Government are not aware of any great demand for a Special Deputy Inspector for Muslim Education in the Assam Valley. But a resolution for providing such an officer was received from the Gauhati Anjuman in July 1940.

(b)—Government will look into the matter after seeing the work done by the Assistant Director of Public Instruction for Muslim Education in the Assam Valley this year.

Rural Uplift Centres in Assam

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked :

67. (a) Are Government aware of the unsatisfactory progress of the Rural Uplift Centres in Assam ?

(b) Do Government propose to introduce some useful cottage industries in the Centres such as Sericulture, Dari-Weaving and Cane-Works so that the people concerned may derive some real benefit from them ?

68. Do Government propose to consider the desirability of introducing cheap Homeopathic treatment in the Rural Uplift Centres ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

67. (a)—No. Government is informed that work is progressing satisfactorily in the Rural Reconstruction Centres.

(b)—Cottage industries, such as, spinning, hand-loom weaving and sericulture, are being encouraged in some of the Rural Reconstruction Centres. The hon. member's suggestion for introducing Dori-Weaving and cane-works will be carefully considered.

68.—The hon. member's suggestion will be carefully considered.

Number of Civil Surgeons joining War Service

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

69. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) How many Civil Surgeons of the province have since joined the War service ?

(b) How many of them are ready to join War service in future ?

(c) How many of them will be retained in their present service in Assam ?

(d) The reason for the retention of some of the Civil Surgeons to their present service in Assam ?

The Hon'ble Srijit HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY replied :

69. (a)—Two. A third is under or less of reversion to Military service ?

(b)—One.

(c)—Four.

(d)—Because three of them are in the residuary cadre and one of them is non-British.

Election to the Silchar Municipal Board

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

70. Is it a fact that the election for the Silchar Municipal Board was held on the 17th January 1941 ?

71. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The names of candidates who stood for election from the Janiganj Ward of the said Municipal Board ?

(b) How many members were to be elected from the aforesaid Ward ?

(c) The number of votes polled by each of the candidates for the said Janiganj Ward ?

(d) Whether accumulative system of voting was adopted in the aforesaid election, i.e., whether the voters cast as many votes as there are number of seats, for any candidate or candidates ?

72. (a) Is it a fact that Mr. Arun Kumar Chanda, M. A., polled the highest number of votes in the said Janiganj Ward election ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state—

(i) Why the name of Mr. Arun Kumar Chanda was not announced in the Assam Gazette Notification No. G., dated the 21st January 1941 ?

(ii) Why the name of the candidate who stood seventh in the Janiganj Ward election was declared sixth in the aforesaid notification ?

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

70.—Yes.

71. (a) and (c)—The information is furnished below :—

Ward	Name of candidates	No. of votes polled
Janiganj ...	1. Babu Arun Kumar Chanda ...	777
	2. Babu Kamini Kanta Paul ...	470
	3. Babu Girish Chandra Bhuiya ...	721
	4. Babu Jnanendra Chandra Naha ...	370
	5. Maulavi Musharaf Ali... ..	350
	6. Maulavi Mubesarwar Ali Choudhury ...	439
	7. Babu Jamini Mohan Das ...	555
	8. Dr. Sashindra Chandra Das ...	417
	9. Maulavi Samjid Ali Mazumdar... ..	328
	10. Babu Hemendra Kumar Dutta ...	463

(b)—Six.

(d)—Yes.

72. (a)—Yes.

(b) (i) and (ii)—The hon. member's attention is invited to the reply to starred question No. 53(c) asked by Maulavi Mabarak Ali at this session of the Assembly.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: The answer was incomplete. Will the Hon'ble Minister make the answer complete now ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: In view of the disqualifications acquired under section 13(4) of the Assam Municipal Act, on 16th January 1941, the Deputy Commissioner omitted his name under a wrong impression of the law.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Who is the Deputy Commissioner ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Mr. Fletcher.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: If his action on the line was wrong, what step was taken to right it ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: It has been pointed out to the Deputy Commissioner.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: May I know whether the wrongs have been righted now ?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Yes, it has been pointed out to the Deputy Commissioner to have it righted.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Will Government please state whether the Deputy Commissioner has followed the instructions of the Government?

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

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Did Government take notice of the wrong?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Yes, and instructions were issued.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: May I know whether Mr. Chanda is now a sitting member?

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

Appointment made during the regime of the present Ministry

Babu LALIT MOHAN KAR asked :

73. Will Government be pleased to state in a tabular form, the number of appointments, both permanent and temporary, made during the regime of the present Ministry up to 31st January 1941, and the number of such posts filled up by (i) Surma Valley Caste Hindus (ii) Assam Valley Caste Hindus (iii) Surma Valley Scheduled Castes (iv) Assam Valley Scheduled Castes (v) Immigrants (vi) Tribal Castes (vii) Surma Valley Muslims and (viii) Assam Valley Muslims in different Departments of Government service?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

73.—The information is being collected, but it will require some time to collect complete information.

Provincial War Fund

Babu LALIT MOHAN KAR asked :

74. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The total amount of collection made for the Provincial War Fund up to 31st January 1941?
- (b) The amount of collection made from each district of the Province?
- (c) The amount collected from Muslims whose names were recorded?
- (d) The amount collected from Hindus whose names were recorded?
- (e) The amount collected from persons of other castes and communities whose names were recorded?
- (f) The amount collected from persons whose names were not recorded?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

74. (a) to (f)—The only particulars which are available are laid on the table; they were made available by the courtesy of the Secretary of the Fund.

Statement referred to in reply to unstarred question No.74(a) to (f) asked by
Babu Lalit Nohan Kar
ASSAM WAR FUND

ACCOUNTS TO 15TH FEBRUARY 1941

First line of figures totals to 15th January 1941

Second " " from 15th January to 15th February 1941

Third " " to 15th February 1941.

District	Direct Prosecution of war		Other Purposes	Unallocated	Totals
	Aircraft	Not specified			
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Lakhimpur does not include donations to the Lakhimpur Fund.	4,967 13 9	7,444 8 0	22,953 12 2	12,136 8 9	47,502 10 8
	159 4 0	377 13 0	7,757 14 0	805 1 0	9,100 0 0
	5,127 1 9	7,822 5 0	30,711 10 2	12,941 9 9	56,602 10 8
Sibsagar	23,759 6 0	8,067 11 0	2,163 8 0	71,089 8 6	1,00,080 1 6
	3,243 14 0	275 2 0	524 7 0	2,791 14 6	6,835 5 6
	27,003 4 0	3,342 13 0	2,687 15 0	73,881 7 0	1,06,915 7 0
Darrang	5,188 1 3	7,262 10 9	2,697 2 9	18,615 6 0	33,763 4 9
	451 1 3	828 5 0	174 8 0	4,412 4 6	5,866 2 9
	5,639 2 6	8,090 15 9	2,871 10 9	23,027 10 6	39,629 7 6

District	Direct Prosecution of war		Other Purposes		Unallocated		Totals	
	Aircraft	Not specified	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Nowgong	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	..	..	13,904 15 0	14,049 15 0	..	..
	145 0 0	..	..	..	679 11 0	679 11 0	..	..
	..	..	..	..	14,584 10 0	14,729 10 0	..	..
Kamrup .. ..	..	125 0 0	336 6 0	..	17,021 0 6	17,457 6 6	..	..
	..	..	..	..	1,629 5 0	1,629 5 0	..	..
	..	125 0 0	336 6 0	..	18,650 5 6	19,111 11 6	..	..
Goa para .. ..	..	10 0 0	5 0 0	..	61,020 6 9	61,025 6 9	..	..
	..	..	..	..	5,455 1 6	5,455 1 6	..	..
	..	10 0 0	5 0 0	..	66,475 5 5	66,480 5 5	..	..
Khasi and Jaintia Hills ..	2,510 0 9	7,207 1 3	4,547 15 0	..	51,447 12 6	45,712 15 6	..	..
	100 0 0	204 3 0	615 6 3	..	1,937 3 3	2,456 12 6	..	..
	2,610 0 9	7,411 4 3	5,165 5 3	..	55,384 15 9	48,509 10 0	..	..
Naga Hills .. ..	..	290 11 3	99 0 3	..	15,504 14 9	15,994 10 3	..	..
	..	136 14 0	21 5 0	..	203 1 9	541 4 9	..	..
	..	427 9 3	120 5 3	..	15,808 0 6	16,435 15 0	..	..

Manipur .. ..	..	73 14 0	409 12 0	3,740 13 3	4,224 7 3
	..	0 10 0	55 2 0	1,378 1 10	1,433 13 10
	..	74 8 0	464 12 0	5,118 15 1	5,658 5 1
Lushai Hills.. ..	..	134 0 0	650 0 0	7,354 6 9	8,138 6 9
	570 0 0	..	2,000 0 0	2,611 15 6	5,181 15 6
	570 0 0	134 0 0	2,650 0 0	9,966 6 3	13,320 6 3
Garo Hills .. ..	..	8,256 13 0	25 8 0	1,776 11 3	10,059 0 3
	..	1,157 1 0	8 0 0	..	1,165 1 0
	..	9,413 14 0	33 8 0	1,776 11 3	11,224 1 3
Sadiya Frontier Tract ..	..	846 14 0	..	3,723 10 5	4,570 8 5
	..	..	..	546 8 0	546 8 0
	..	846 14 0	..	4,270 2 5	5,117 0 5
Balipara Frontier Tract ..	..	2,100 8 6	313 12 0	205 0 0	2,619 4 6
	..	83 7 9	30 12 0	10 0 0	124 3 9
	..	2,184 0 3	344 8 0	215 0 0	2,743 8 3
North Cachar Hills ..	50 0 0	..	..	4,518 12 0	4,568 12 0
	10 0 0	..	..	174 7 0	184 7 0
	60 0 0	..	..	4,693 3 0	4,753 3 0

District	Direct Prosecution of war		Other Purposes	Unallocated	Totals
	Aircraft	Not specified			
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	9,491 5 3	968 0 0	1,675 1 9	11,707 8 6	23,841 15 6
	1,103 0 0	..	1,798 8 0	3,747 13 8	6,649 3 8
	10,594 5 3	968 0 0	3,473 9 9	15,455 6 2	30,491 5 2
Sylhet	13,413 5 3	1,310 12 0	3,122 13 9	1,09,648 1 10	1,27,495 0 10
	1,818 8 0	..	1,036 3 0	4,591 13 3	7,435 6 3
	15,231 13 3	1,310 12 0	4,159 0 9	1,14,239 13 1	1,34,930 9 4
District not known ..	..	..	..	631 0 0	631 0 0

	..	..	..	631 0 0	631 0 0
Donations by Tea Estates through the Indian Tea Association and Managing Agents.	..	..	..	24,933 2 0	24,933 2 0
	..	..	..	1,845 6 0	1,845 6 0
	..	..	..	30,603 0 0	30,603 0 0

Assam-Bengal Railway	..	..	..	..	266 2 0	266 2 0
	..	..	..	..	38 6 0	38 6 0
	..	..	..	..	304 8 0	304 8 0
Donation by the Joint Steamer Companies.	..	..	..	..	..	..
	..	..	..	..	5,000 0 0	5,000 0 0
	..	..	..	..	5,000 0 0	5,000 0 0
Total Fund as subscribed	59,525 0 3	38,555 7 0	38,999 11 8	4,78,612 13 6	6,15,693 0 5	6,15,693 0 5
	7,455 11 3	3,063 7 9	14,042 1 3	31,026 2 6	55,587 6 9	55,587 6 9
Total	66,980 11 6	41,618 14 9	53,041 12 11	5,09,639 0 0	6,71,280 7 2	6,71,280 7 2
Received from Lakhimpur Fund	1,77,193 14 0	..	5,000 0 0	..	1,82,193 14 0	1,82,193 14 0
Total Fund	2,44,174 9 6	41,618 14 9	58,041 12 11	5,09,639 0 0	8,53,474 5 2	8,53,474 5 2

E. P. BURKE,

Honorary Secretary and Treasurer.

Motion to carry out air raid precaution measures in Assam

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I beg to move that this House is of opinion that the Government of Assam do take necessary steps to carry out air raid precaution measures where considered necessary and to expend a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,000 in advance of the sanction of the Government of India.

Hon. members have been supplied with a copy of the motion which contains an explanatory note. To explain further the necessity of this motion, I may inform the hon. members of this House that ever since the war has started and the essential necessity of petrol for the purposes of war was recognised and as in India proper the biggest oil field producing petrol is situated in Assam, viz., Digboi with its refinery at Titmukia, the Government of India declared that area protected. Later on, about the middle of last year, these areas of either military or strategic importance was divided into different categories. Then Titmukia and Digboi were declared to be in Class I, i. e., actual air raid precaution must be taken in those areas. Shillong being the capital of the province was placed in category No. II, although it has not got the same military or strategic importance. Since then, there is a menace of war in the Far East and the Government of India has insisted that every possible air raid precaution should be taken in the Class I category areas and also some kind of preparedness for Class II areas for the purpose of meeting possible air raid. But the first defensive necessary is the anti-aircraft guns. The Government of India propose to send such instruments to those two areas concerned. But along with these it is necessary to keep ready fire fighting apparatus, gas-masks, steel helmets and also shelter for civil population, if there is an actual raid. For this purpose, the Government of India has intimated to us that a certain number of gas-masks and steel helmets will be sent. But there are other minor things which will require expenditure and the amount of which we do not know, for example, digging of shelter in those places, etc. Where there are military units available, the Commanding Officers have promised to supply, free of any charge, labours of sappers and miners. Similarly at Digboi also, the Oil Company had intimated their intention of supplying the labour free. But it may be, the land on which these shelters are to be dug may belong to some private party and they may have to be compensated. In short, Sir, small expenditure, apart from what the Government of India will bear, may be necessary, and, therefore, we think, that we should get the vote of the House to enable us to incur the expenditure before we receive the sanction of the Government of India to the extent of Rs. 5,000. I think, Sir, I have stated all the relevant matters which have necessitated this motion and if any further explanation is required, I will submit it in reply after the discussion, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That this House is of opinion that the Government of Assam do take necessary steps to carry out air raid precaution measures where considered necessary and to expend a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,000 in advance of the sanction of the Government of India."

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of information Sir. Does the Hon'ble Prime Minister think that this sum of Rs. 5,000 will be sufficient for this purpose? As it has been explained by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, we understand that we are going to spend this money for defence purpose and there is every chance of getting this amount back from, the Central Government. In that case, I think, Sir, it will be well if we know definitely that this sum is quite sufficient, otherwise, if permitted, I am willing to move an amendment to increase the amount.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: For the present we do not envisage an expenditure of bigger sum than this Rs.5,000. As I have already mentioned, Sir, certain heavier items of expenditure will be taken up by the Defence Department. So we believe that the initial expenditure will be covered by the sum that is provided in this motion, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is there any harm to get this amount increased a little more, Sir? If the amount is not spent it does not matter much. In such a case it will be prudent on our part to keep some more money sanctioned.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: But when the Government do not want more why does the hon. member want to increase.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, it ought to be an adequate sum.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I cannot allow an amendment for increasing the amount mentioned in the motion.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Moreover, any such amendment of increase cannot be moved without His Excellency's sanction.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: I want an information, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: What is the point of information?

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: The point of information is that if the Government really think that we are really on the verge of danger, I want to know whether we are really in danger, Sir.

Mr. D. B. H. MOORE: Mr. Speaker Sir, I rise to support this motion. It will be recalled that during the Budget discussion—we had occasion to draw the attention of Government to the fact that, while the war situation in the Far-East was rapidly deteriorating, thus focussing attention on Assam and the North-Eastern Frontier, no provision had been made in the Budget for funds for air raid precaution work which has now become an urgent necessity.

It is gratifying, therefore, to find that Government appreciate the gravity of the situation, and are acting with commendable promptitude in coming before the House for funds for this purpose.

While supporting the motion, however, I desire to make it clear to Government that from enquiries made on the subject, the sum for which sanction is asked, namely, Rs.5,000 appears far from adequate.

While not wishing to appear unduly alarmist, we feel that the situation is potentially dangerous, and that the provision of efficient and adequate air raid precautions must be undertaken with the utmost despatch in those areas considered necessary.

We cannot believe that the provision of first class fire fighting equipment, effective shelters, splinter and blast-proof protection and the many other measures necessary for the adequate protection of life and property, even in restricted areas, can be carried out with the figure mentioned, and would accordingly urge Government to regard the sum of Rs.5,000 as initial and not final expenditure.

We would indeed welcome an assurance from the Hon'ble Prime Minister that if this amount is found in practice to be inadequate, Government will not hesitate to come before the House for further funds for this vital work.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Mr. Marak has got such thirst for information that I think it ought to be the rule of this Assembly that anybody who can supply him the answer should do so. I would like to point out to Mr. Marak that India, including the province of Assam, has

been in the war zone ever since the Burma Government reopened the Burma Road. That seems to me the salient feature of the present situation. That danger arose as far back as October 1943 and the danger has been increasing ever since that time. For quite different reasons from Mr. Moore's I too would welcome the approach which Government have now made to this question of air raid precautions. There are certain considerations which we in this Assembly should ventilate.

In the first place, in all such areas as are selected for precautions there must be absolute uniformity of application. I am one of the few members of this House who, when the war first broke out in England, acted as an air raid warden. I have a special interest in this question as, I think, I am also the only member of this House whose property has been bombed and has also suffered from incendiaries. I think the first thing to drive home in this problem is uniformity. It is no use whatever to see, for example, the large industrial concerns adopting all the precautions if through want of organisation the private citizen can escape; it is no use whatever a private shop-keeper blacking out his premises if the municipal office remains alight; similarly it is no use whatever if the bus-owner drives with dimmed lights while the private owner drives his car with blazing headlights. There must be absolute uniformity of application, and this degree of uniformity surely presupposes a very much more elaborate organisation than what the Prime Minister in this motion contemplates.

I think, the second point to ventilate is that this business of air raid precautions is a direct Government responsibility. The power can be delegated, but it is the responsibility of Government to issue such clear directions that, in the language of the Bible, "the way-faring man though a fool shall not err therein". I think the essence of all instructions is clarity and simplicity. There again, Sir, I think it presupposes a degree of organisation and a number of officers not apparently contemplated in this first approach.

The next point I would like to stress is the necessity for speed. The test, in my view, must be need and not finance and if these precautions are going to be taken, as I think they should be taken, we must get on with the job without any delay due to doubts as to who will bear the financial responsibility. In England there were towns and county councils which gravely endangered the lives of the people living within their jurisdiction precisely because there was this dispute from the beginning as to what authority should pay the major portion of the bill. It was only when the Central Government in London, declared that they would make grants in aid, bear a large percentage of the cost of precautions, that the move was really made in the right direction.

And finally, if experience in England is any guide at all, it seems to me that there are three essential items. The first is a First Aid Organisation. It is not a very difficult thing, Sir, to arrange a first aid organisation. In many other provinces St. John Ambulance Corps have a strength running into four figures, and it should not be beyond the scope of voluntary workers to organise a similar corps for this province. The second need, again based on experience elsewhere, is for fire fighters and fire appliances, and I would like to emphasise that fire appliances do cost enormous sums of money. And finally, there must be some kind of service for demolition and for rescue work. None of these three services can begin to function at all until the leaders of the people have convinced the public of their urgency, and of the leaders of the people I regard nobody else as better qualified than the Prime Minister of this Province. Obviously, Sir, these three services will require funds which Government alone can provide.

There is yet another feature of the air raid precaution which seems necessary to emphasise, and that is the protection of the poor man. Most of us in this Assembly are aware of the danger because we can read about the danger ; most of us live in houses where we can take certain elementary precautions. But the poor man is not aware of the danger until the leaders tell him so ; he must rely on a Government organisation.

And finally, Sir, we must build up our experts. Those persons who have been put on the job should be kept at it. It is no good throwing off a man every two or three months ; the man who has built up a certain amount of knowledge must go on increasing it. Knowledge is the starting point of any organisation. In England in the first six months of the war the biggest need was for workers with an inventive and improvising mind. In India the need is exactly the same. It is no use for Government officers to say that they cannot get on with this job because they have not got all the necessary equipments. We must work with the tools in our hands. Therefore, Sir, I stress the need for improvising and inventive minds. This is not a problem for stereotyped Government officers who can never escape from the red tape which wraps them round (*Hear, hear*). If suitable Government servants cannot be found, may I make a special plea for closer co-ordination with the Defence Department, for after all the Defence Department has been doing this work for the last twelve months ? They must have certain officers who know a good deal about it than any of the provincial Government officers. Therefore, Sir, I do want to close these remarks with an emphatic demand for inventive mind. Finally, Sir, we consider Government's function will be to support their officers on the spot even if that means greatly increasing interference with the rights of the ordinary citizen.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I put that question for information for myself, because I wanted to know whether we are really in danger. If we are in danger, then what about Dibrugarh, Jorhat and other places in the province ? They should also be regarded to be in an equal danger. And so these air-raid precautions should be undertaken for all these areas as well. I was putting the question as I wanted to know whether it is absolutely necessary or not. Of course after hearing Mr. Whittaker, I am enlightened. We may hear something more from the Hon'ble Premier, and my request is only that precautionary measures should be taken and that people throughout the province should also be enlightened.
(At this stage the clock struck 12 noon).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : This matter will stand over for Monday to be taken up during question hour, if time permits. If any hon. member wants to speak, he may do so then.

Presentation of a supplementary statement of expenditure for the year 1940-41

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to present a Supplementary Statement of Expenditure charged on the revenues of the province during 1940-41 and also a list of Supplementary Demands for Grants for 1940-41. These demands are fully explained in the explanatory notes. If any hon. member requires any further elucidation, I will refer him to the Deputy Secretary, Finance, who is available here.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Two supplementary statements have been placed before the House, one is regarding the expenditure charged on revenues of the province and the other regarding expenditure which is not

so charged. The hon. members have got a right to discuss the supplementary statement of expenditure charged on the revenues of the province, but they will have no vote thereon. This matter will come up again on the 20th, and time will be allowed for discussing the statement.

With regard to the other supplementary statement, hon. members know that this will come up before the House for discussion and voting on the 20th and on the 21st. Hon. members are entitled to table cut motions if they like to these demands. Under Rule 100, the hon. members know that, the cut motions are to be tabled three clear days before the demands come up for discussion. Now, three clear days will expire tomorrow. But tomorrow being a Sunday, hon. members will have to table their cut motions today before 2 p.m. But I will extend the time and hon. members may hand over their cut motions today before 4 p.m.

As regards the question of allotting time for discussion of these demands, as in previous sessions, I would request hon. members to meet me in my chamber at quarter to 2 p.m. so that I may prepare a time table for allotting time for the demands. There is also another matter to be settled, viz., the order in which the demands are to be taken up. My idea is that all the demands should be fixed up for the 20th, assigning the last place to demand No. 14, which relates to the grant of rupees one lakh to the British War Fund. It may be taken up at 2-30 p.m. on the 20th after disposing all the other demands, so that the discussion on it, which, I expect, will be a prolonged one, may be continued on the following day.

Demands for Grants

GRANT No. 11

(25.—General Administration)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.22,69,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1942, for the administration of the head "25.—General Administration."

Sir, there are notices of 13 cut motions raising various points, and I think that, instead of making any general remarks at the time of making my motion, it will be better if I reply at the time when those cut motions will be moved.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:—

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.22,69,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1942, for the administration of the head '25.—General Administration'."

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I beg to move, Sir, that the provision of Rs.21,600 under Grant No. 11, Major head 25.—General Administration, Minor head—H.—Minister, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed Head—Parliamentary Secretaries, at page 73 of the Budget, be refused, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs.21,600.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I fix 7 minutes' time for the speech of a mover of a cut motion, 7 minutes for speech of the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge for his reply and 5 minutes for the speech of each of the other hon. members who would like to speak on any cut motion.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, when the Budget was placed before us last year, there was a provision for 10 Parliamentary Secretaries. Then the Hon'ble Prime Minister gave us an assurance on the floor of this House that not more than 6 Parliamentary Secretaries will be taken. Now, Sir, we find, from what we heard three or four days ago, that only 4 Parliamentary Secretaries have been appointed up till now. While discussing the Budget, Sir, I mentioned that in the Revised Estimate for 1940-41 I did not find any money allotted under that head. At that time I had some suspicion in my mind that no Parliamentary Secretaries had been appointed, but when I heard that four hon. members had joined, I could not understand wherefrom they would be paid and so that point still remains to be explained. Now, Sir, my point is this that even today in reply to a question of mine, *viz*, when the Government proposed to provide subdivisional headquarters for Health Officers, the Hon'ble Mr. Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty replied—'when funds will permit'. Sir, I think that if the Hon'ble Prime Minister really desires he can do without these Parliamentary Secretaries. From 10 he came down to 6, and then credit must be given to him that though money for 6 Parliamentary Secretaries was sanctioned he has been able to manage with 4, and I understand that these 4 also have been appointed very recently—I mean three or four months back. So, Sir, I think that the Hon'ble Prime Minister can do without this amount, and by this amount he can do many other beneficial works which will be for the real good of the rate-payers.

With these few words, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs.21,600 under Grant No. 11, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—H.—Ministers, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Parliamentary Secretaries, at page 73 of the Budget, be refused, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs.21,600."

There is also another cut motion* in the name of Maulavi Abdur Rahman, and he wants to discuss the same matter though his motion is not for total refusal. He can take part in this debate if he likes.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a similar cut motion standing in my name, but I have got a slight difference from Mr. Mookerjee's motion; he wants that there should be a total refusal of the amount, whereas I want to raise a discussion about the utility of the services of the so-called Parliamentary Secretaries.

Now, Sir, since this amount was voted by the House, our Hon'ble Premier placed the whole matter before the Government party, of which I am also a member, to decide the personnel from among the party who were willing to serve as Parliamentary Secretaries. He was making a serious attempt to appoint persons who might have been supported by the whole

*Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 21,600 under Grant No. 11, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—H.—Ministers, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Parliamentary Secretaries, at page 73 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To raise a discussion about the utility of the services of the Parliamentary Secretaries.)

party of which he is the Leader, but unfortunately the matter was delayed. Probably the hon. members of the party could not come to a final decision, and so far as I remember during the last November session out of six, four were elected by a majority of votes, and with regard to the question of one more I come to know that no final decision has yet been arrived at. On my subsequent enquiries after November last, I learn from some of the hon. members who have been appointed as Parliamentary Secretaries that they have not been given charge of anything to deal with. My idea was that they would be given some important work to do, and this was the statement of the Hon'ble Premier that by these appointments he would give these persons some chance of learning parliamentary works. But the other day while I was talking to one of my friends who has been appointed a Parliamentary Secretary, I was shocked to find that in spite of his efforts, he has not been given any chance to do anything. I do not know whether these hon. gentlemen have been attached to any Hon'ble Ministers, or whether they have been given a chance to deal with any files. As for myself, I am quite in the dark to know whether the Parliamentary Secretaries have got any special duties, or whether they have been given any duty to perform. If it is seen that these hon. gentlemen should not be given any chance to deal with any files, then the House is to consider what to do with them, or, in other words, I may say that it is the duty of the Hon'ble Leader of the House to consider whether their services are at all necessary. If the Hon'ble Premier finds that their services are at all necessary in order to give the Ministers some relief in the discharge of their onerous duties, it is up to him to say "yes, they should be retained", but, at the same time, if for the sake of maintaining a few hon. members by the grant of a few hundreds per month this provision is necessary, then I should make an appeal to him that he should see that this amount may not be unnecessarily spent (*Hear, hear,*) and that he spends this amount for any of the public needs. If, however, it is necessary to keep these Parliamentary Secretaries, then it is up to him to see that they also learn parliamentary procedure and methods.

Srijut RAM NATH DAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the motion moved by my hon. friend Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. I say, Sir, the amount of Rs.21,600 budgeted for Parliamentary Secretaries will not be worth spending for the purpose. I say that because I have not seen the need of the Parliamentary Secretaries under the circumstances existing in the province at present. Thereby I do not mean to say that Parliamentary Secretaries are not necessary at all; what I mean to say is this that Parliamentary Secretaries are not necessary under the circumstances existing in this province at this time. Need for Secretaries would have been here, if there were sufficient works for them and when our Hon'ble Ministers would not have got sufficient time to discharge those works by themselves. But have we so long seen anything done by these appointed Parliamentary Secretaries, or have our Hon'ble Ministers at any time complained that they were getting difficulty in discharging their duties in carrying on the administration for want of time? I think, Sir, our Hon'ble Ministers have not complained at any time, and they cannot complain with their present number. When our Prime Minister first formed the Ministry he formed that Ministry with 5 Hon'ble Ministers to carry on the administration, and at that time we had not heard any grumbling or murmur from him that he was finding difficulty from want of time in carrying on the administration. Despite that what we see to-day here? We have seen a galaxy of Ministers numbering ten filling in full two treasury benches. In view of this, I do not think, Sir, that our present Hon'ble Ministers can complain that they are overworked. Therefore, Sir, I say that the need for the Parliamentary Secretaries in

this province under the circumstances existing is not there. Moreover, Sir, we have not been shown even by the Government the need of the Parliamentary Secretaries. The other day even our Hon'ble Finance Minister has not assigned any reason nor has he met the criticisms levelled against this item. Therefore, I say, Sir, that even the Government has not shown the need for these Parliamentary Secretaries and when there is no need for Parliamentary Secretaries, the amount which is going to be spent for them is not worth spending. So, Sir, I support the motion of Mr. Mookerjee.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK : I stand to oppose this motion. I think Parliamentary Secretaries are necessary. Government has considered very carefully the matter and have finally decided to have the services of Parliamentary Secretaries. In other provinces there are Parliamentary Secretaries. I think the money should not be refused and the money allotted should be passed.

Secondly, I come to the cut motion tabled by our hon. friend Mr. Abdur Rahman. It is to criticise the policy of Government and not to throw out the provision made for Parliamentary Secretaries. The criticism is not fitting. At first the Ministry found some difficulty in making appointments at an earlier date. He was criticising the policy, but he himself was in the meeting and he knew the difficulties. So he ought not to have criticised the Government. I am glad however that one Parliamentary Secretary has been appointed from amongst the Garos. I am very happy that my colleague Mr. Momin is one of the Parliamentary Secretaries.

Mr. BINODE KUMAR J. SARWAN : I beg to oppose the cut motion of Mr. Mookerjee. Sir, I find the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries quite essential and not unnecessary. The Hon'ble Prime Minister when he was formerly in charge of the Finance, very wisely made provision for them in the Budget. Now the necessity for their existence I have to explain, otherwise some hon. members will not be satisfied and they will not be content. These appointments were made on the 14th January and recently the Hon'ble Ministers have given us a start to work. Now, for instance, Mr. Benjamin Ch. Momin who comes from the Garo Hills, a partially excluded area, has been appointed a Parliamentary Secretary. The Hon'ble Premier does not know the customs and manners of the Garo people, and Mr. Momin, the Garo Parliamentary Secretary, is helping him with all materials, and the Hon'ble Premier thinks that his help is very essential.

I come from the district of Darrang. The Hon'ble Minister may not know anything regarding the Darrang district. Therefore any member who is appointed a Parliamentary Secretary from that district may be able to give him some information or some guidance. I know the creek and corner of that district, and any Minister who likes to get some information about Darrang may get it from me. (*Laughter*). The Parliamentary Secretaries are doing their best. The Parliamentary Secretaries are also helping the Ministers in drafting and preparing their letters, etc. (*Hear, hear*). And still more, during this period of one and a half month the Parliamentary Secretaries are getting informations about the procedure of running the administration by reading the Government Hand-book and other manuals, etc. So we are like children in our new appointment and they have asked us to get acquainted with the rules of the Executive Manual, Government Hand-book and Fundamental Rules, etc. Therefore, Sir, I think sincerely that it is necessary

that there should be Parliamentary Secretaries. There have at present been appointed and I hope the appointments will be completed soon.

With these words, I resumed my seat.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA :—Sir, I support the motion of my friend Mr. Menkayee. I do not say that Parliamentary Secretaries are not necessary. As a matter of fact, in other provinces they have been appointed. But I do not think that they have been allowed to deal with the work which is done in the House. As a matter of fact, they make themselves busy in other places, deal with all matters of the province. But I do not think I really feel pity for them as we see them in the House. If I were I see that they have no time to give me. I have seen them at a cheaper rate and one of them told me, say that he was better than a Peshkari. They are to carry the files and open the files. I will not say for them. Sir, if the Hon'ble Ministers think that they are really necessary for the good of the province, then they must be given a chance and also they must be given a chance to reply to questions. Hon'ble Ministers remain absent from the Assembly on the other day. I am a questioner, why the Parliamentary Secretaries should be given a chance to the questions to be answered by the Hon'ble Ministers. An hon'ble Member who is very ill at the moment, but the Hon'ble Premier said that it should be better replied by other Hon'ble Ministers in the presence of Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali. Sir, I have already said that I do not think for a moment that Parliamentary Secretaries are not necessary, but what I say is that they should be given sufficient work to do and if the Hon'ble Premier thinks that there is no sufficient work for them then there should not be any Parliamentary Secretaries in this province and the money saved from that head can be very well utilised in other nation-building works. With these few words I support the motion.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA :—Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think every hon'ble member who has taken part in this debate excepting the last speaker. He has brought before this House what kind of private conversation he had with some Parliamentary Secretaries. I would rather say that he was not trying to have any private conversation with them but he was doing espionage work.

Sir, the question whether the Parliamentary Secretaries are needed in this province is a debatable one. No body denies that there are two schools of thought—one school thinks that Ministers alone are empowered not only with the duties to be performed under the statute in the Legislatures but also with the duties of administration. Other school of thought brings in the argument that a man is generally foisted to the Ministry without any previous experience, therefore it is better to have a set of people who will be able later on to take up parliamentary duties if called upon to function as Ministers. We have seen that under the regime of the Congress Ministers in other provinces, Parliamentary Secretaries were also appointed and also there is also the institution of the Parliamentary Secretaries. We, in Assam, felt difficulties on certain matters. I will detail at length the reasons which led the Ministry to think of introducing the system of Parliamentary Secretaries in Assam. At least in two or three matters, the Ministry found difficulties. Speaking for myself, I should say that I am in-charge of the Home Department consisting of law and order. I have absolutely no idea as to how things function in the partially excluded areas. Vehement complaints were made on the floor of this House

about administration in these areas so much so that my predecessors, while in office of which my hon. friend Srijut Ram Nath Das was also a member and who has just now complained about this matter, will remember that, had to institute a conference called 'Partially Excluded Areas Conference'. It is unfortunate that the authors of that Conference could not come to any decision before they laid down their office and it has now devolved on me to come to a decision on certain matters concerning the administration of justice, and concerning the special customs like that of 'Aking' in Garo Hills. It is very difficult for me to understand that—some representative of people says something here in the Assembly whereas the local officers give a different reply to our queries. I have found, Sir, that Mr. Momin who hails from Garo Hills has been of great assistance to me. He can give first-hand advice and information on all matters concerning Garo Hills.

As regards question on labour, I should say that we are on the eve of some legislation for benefiting labour and we thought that the presence at headquarter of a member representing that constituency will be of some help to the Ministry. Therefore, Sir, we have had this institution of Parliamentary Secretaries. My hon. friend Mr. Mookerjee, the originator of this cut motion, has given me credit. We have appointed four Parliamentary Secretaries although we are to appoint six. Sir, on a party system Government, I followed the lines of democracy and consulted the party before making any appointment of this nature. It has been settled in the party meeting that there should be six Parliamentary Secretaries of which two will go to Muslims of two Valleys. Four posts will go to minority communities whose special interests require the presence of one of them at the headquarter to help the Ministry; I mean the minority communities of plains tribal, hill tribal, labour and the scheduled-castes should be represented. It was stated by my Hon'ble Colleague the Finance Minister in his introductory speech the reason why up-till-now five have been appointed and one has not yet been appointed. As regards the last one, it has gone to the vote of the group which has not yet been completed.

My hon. friend Mr. Ram Nath Das urged that under the present circumstances in Assam it is not necessary to have Parliamentary Secretaries and he has advanced argument that as there are ten Ministers, it is not necessary to have Parliamentary Secretaries; but who will decide whether the Parliamentary Secretaries are necessary or not? I must give credit to my hon. friend Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta when he says that the Parliamentary Secretaries are necessary and what he meant is that these gentlemen should be given good opportunity of learning the work of administration. The only thing that can be said, Sir, is that on account of want of place they did not get office rooms of their own. The Hon'ble Ministers themselves also had similar difficulties, but now with the enlargement of the Constitution House, they will get their own rooms where they will be able to do conveniently their own file work. I was myself working so long in a room which was the passage and the Committee room and yet shared by the Hon'ble Minister of Local-Self Government. It is quite correct to say, Sir, that the work can be managed with lesser number of Ministers than ten but the principle of appointing ten Ministers was laid down by the Congress Coalition Ministry whose aim was to appoint ten Ministers but actually they appointed eight Ministers. At the time when I left the Ministry in 1938, I had only six Ministers although I started with five. Before the present Reform, there were only two Ministers and two Members who used to do all the works. But now I can say without any fear of contradiction or challenge that the work has increased not only three folds or four folds but it has increased by at least five times after the present Reform. Therefore, if we have even ten Ministers, there may be room for Parliamentary Secretaries.

Now I like to say a word about the function of the Parliamentary Secretaries. It is known to every hon. member that the Parliamentary Secretaries cannot take up the statutory duties of the Hon'ble Ministers. They can be given the functions of the Legislature, i.e. answering supplementary questions, preparation of Government replies and Bills, etc. All these functions were given to the Parliamentary Secretaries in Bihar, United Provinces and also in the Punjab. Then we have got functions in connection with the day-to-day administration of the Government business. We have decided that the functions of the Legislature should better be performed by the Ministers themselves, but in the day-to-day administration of the Government we should get the help of the Parliamentary Secretaries in the shape of advice to the Ministry.

Sir, I have already stated that the Parliamentary Secretaries now appointed are rendering good services to the Ministry and I need only say that I will be the last person to keep any body of officers without any work. If we find that we can dispense with their work we will do that the very next month.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is: "That the provision of Rs.21,600 under Grant No.11, Major head—25—General Administration, Minor head—H—Ministers, Sub-head 1. Pay of officers Detailed head—Parliamentary Secretaries, at page 73 of the Budget, be refused, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs.21,600."

The question was negatived.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 98,779 under Grant No. 11, Major head—25:—General Administration, Minor head—H—Ministers (total), at page 74 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 101, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 101.

Sir, I have tabled this motion only to criticise the Ministers' policy regarding appointment. Times without number on the floor of this House it has been suggested that some percentage should be reserved for merit and merit alone. But, Sir, though sometimes we got assurances from the Government, up till now we do not know whether the policy which was invoked at the very beginning has been changed. Sir, so far from the appointments we can find (there being no publication intimating the change), that the same policy is being pursued up till now. I do not like to take much time of this hon. House on this matter because I am fully convinced that all the hon. members want that certain percentage should be fixed for merit and merit alone. So it is needless for me to deal with the matter in detail. With these words, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut motion moved: "That provision of Rs.98,779 under Grant No. 11, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—H—Ministers (total), at page 74 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.101, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs.101."

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am obliged to my friend Mr. Mookerjee for raising this question for it enables me to explain the Government position. Far from the present Ministry getting a censure as the cut motion is designed to be, they ought to get credit for their policy in this respect. When there has been insistent demands from the minority communities and the backward communities

who did not get their share in the past. hon. members will give credit to this Ministry to hear that after a good deal of deliberation and facing a good deal of opposition in the Cabinet, they have been able to reserve 20 per cent. of all appointments to be given to the most meritorious people irrespective of the community from which the candidate comes. We initiated this policy about the middle of last year and a keen observer like Mr. Mookerjee ought to have noticed that while we filled the posts of Assistant Surgeons last year, we gave an appointment to a caste Hindu from the Surma Valley on the grounds of merit alone though Surma Valley Hindus are over-represented in the service by about 200 per cent. I must say that this 20 per cent. reservation has been made in the appointments which will be directly made by Government, *i.e.*, in provincial services. We hope that the policy adopted by us will be extended to the appointments in the lower offices as well, but no definite instructions have been issued to that effect. Even in the recruitment of Assam Civil Service this time we have instructed the Public Service Commission that one appointment should be given to the best candidate irrespective of the fact that the candidate comes from a over-represented community. I think Mr. Mookerjee ought to be satisfied on the statement of the policy of the Cabinet and will see his way to withdraw his cut motion.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, after hearing the Hon'ble Premier I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.30,519 under Grant No. 11, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—Secretariat and Headquarters Establishment—M.(b) Civil Secretariat (Publicity Department) (total), at page 77 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.101, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 101.

Sir, I have tabled this motion only to criticise the Government's policy of the Publicity Department. Sir, this is a Department of which nobody can deny that it is necessary. But what benefit the people are deriving out of this Department? That is the sole question.

Sir, in other provinces we find that there are periodicals and other organs of the Government by which the public know about the activities of the Government, but in our province we have not got anything like that. Sir, I think it is high time that the Publicity Department being in existence, for more than a year, there should be some periodicals or some kind of organs so that the public may easily know the activities of the Government.

Sir, it is not a new thing as I have already stated that in other provinces, where there are Publicity Departments, the Government are always eager to allow the public know about their activities. I hope, Sir, I shall get an assurance from the Hon'ble Prime Minister that in our province also we shall derive the full benefit of this Department. With these words, Sir, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs.30,519 under Grant No. 11, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—Secretariat and Headquarters Establishment—M.(b) Civil Secretariat (Publicity Department) (total), at page 77 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.101, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs.101."

There is also another cut motion* on the subject in the name of Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury, to reduce the grant. He may also speak now.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my motion is almost identical with that of Mr. Mookerjee. The other day, while discussing the Budget, I spoke concerning that the Publicity Department was not doing their work, as expected. We learn from the Budget Memorandum that the Government was constructing a suitable House for locating the office of the Publicity Department and now that office is located somewhere in the building of a bank on the Gauhati-Shillong Road. During this time when the Reform is at work and war is going on, people want to know what is being done from Government and perhaps with that view Government established that Department. We only notice that some Press Notes are published in some tabloids Papers which mostly appear in the Assam Edition of those papers but they do not reach the people for whom these publications are meant. My suggestion is that Government should provide more money to enable the Publicity Officer to do elaborate and effective propaganda about what the Government are doing and to enlighten the public about the European War. When we go to villages we say that our Government is doing this and that, but when the people read the newspapers that are published from the district they do not find anything like that. But from other provinces, like Bombay and Bengal we get some news-sheets published by Government through the Publicity Department fully stating the activities of the Government, whereas in our province nothing of that kind is found. I think, Sir, that Government can very easily publish a news-sheet either in the shape of a weekly, fortnightly or at least a monthly to enlighten the public with authentic information about what the Government are doing and about the Great European War. I mention war frequently because due to the war the prices of commodities have risen enormously. Even only the other day we have read in newspaper that an ordinary match box which was sold at one pice each, will be sold at two pice and bigger box at three pice each. Now about all these things people should be enlightened and the most proper medium is the Publicity Department. I, therefore, suggest that Government should provide more money to enable the Publicity Officer to run the propaganda throughout the whole province in the shape of booklets, pamphlets and news sheets, which should be published in three languages, i.e., English, Bengali and Assamese—that is the proper medium. With these few words, Sir, I draw the attention of the Government to this Department. I do not move my motion, Sir, with the hope that Government will take note of all that I have said in connection with this motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does Mr. Moore want to speak on this motion.

Mr. D. B. H. MOORE: My motion is slightly different, Sir. Have you any objection to my moving my motion separately, Sir?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: No. The hon. member will be allowed to move his motion separately. I do not think that his motion is exactly the same as the motion that has been moved. I simply wanted to know whether he wanted to speak on this motion.

*5, Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY to move:—

That the provision of Rs.30,519 under Grant No. 11, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—Secretariat and Headquarters Establishment—M(b) Civil Secretariat (Publicity Department) (total), at page 77, of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To criticise Government for not providing more money for the Publicity Department.)

Adjournment

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

After launch

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA :

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my thanks are due to all those hon. members who have raised the question of the Publicity Department. I am very glad to find a change in their view, for, I distinctly remember that when I proposed the institution of a Publicity Department for the Government of Assam in my budget speech of 1940-41, many hon. members criticised that it was not a safe thing to do, or that Assam could not afford a Publicity Department. Since then the small beginning we made has drawn the attention of hon. members and now they have given the benefit of their ideas—or shall I say experience—and not only they want that this Publicity Department should function but they want that it should function properly.

The main question that has been raised by the author of this cut motion, *viz.*, Mr. Mookerjee, is that we must, before we spend any money, see what benefit the public is deriving from this Department. I entirely agree, Sir, that no money should be spent from the public exchequer unless the public derive benefit therefrom. The very fact that two hon. members have given notice of cut motions in order to draw the pointed attention of the Government to the need of providing more money for the Publicity Department clearly shows that they believe that great good can be done and some good has been done to the public by the Publicity Department. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee's chief complaint is that there has been no organ issued by the Publicity Department in Assam unlike the similar Departments of richer provinces. I wish, Sir, I had the money to issue a weekly news-sheet from the Publicity Department telling the people what has been done or what is being proposed to be done by the Ministry as well as the effect of the war on the economic condition of the people and the different phases of the war. Probably great minds think alike, Sir. We have had some such kind of proposal before us but we had to turn it down on account of some peculiar difficulties of Assam. In Assam, Sir, as you know, there is a multiplicity of languages. For the Assam Valley proper, we have got to issue the news-sheet in Assamese; for the Assam Valley in Bengali and for the Hill Districts in different dialects of the hills. Unless we can do that, our news-sheets will not make any approach to the masses for whom this demand is being made by my hon. friend.

My friend Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury has criticised that so long Government could not provide an office for this Department. Sir, it is no secret that the growing activities of the representatives of the people both in this House as well as in the Upper House have expanded the work in the Secretariat so much that in spite of extra building accommodation for different offices, we have not yet been able to find room for some Departments. For instance, the office of the Inspectress of Schools and her Assistant had to be housed in a room belonging to the Hydro-Electric Ltd. Similarly, Sir, it was your kind accommodation that allowed the Publicity Department to function in one of the rooms of this Assembly Building. For this office, we have recently rented a portion of the New Standard Bank buildings on the Gauhati-Shillong road. In the next year's budget, Sir, more money has been provided and we will see whether the suggestions made by different hon. members can be carried out. With the poor resources at the disposal of this Department, I should say the Publicity Department has done quite valuable work. It publishes a weekly note on the progress of the war. It also issues, whenever necessary, press note on the activities of the different Government departments, and it has also

brought to the notice of the different departments of the Government of the public as expressed in the Press. Mr. H. S. Chaudhury says that the press notices of the Publicity Department appear only in Calcutta papers, and that even the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* does not find a place in the local papers. He says we cannot go to a certain extent Sir, but I myself had seen the notices of the Publicity Department published in the local Press. So far as the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* is concerned, we have been well-served by the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* as well as one of the *English Weeklies*. I hope, Sir, you will be able to show to the importance of and importance of the work, and what the Publicity Officer and his Department can do with the Government location and with added resources which are available to be used at their disposal in the next budget year.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

Mr. D. B. H. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 6,171 under *General No. 11, Major Head 25, —General Administration, Major Head 25, and Headquarters Establishments, Major Head 25, Sub-head 1, —Pay of officers detailed head Publicity Officers at Rs. 27, of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 1, i.e., the amount of the whole amount of Rs. 22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 1.*

Sir, I have already stated during the Budget debate the urgent need for Government to take a more active and energetic interest in the subject of publicity and propaganda, and it is with the object of pressing this home, with particular reference to the war, that I have tabled this motion. During the debate we made certain suggestions, which, however, received no reply from the Hon'ble Finance Minister. I make no apology, therefore, for again introducing this subject and urging upon Government the need for immediate and energetic action in the matter.

As regards publicity, we put forward four suggestions, namely, (1) that the department might be re-named and confined itself exclusively to war publicity, (2) that a large scale scheme of war propaganda should be launched, primarily for the collection of war funds in the form of loans, (3) that steps be taken to obtain a regular supply of war news and war propaganda films for the widest possible circulation, and lastly (4) that competent Government Officers should address public meetings at regular intervals to acquaint the public with the progress of the war. I would again emphasize the need for the launching of a campaign of war savings. The collection of war funds in the shape of donations has proceeded with a very considerable degree of success. But it is our view that, if Government encourage the collection of further funds in the shape of loans, as opposed to gifts, the response will be both immediate and correspondingly larger. No matter how soundly and carefully the finances of the country are handled during the period of the war, it is certain that the post-war period will bring with it a measure of economic depression and dislocation. Money invested now in the form of loans to Government will provide funds for the investor which will form a very valuable reserve in times of economic stress and strain. This fact is, we feel, not generally appreciated and the Publicity Department would do well to acquaint the public with the advantages of such a scheme of regular investments and savings.

Turning to the question of propaganda, it is only too evident that the importance of this weapon in modern warfare is not sufficiently appreciated. The war effort of a people kept in ignorance of the progress and

needs of the war will in the very nature of things be half-hearted. Propaganda, skilfully handled, can play a vital part in maintaining the morale and the interest of the people, resulting in a more concerted and a more enthusiastic war effort. The outcome of this war undoubtedly affects Assam as it does India, and it is of paramount importance that propaganda should be conducted in such a way as to leave no doubt in the minds of the public of the tremendous issues involved. Of the sum of Rs. 30,000 which has been allotted to this department for the new financial year, only a proportion of Rs. 10,000 is for war publicity and propaganda purposes. We consider that this sum is totally inadequate, and would urge Government to consider seriously the need for providing additional funds for this most important work. Propaganda is a provincial subject and we would accordingly urge Government to meet the imperative need for creating energy and drive that Government can command.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Out in motion moved:

That the grant of Rs 6,477 under Grant No. 13, Major head 25, General Administration—Minor head Secretariat and Headquarters Establishment—Minor head Secretariat Publicity Department, Sub-head 1, Pay of Officers—Detailed head Publicity Officer, page 77, of the budget, be reduced by Rs. 4,000, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 4,000.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my hon. friend Mr. Moore complained that, as he did not get any reply in the summing up of the budget by my Hon'ble colleague the Finance Minister, he has raised this question again. I may assure him, Sir, that all his valuable suggestions had been carefully noted by Government. If for want of time, my Hon'ble colleague did not categorically refer to those suggestions in his final speech on the general discussion of the budget, it should not be taken that Government have fought shy of those suggestions. As Mr. Moore has raised the same four suggestions which he raised in his speech during the budget discussions, I will take them categorically and reply to each one of them.

I think, Sir, there is no necessity for renaming this department as 'war publicity' only. Because, if we give it a limited name by reserving it only for war publicity, the Ministry or the public will not get the benefit of any publicity measures on the various activities of the Government—a matter which the public has every right to know. I think, Sir, the intention behind the suggestion will be effected if I can prove to him that at the present time the Publicity Department is converging more on war publicity than on other matters. I can tell my hon. friend as well as the other members of the House that I have heard, I being in charge of the Publicity Department—complaints from many members of the Ministry that the Publicity Officer is devoting more of his time to war publicity than in giving publicity to the activities of individual departments and portfolios of the different Ministers. As a matter of fact I have had to explain to them that to the extent of his resources and the limitation of his time, the Publicity Officer is giving his attention to both matters, and both of them are vital to the best interests of the province.

I agree with my hon. friend that there should be a large scale propaganda for Defence Loans. I have indeed on many an occasion said, specially in my appeal which I issued at the beginning of the war, that these loans ought to be given cheerfully by the people as it will not only be helping the British Government in their main object, *viz*—the overthrow of Nazism and Fascism, but also it will give a decent return to them for the

money which is invested. I quite agree with my hon. friend that it should be brought home to the people that these investments in the Defence Loans and Savings Bonds ought to be made as a lay by for the postwar depreciation that is sure to come. It was noticed in the last year of 1914-18, that while the war had lasted the people—irrespective of whether they were belligerents or neutrals—were working at a pitch and they had also lately no consideration for what would be the after effect. While the strain is on, the strainer does not feel the stress and energy that have been put for a work, but as soon as the strain is over, and relaxation comes, the strainer then feels what amount of energy has been lost. The same is the case with money matters. Governments are spending money for the successful prosecution of the war and they are not thinking what will happen after the war is over. Therefore it is in the best interests of the people and the country that they should save something as well as help in the prosecution of the war by subscribing to the Defence Loan. That is a subject which will be given due weight by the Publicity Department. My hon. friend says that steps should be taken to disseminate authentic war news promptly. In this I do not think that the Publicity Department can be blamed. We get the most authentic war news from the Central Information Bureau, which the Publicity Department transmits to the local centres and press as soon as they are received.

Then, again, Sir, my hon. friend has suggested that the Publicity Department should organise public addresses on the progress of the war in different places. Sir, I do not think that with the small staff which the Publicity Department has got this additional burden should be placed on them. Each District and Subdivision has got its own War Committee, and we have requested the War Committees to have a special department to arrange such public addresses either from competent Government servants or from the enthusiastic public. This suggestion will have to be transmitted to the different War Committees rather than be taken up by the Publicity Department. I quite agree that the sum that we have provided is inadequate. I wish I had the funds to increase the allotment, but with the goodwill and support of the hon. members, I hope, when the necessity arises, I shall be provided with funds for more efficient working of this Department.

Lastly, my hon. friend has said that our war effort should be strengthened by propaganda. There is no doubt about it. I have heard from responsible European quarters in private conversation that propaganda like the propaganda of Dr. Goebles in the German Machine is worth its weight in gold. The value of propaganda is well known, and we will do our little best with the material that we have got.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Does the hon. member wish to press his motion?

Mr. D. B. H. MOORE : No, Sir. I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.4,65,160 under Grant No.11, Major head—25.—General Administration—Minor head—District Administration—S.—General Establishment, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total), at page 80 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, is the object of the motion to raise a discussion about the appointments made in the Deputy Commissioner's establishments at Sylhet and Shillong. Sir, it is perhaps known to the hon. members of the House

that the past by putting series of questions some of the hon. members of the House wanted to acquaint the Government with the irregularities which are prevalent in the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, with regard to clerical appointments. It is reported that although there is a practice in the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Sylhet, that candidates are examined and appointments are made after preparing a list of the successful candidates, even then there are serious complaints that the Sheristadar attached to the establishment of the Deputy Commissioner's office interferes in every matter, and very lately things which are prevalent there in the matter of giving preference to candidates have come to our knowledge. It is common talk that whosoever can make arrangement with the Sheristadar Sahib gets preference in getting an appointment although in merit he may not stand the highest. So far as I remember during the last November Session, and also during the last Budget Session this objectionable practice on the part of the Sheristadar was brought to the notice of the Government by some of the hon. members in the form of questions, but in spite of that the Government have not taken any action, or have not given any definite instructions so that the meritorious candidates may not suffer at the hands of the Sheristadar at the time of getting appointments.

There are other matters which also deserve serious consideration of the Government regarding the conduct of the Sheristadar at Sylhet.

Then, about the establishment of the Deputy Commissioner at Shillong. Very recently I have been told that in this office the Muslims are not getting their due share in the matter of appointments. With this information in my mind, I put a number of starred questions which have been admitted, but have not come before us yet in the form of replies. So far as my knowledge goes, at Shillong in the Deputy Commissioner's establishment, there is practically no Muslim serving in the higher grade. Very recently the Officer in charge of the Nazarat recommended for a Muslim to be appointed as Nazir, but the Deputy Commissioner while making the final appointment did not take into consideration the recommendation of the Officer in charge of the Nazarat.

There are other complaints which prompt me to come forward in the form of a cut motion in respect of the grievances of my community with regard to appointments. It is a known fact, Sir, that the unemployment question is the burning question of the day. We very often trouble the Hon'ble Ministers for appointment of our nominees. If our Ministers be a bit careful so that the respective communities—Hindus, Muslims and other communities—may get their due share in all the offices, then the burden of the unemployment question may be a bit lessened. Sir, my idea to move this motion is to bring to the serious consideration of the Hon'ble Premier that he should take prompt action to see that the Muslims get their due share in the establishments of the Deputy Commissioners at Sylhet and Shillong. My grievances are more directed to the establishment of the Deputy Commissioner at Shillong where there is a great dissatisfaction in the minds of the people of my community that they are not receiving their due share in appointment.

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

"That the provision of Rs.4,65,160 under Grant No.11, Major head—25.—General Administration—Minor head—District Administration—S.—General Establishment, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total), at page 80 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my hon. friend Mr. Rahman has tabled this cut motion at the end of his speech, with the idea that Government will see to it that his community may get its share of appointments in the Deputy Commissioners' Offices both in Shillong and Jaintia Hills, for good and good. I have nothing to say about this. But in the last part of his speech he made some allegations against the Government officers, viz., the Deputy Commissioner of Shillong, the Sheristadar and the Deputy Commissioner of Jaintia Hills. I know very little. But as a citizen of the State, I feel that I should protest against such allegations. I think that town have never heard that the Sheristadar was a drunkard, and that the Deputy Commissioner of Jaintia Hills was a friend of the Sheristadar. It is really a very serious charge. I think that the Hon'ble Premier will kindly take note of this. Is it whether a Deputy Commissioner of Mr. Stewart is a drunkard or not, this kind of nasty criticism or not. It is not fair. Mr. Rahman has not kept unjust request of some persons, and he has not changed his policy while ago the Hon'ble Premier said that he was going to change in his policy regarding appointments, but he is still doing a lot with regard to appointments which are directly at the disposal of the Government and the Ministry have not taken it into consideration that appointments are concerned. I hope that the Hon'ble Premier will say publicly about his policy extending the same to all kinds of appointments, that charges of this nature against high and responsible Government Officers may not unnecessarily be raised in this way. With these observations, I oppose this motion.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. mover of this motion has mentioned a special case about the appointment of the Nazir in Shillong. His grievance is that a Muslim has not been taken in, and though another person of his own community has intervened, yet the present incumbent had been taken in that post. I am very much surprised that the hon. mover has taken this as a special case. But he has not made out a case. Does he mean to say that people who are already in the office should not get the consideration of the Deputy Commissioner for the convenience of his office?

There is another point in regard to appointments in district offices. Is the proportion in these appointments to be taken on district or general population basis? If it is on the district basis, then more Khasis should be appointed in the offices of the Deputy Commissioner and in other district offices in the district of Khasi and Jaintia Hills. I think there are not enough Khasi officers in the district offices in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. This is a grievance that in the district offices appointments are not given to Khasis in larger numbers. Therefore I oppose this motion. I think it is right on the part of the Deputy Commissioner to take into consideration population on a district basis in making appointments in his district offices.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would respect the feeling which prompted my hon. friend Mr. Abdur Rahman, to propose this cut motion to draw the attention of the Government to some deficiencies which he thinks obtains in the matter of representation of Muslims in the two offices he has mentioned; but I am afraid, he is not well posted with facts. He mentioned that he tabled a certain set of questions on the point. I am sorry from the figures that have been supplied, I find that so far as the Khasi

Hills are concerned he has got absolutely no case. In all the offices under the Deputy Commissioner at Shillong, there are 38 clerks in the different branches including the Police which till recently was exclusively in-charge of the Deputy Commissioner. Out of these 38 clerks there are two Muslims in the Police Department. On the population basis, the Muslims are entitled to only one per cent., i.e., 38 of the total appointments whereas they are enjoying two posts although not in the general office of the Deputy Commissioner but in the office of the Deputy Superintendent of Police who was till recently under the Deputy Commissioner. My hon. friend Rev. Nichols-Roy complained that there are not sufficient number of Khasis but I should say that here also he is not well informed; out of the 38 clerks, there are as many as 31 tribal people, one Anglo-Indian, four Hindus and two Muslims. So it is clear that the Khasis are well represented in the office. My friend is quite correct in saying that in matters of appointments which are made on the district basis, the figures of district population alone are to be taken into consideration.

Now as regards the case of Nazarat clerk, my hon. friend mentioned both in his question as well as in his speech to-day that the Extra Assistant Commissioner in-charge recommended the name of a Muslim candidate for that post but the Deputy Commissioner gave it to other community. On the facts that have been placed before me, it has been stated that the Extra Assistant Commissioner never recommended any Muslim candidate for that post. Therefore so far as the Khasi Hills are concerned, I doubt whether the emphasis which he laid bears any scrutiny.

Next I come to Sylhet. I have been hearing from 1937 about the so-called irregularities prevailing in making clerical appointments in the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet. When I referred this matter to the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, he said that he holds an examination of all the candidates and on the result of the examination he makes the appointments whenever vacancy occurs on communal basis. It was probably in the general discussion of the budget last year, some allegations were made against the Sheristadar that he interferes in the matter of appointments. Sir, it will be untrue to say that no action was taken by Government in this respect. I personally discussed this matter with the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Stewart, on two occasions and on both the occasions he said that the allegations against the Sheristadar are unfounded. Various requests have been made to me both in private and public about things which cannot be stated either on the floor of this House or outside. Government must have some definite data to come to a decision in this matter on general allegation against the Sheristadar about which I have taken notes but about which I do not find any definite proof, I cannot take any action without doing an injustice to the Officer. Moreover the appointment and transfer of Sheristadar does not lie with the Government under our rules. Under the delegation of power, it is the Commissioner of Divisions who makes all these transfers and appointments. If my hon. friend can give me any definite instance as to where, when and how the Sheristadar interferes, I will make enquiries on the matter, but I cannot make inquiries on vague statements.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, after hearing the Hon'ble Premier, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Will the Hon'ble Premier enlighten me whether the Khasis are represented according to population basis here in the Deputy Commissioner's office?

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

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

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 1,13,913 under Grant No. 11, Major head -25, General Administration, Minor head -I, District Administration -I, Subdivisional Establishment (total), at page 81 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, this morning during question hour when we were discussing about the question put by one of the hon. members of this House namely Bahu Bopin Behari Das regarding the period for which Gazetted officers can be allowed to station at a particular place, the Hon'ble Premier was pleased to say that this question should be discussed with the members which stands in my name. Sir, on a previous occasion, when the same very question whether the gazetted officers should be allowed to remain at a particular place for more than a stipulated period was discussed, so far as I remember, during the regime of the Congress Coalition Ministry, the then Home Minister Mr. Bardoloi, in reply to a question of mine, definitely stated before the House that the policy of the Government was to allow a particular officer to remain at a particular place for three years only, and in certain special circumstances they can be allowed to remain at a place up to five years. I also remember that the present Hon'ble Premier also stated before the House that the policy of the Government is that an officer should not remain at a place for more than three years and in special circumstances he can remain up to five years. In the result of the repeated putting of the same question before the House with a view to draw the attention of the Government, this can be ascertained that the general public feel inconvenience if the gazetted officers are allowed to remain at a particular place for more than three years. This is also not the general policy of the Government that officers who have got the powers behind them or who are empowered by the Government either to do wrong or good to the people, should be allowed to remain at a place for more than three years.

Sir, I am concerned particularly with regard to the question of putting Magistrates at a place for more than three years. Now I shall try to mention the difficulties before the Government which I apprehend and which are also supposed to be experienced by the general public. If a Magistrate is kept in one place for more than three years, he can naturally become acquainted with certain set of people. The Magistrates are after all human beings and they must have association with some of the people where they remain. There are different parties with different aims and objects and with different interests. If I belong to a particular party and if a Magistrate who is now working at that place belongs to my opposite party, certainly he will seek opportunity for the interest of that party to put me to trouble whenever there will be opportunity. Sir, it is not difficult for a Magistrate to find out an opportunity to put a man to trouble by virtue of the power he possesses. This is the principle to which I draw the serious attention of the Government and they should take into consideration that a Magistrate must not remain at a place for more than three years. Sir, I have got in my possession certain letters which I received since I came to attend this session with regard to a certain Magistrate, about whom I should not mention. He is working at a particular place for five years and has got relations there too. In that letter, which I have shown to some responsible members of this House, there is a definite complaint against that particular Magistrate. It is stated in that letter that a gentleman who was not on good terms with a relation of that Magistrate had to undergo a very severe trouble through the influence of that Magistrate. In one case it is complained that the man had to undergo imprisonment for one and half

months. Of course, the case in which that particular gentleman was implicated was not tried by that particular Magistrate, but through the influence of that Magistrate with whose relatives that man was not in good terms, this particular gentleman was given much trouble.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: What is the good of stating all these things? The hon. member is speaking of matters and all sorts of grievances which may be only imaginary and may not stand the test of an enquiry.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I am not going to cite any concrete example. My point is that there is apprehension in the minds of the public because of the fact that Magistrates are allowed to remain in a particular place for more than 3 years and because of the fact that they have been able to make relationship with some people at that place. So it is not fair on the part of the Government to allow these Magistrates to remain at a particular place for a period of more than three years. Government should be on the alert in this matter so that the people should not have any apprehension in that respect. The public should be given to understand that a Magistrate will not be allowed to work at a particular place for more than three years. With these words, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs.1,13,913 under Grant No. 11, Major head—25.—General Administration, Minor head—District Administration—T.—Subdivisional Establishment (total), at page 81 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.22,69,100 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I find that this question of the posting of some Magistrates at some places for a considerable length of time has been agitating the minds of some hon. members of this House. So I took the trouble of going through the Civil List to find out how many of the Magistrates complained against have been at a particular place for more than three years and I find that in the Surma Valley only six Magistrates have been posted to different subdivisions for more than three years. Some of them were on the point of being transferred, but as they were doing census work they had to be kept in their stations till the census was completed. After the census work is over, some of the Magistrates who are already more than three years in one place will be removed to different stations. After the of 81 in our Extra Assistant Commissioner cadre only six Magistrates have been compelled to stay in one particular place in the Surma Valley. That is not very large. I can assure my hon. friend that though there is no hard and fast rule in our Executive Manual that an officer or a Magistrate cannot be placed on the same place for more than three years, still the ordinary general rule or procedure is that a Magistrate is not allowed to remain for more than three years in one station. So the suggestion made that it is time for moving some officers from one particular station to another will be given due consideration. Of course I do not accept the allegation made that these Magistrates being stationed at one place develop idiosyncrasy or partiality. It is not on account of that but on account of the general rule or ordinary procedure of removing the Magistrates after they have been posted at some stations for three years, that this question will be given due effect after census work is over.

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

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Let me now put the substantive motion. The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 22,69,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending the 31st March, 1942, for the administration of the head '75.—General Administration'."

The question was adopted.

Grant No. 2

(7.—Land Revenue)

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 15,71,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1942, for the administration of the head "7.—Land Revenue".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved.

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 15,71,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1942, for the administration of the head '7.—Land Revenue'."

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, I shall move out motion No. 5. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 6,460 under Grant No. 2—Major head—7.—Land Revenue, Minor head—Charges of Administration—B.—Tahsil and Other Establishments, Sub-head—3. Management of Private Estates under Act X of 1892, at page 54 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 10, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 15,71,900 do stand reduced by Rs. 10.

Sir, this is an old question and this is being agitated over by some of the members since we came to this House. So far as I remember, during the first Budget Session my friend, Maulavi Ashrafuddin Md. Chaudhuri, M.L.A., took the initiative in the matter and he fought hard over the question.

My grievance is that the management of the private estates is not satisfactory. Even during the last Budget Session I moved a motion that though Government have taken over charge of some of the private estates under their management but their working is very unsatisfactory. Sir, my point is if Government have kindly taken up the administration of those properties they should be serious and sincere for better administration. The proprietors of the private estates while find themselves incapable or unable to manage their own affairs they come to the Government with the hope of better management of their properties but if Government simply by appointing some officials find or think that their responsibilities are over then it is no good taking over charge of any private estate. My only point is to urge on the Government that they should be very much serious and sincere about better management of these estates. I need not come to any concrete example about any particular estate but this is a general question and wherever we turn our attention we find that proprietors are crying hoarse at the management or at the ill-treatment which the wards receive from the official heads even after they have surrendered their properties to the hands of the Government. With these words I commend my motion and draw the attention of the Government to look to the management of the things.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut motion moved :

"That the provision of Rs. 6,460 under Grant No. 2, Major head—7.—Land Revenue, Minor head—Charges of Administration—B.—Tahsil and Other Establishments, Sub-head—3.—Management of Private Estates under Act X of 1892, at page 34 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 10, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 15,71,900 do stand reduced by Rs. 10".

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Sir, I take this opportunity of bringing to the notice of Government the management of the Court of Wards Estate of Mechpara in the district of Goalpara. It goes without saying that the wards states have been relegated to the Government, and the Government for the matter of that have become trustees. Of late, there has been some mis-management which would be well illustrated by giving an instance of wanton devastation of a forest within the Court of Wards of Mechpara. The Hon'ble the Revenue Minister will particularly take note of the fact that the Mechpara Estate of late has been trying to lay claim over the *Lakheraj* forest *mahal* named Chaibari and for sometime they have been trying to catch hold of it and possess it by any means. Sir, with regard to this area of the forest *mahal* of Chaibari I have got to say that this forms part of the Chaibari *Lakheraj* owned by the Lakherajdar Srijut Mrigendra Narayan Chaudhury for a very long time. The Estate, as they wanted to take possession of it, caught hold of a member of this House, I am constrained to say, and gave settlement of the entire forest to fell and remove trees at a ridiculously low price of 8 annas per tree. This forest has not been worked for the last 20 or 22 years and within the course of about 2 weeks about 700 trees have been cut and removed, the valuation of which could not be less than Rs. 20,000 but the estate will in return get only a pitance. On a calculation it would not fetch even Rs. 400. This is an instance, Sir, properly speaking, if the owners of the estate wanted to possess it, they could have done by means of a civil suit. But instead of doing it, they have taken recourse to settle it with one who has desperately gone into the forest and by this wanton devastation the entire forest is being damaged. I had an opportunity of bringing it to the notice of the Divisional Forest Officer of Garo Hills who is the Chief Forest Officer of the Mechpara Forest also. I do not know what action, if any, has been taken by the Divisional Forest Officer, Garo Hills. But the matter, as it stands, will deprive the estate of a very valuable property and the estate will lose to the extent of Rs. 20,000 in a course of a few weeks. If I am correctly informed, Sir, no notice was published for calling of tenders and if it was published at all, the publication was not at all sufficient to bring in tenderers who could give better price. A tree which will yield not less than Rs. 13 to 15 each has been given only for 8 annas! This is a sum which is ridiculously low and I bring it to the notice of the Government. If the estate is being managed in this fashion, I believe, as a trustee, the estate is not being well-managed and the trust is not well executed. With these words, Sir, I support the motion of my hon. friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman.

Maulavi ABDUL AZIZ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Revenue Minister the grievances of the tenants of a particular Court of Wards Estate, viz., the Munshibari Estate which has been recently taken over by the Court of Wards. For some time past, some sort of tension is going on between the tenants and the Manager of the Estate. Most of the tenants have low-lying lands which are liable to be washed away by flood annually. During the last year, Sir, the entire crop of the tenants was washed away. The tenants brought this fact to the notice of the Manager; they also petitioned to the Deputy Commissioner. When the Deputy Commissioner went to the headquarters of the South

Sylhet subdivision the tenants approached him; they came to me also. I saw the Deputy Commissioner and talked with him the grievances of the people. The Deputy Commissioner also met the people and questioned the Manager about the destruction of paddy. The Manager admitted the fact and he recommended remission of rent for the last year. I left the Deputy Commissioner, the Manager and the people talking together and I do not know whether the Deputy Commissioner has passed any order for remission. To-day I have received a letter from the tenants of the locality asking me to move the Hon'ble Revenue Minister to set aside the order of the Deputy Commissioner directing the Manager to bring rent suits under the Public Demands Recovery Act. Sir, the condition of the people is really pitiable, and I request the Hon'ble Minister to make an enquiry into the condition of these tenants who will number about 500. Their crops are annually washed away by flood, and so they are unable to pay rent. In the circumstances, in which they have been placed now, it would be simply cruel to proceed with rent suits against them under the Public Demands Recovery Act. With these words, I request the Hon'ble Minister to enquire into the matter.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Rahman moved this motion I expected to hear from him certain specific allegations against the Court of Wards, but he has only made a general allegation that the estates under the Court of Wards are mismanaged. Of course I do not plead guilty to that charge. But it is a fact that in the district of Sylhet the number of these estates have been increasing; recently, we took over seven more estates. The Deputy Commissioner is so much occupied with other work that without the help of a whole-time officer it is impossible for him to supervise the management of all these estates. So, naturally, Sir, there might be some defects in the management of these estates. But we have recently appointed an officer on special duty to help the Deputy Commissioner in bringing the management of these estates to order, and we hope that with the placing of one whole-time officer at his disposal in future, the Deputy Commissioner will be able to effect improvement in the management of the Court of Wards estates. If, however, the hon. mover has any particular estate in mind, he would do well to bring specific allegation against that particular estate.....

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Did the Hon'ble Minister not receive petitions from some of the wards of the Majumdari Wards Estate embodying certain allegations against the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Stewart?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: No such allegations have been made. So far as I know, some petitions were received from some of the wards asking for some money from the estate, but these were refused by the Deputy Commissioner because he was not in a position to pay them from the surplus. That was the allegation I heard of. Any way, Sir, if any specific allegations are made against any of these estates, Government will be only too glad to look into them.

As regards Maulavi Amjad Ali's allegation regarding the devastation of forests in Mechpara, the matter has been brought to my notice recently by a petition, and I am glad to be able to say that that petition has already been sent to the Deputy Commissioner for an enquiry into the allegations by the Divisional Forest Officer, Garo Hills.

As regards the complaint that has been made by my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Aziz, I do not think, Sir, this is an instance of mismanagement. I think he has no particular complaint against the Manager or the Deputy Commissioner except with regard to his direction to institute rent

suits against the defaulters. That is a matter, if properly represented, will be looked into. I think, Sir, with this assurance my hon. friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman will feel inclined to withdraw his motion.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I only hope that the Hon'ble Minister will be serious about materialising the assurances which he has given. In view of these assurances, Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move—
“That the provision of Rs.49,363 under Grant No.2, Major head—
7.—Land Revenue, Minor head—C.—Management of Government Estates—Colonisation Schemes (total), at page 35 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.10 i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.15,71,900 do stand reduced by Rs.10.”

Sir, the object of my motion is not to criticise Government, but only to draw the pointed attention of Government to the fact that the annual grant made to the Dalgaon Colonisation area for the amenities of life is quite inadequate.

Sir, from the Dalgaon area the Government have realised some lakhs of rupees. The colonisation scheme came into force from the year 1931, and since then the Government have been realising premium. I am going to give a statement showing that the area that has been brought under the colonisation scheme and the amount of premia realised every year and the number of families which have immigrated into this area.

In 1930-31, the area included in the colonisation area was 38,344 *bighas*, the total amount realised in a year is Rs.7,238 and the number of families immigrated is 1,611. In the year 1931-32, the area included was 19,874 *bighas*, the total amount realised in a year is Rs.12,960 and the number of families immigrated is 754. In the year 1932-33, the area included in the colonisation area is 185 *bighas*, the amount realised in the year is Rs.9,658 and the number of families immigrated is 370. In the year 1933-34, the area included was 765 *bighas*, the amount realised in a year is Rs.12,421 and the number of families immigrated was 520. In the year 1934-35, the area included was 21,780 *bighas*, total amount realised every year is Rs.16,851 and the number of families immigrated was 260. In 1935-36, the area included was nil, the total amount being realised in this year was Rs.32,517 and the number of families immigrated was 601. In the year 1936-37, the area included was 16,163 *bighas*, the amount realised was Rs.45,400 and the number of families immigrated was 1,280. In 1937-38, the area included was 500 *bighas*, the amount realised was Rs.50,207 and the number of families immigrated was 1,486. In the year 1938-39, the area included was nil, the total amount realised was Rs.51,133 and the number of families immigrated was 1,450. In the year 1939-40 up to 27th February 1941, the area included was nil, the total amount realised was Rs.40,272 and the number of families immigrated was 78. Up to February 1941 total area included was 103,585 *bighas*, the amount of premia realised was Rs.3,37,750 and the total number of families immigrated 8,928.

But out of these amounts during these years only Rs.8,700 has so far been spent by the Government for the colonisation area for roads and water. Now, Sir, I have gone through the budget and find that only Rs.15,000 has been allotted for communications for this year for the colonisation areas in the whole of Assam. In Assam there are three colonisation areas. Therefore for Dalgaon area, out of this Rs.15,000, at the most only Rs.5,000 can be expected. So I beg to bring to the notice of the Government what will be the fate of the people of the Dalgaon colonisation area. My point is this.

Rupees 8,700 has been spent during these last years. There is only one Middle English School at Dalgaoon. For that school Government has not given any grant during these years out of this fund. The sole object of my motion is that the Government will be kind enough to grant some amount to this school as recurring and non-recurring building grant out of this fund. Government has been granting Rs 25 a month for the last two years, but this amount is quite insufficient. Some two hundred rupees are required for the maintenance of the school, the balance of the amount which is required for the running of the school has been collected by public subscriptions. At the same time the people are so very poor and illiterate that, if the Government do not care to take some special interest in regard to this school, there is no hope of getting public subscription and giving the people education. So I request the Government that out of this fund some amount will be set apart for aid of this school. With these words, I concluded my motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Cut motion moved.

"That the provision of Rs 49,361 under Grant No 2, Major head—7.—Land Revenue, Minor head—C.—Management of Government Estates—Colonisation Schemes (total), at page 35 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.10, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs 15,71,900 do stand reduced by Rs.10."

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Government are in sympathy with the object of this motion. Government admit that they have not been able to allot money for water-supply and internal communications in these colonization areas in proportion the amount received as premia from these areas. As has been stated by the hon. mover a sum of Rs 15,000 has been provided in the budget and out of that not more than Rs.5,000 can be allotted to this area. But when he mentions the amenities of life, I think that to be rather a vague term as that includes main roads and schools, etc., expenditure for which will come under different heads and not under this head. But Government has already adopted a policy now that in future whatever is realised as premium from a particular area will be spent for extending amenities of life to that area. So the hon. mover may well expect that in future Government will provide more money in the colonization areas.

With this assurance, I think, the hon. member will be inclined to withdraw his motion.

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED : In view of the assurance given, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.75,666 under Grant No. 2, Major head—7.—Land Revenue, Minor head—F.—Survey, Settlement and Record Operations (total), at page 31 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.101, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.15,71,900 do stand reduced by Rs.101.

Sir, I have tabled this motion to raise a discussion about the preparation of a record-of-rights in the permanently-settled areas. Sir, we all very well know that in every session more than one Bill is placed before this Hon'ble House relating to disputes between landlords and tenants, and only the other day the Hon'ble the Revenue Minister in reply to the motion for the circulation of such a Bill said that the whole trouble was due to non-existence of record-of-rights. So, Sir, this has also been appreciated by the Government that the whole trouble between the landlords and tenants in the permanently-settled area is due to the non-existence of record-of-rights.

I hope therefore that the Government will pay serious attention to this fact and come to a decision soon so that there should be a less number of Bills relating to troubles between landlords and tenants.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut motion moved :

"That the provision of Rs.75,666 under Grant No.2, Major head—7.—Land Revenue, Minor head—F.—Survey, Settlement and Record Operations (total), at page 31 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.101, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.15,71,900 do stand reduced by Rs.101."

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we welcome this motion moved by my hon. friend Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee because in the permanently-settled areas a record-of-rights should be prepared at an early date. Sir, in these days of tenancy reform and reform of landlaws, this measure is very necessary. I have experience of State management in Bijni and Mechpara, where a record-of-rights has not been taken up, and there mutation is sometimes double and treble. That is for want of the existence of a proper record-of-rights. We are trying to introduce in the amended Goalpara Tenancy Act provisions of Alluvion and Diluvion Act. These operations will be inoperative and we cannot apply them unless there is a proper record-of-rights in Sylhet and Goalpara. And there are other considerations also for which the tenants have been urging for a long time, such as the classification of tenancies. Now-a-days, whoever applies for new settlement is saddled with a bigger sum for third class land in comparison to first class lands which are being enjoyed at a less rent in other places. A record-of-rights will remove this defect.

In view of all these, we welcome this motion and I think the Hon'ble Revenue Minister will see that a record-of-rights is prepared at an early date.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government admit that this preparation of a record-of-rights is a panacea for all the ills in the permanently-settled areas of the province ; it is not only beneficial to the Zemindars but also to the tenants. But the only difficulty is the prohibitive cost. As regards the preparation of a record-of-rights in the Sylhet district it may be noted that a record-of-rights was prepared for 3 *perganas* in 1914-1917, and it was found that the preparation of a record-of-rights for the whole district would cost some Rs.35,66,150. That was the estimate of cost made in 1914-17, but the cost now will be over half a crore of rupees. So I leave it to the hon. members to decide for themselves.....

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: On a point of information, Sir, was it Rs.35,000 or Rs.35,00,000 ? The Hon'ble Minister said Rs.35,00,000.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: I said Rs.35,00,000. Now it will require about half a crore of rupees. So the cost is quite prohibitive, and on the other hand in the present state of the finances the Government can do nothing in the matter.

Now, as regards Goalpara, records-of-rights are being prepared as demands arise. A record-of-rights has been prepared for Goalpara Town and its suburbs and Nachnipara and Dehi. There is another thing. According to section 117 of the Sylhet Tenancy Act if a landlord or tenant wants the preparation of a record-of-rights, he might apply and in that case the cost of the preparation of record-of-rights will be borne proportionately between the landlord, the tenant and the Government.....

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: In what proportion ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: The quota will be fixed by the Government. In the case of Bhatipara there was a suggestion recently for the preparation of a record-of-rights because of the agrarian troubles and the Government suggested to the Zemindars concerned to make an application, but no such application was received. So I said, Sir, it is difficult for Government to make any move in this matter. But if the tenants or landlords desire that a record-of-rights should be prepared in any locality it is up to them to make a move.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know whether Government can compel owners of such land to prepare such record-of-rights?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: No.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: After hearing of the prohibitive cost, I think I should beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is that a sum not exceeding Rs.15,71,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1942, for the administration of the head '7. Land Revenue'.

The question was adopted.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 A.M., on Monday, the 17th March, 1941.

SHILLONG:

A. K. BARUA,

The 3rd May, 1941.

Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.

WZ

ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

GOVERNOR OF ASSAM

His Excellency Sir ROBERT NIEL REID, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., I.C.S.

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