

**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
Monday, the 24th March, 1941.

**CORRECTION SLIP TO THE ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
DEBATES (BUDGET SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY HELD IN
MARCH, 1941)**

Correction Slip No. 2 of 1941.

For the words "The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali replied", wherever they occur below Unstarred questions, put and answered during the 1941 March Session of the Assam Legislative Assembly, *substitute* the words "The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia replied".

[File No.As.-17-L.A. of 1941.]

SHILLONG :
The 15th July 1941.

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

A. G. P. (L.A.) No.85—500—16-7-1941.

replied :

104.—The hon. member is referred to the reply given to unstarred question No. 112(b) asked by Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy, M.L.A., in the current session of the Assembly.

Administration of Justice in the Garo Hills
Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI asked :

*105. With reference to the supplementaries under questions Nos.169-72 asked by Mr. Jobang D. Marak, during the last November session of the Assembly, will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether Government have taken any step to revise the standing orders passed by Mr. A. J. Lainé ?
- (b) The nature of the crime for which flogging was resorted to, of which a notice was given by me under supplementaries to the said questions ?

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

105.(a)—Government are considering the whole body of Rules for the Administration of Justice in the Garo Hills.

(b)—The whippings to which reference was made were inflicted for repeated adultery by a school boy, sexual assault, wife beating and disturbance of religious worship.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: May I ask, Sir, whether the revision of rules and regulations has already been taken up?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Yes, Sir, it has been taken up.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Is it a fact that the rules and regulations were framed many years ago?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Rules are there, Sir.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: I want a reply, Sir, whether the rules are being examined.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: I have already said, Sir, that rules are being examined.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Is it a fact that the rules were framed by the 30th March, 1937?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: I think, the rules were framed on 29th March, 1937.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Were these rules laid up before the Partially Excluded Areas' Conference?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: I have no information whether the rules were laid up before the Partially Excluded Areas' Conference.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: When did Government begin to examine this question?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: It is under the consideration of Government for more than six months.

Teachers of Aided Schools and Madrasas

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked:

*106.(a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the fact that the Government of Bengal have since framed rules governing the entrance into and retirement from the services of the teachers of aided Schools and Madrasas?

(b) If so, do Government propose to frame rules restricting the entrance into and retirement from the services of Aided Schools and Madrasas by teachers on the basis of age limit and length of services whichever come earlier, with retrospective effect?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

106.(a)—Government have no information.

(b)—The question does not arise.

***Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN** : May I know, Sir, whether Government think it desirable that they should frame certain rules governing the entrance into and retirement from the services of the teachers of aided schools and Madrasas ?

***The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : We have not yet examined the question.

***Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN** : May I know the reason why Government does not like to make certain rules ?

***The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : If the hon. member will give me the date of the notification issued by the Government of Bengal or even the date of the *Calcutta Gazette* in which such notification was published, this Government may pursue this matter.

***Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN** : May I know whether Government consider it necessary that they should frame certain rules with regard to entrance into and retirement of the Aided School teachers ?

***The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : I have already replied that question.

***Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN** : Suppose there is no such rule under the Government of Bengal, in that case, may we know whether our Government would consider it desirable that they should frame certain rules with regard to entrance into and retirement of Aided School Teachers from service ?

***The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : Sir, this question has been framed on the supposition that the Government of Bengal has issued such notification, but if the supposition is not correct, then this question does not arise.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

Public Works Department of the Sylhet and Cachar Division

Babu BALARAM SIRCAR asked :

145. Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing separately the number of menials, clerks, road mohurrirs, Overseers and Subdivisional Officers serving in the Sylhet and Cachar Division of the Public Works Department ? (To be shown caste by caste, namely Hindus, Scheduled Castes, Muslims and others.)

146. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The percentage of appointments reserved for Scheduled Castes in the Public Works Department ?

(b) Whether they are fully represented ?

(c) If not, do Government propose to appoint suitable candidates from the Scheduled Castes of the Surma Valley whenever any vacancy occurs in any rank mentioned above in this Department ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI replied :

145.—The information asked for is given below :—

Communities	Sylhet Division					Cachar Division				
	Menials	Clerks	Road Mohurrirs	Overseers	Subdivisional Officers	Menials	Clerks	Road Mohurrirs	Overseers	Subdivisional Officers
1. Hindus (natives of Assam).	5	9	20	5(a)	..	5	6	16	4	2
2. Scheduled Castes	..	1	..	..	..	3	2	2	..	..
3. Muslims ..	6	11	16	..	1	2	6	9	..	..
4. Others (non-natives, Tribal, etc.)	..	..	..	6	2	..	2	3	3	..
Total No. of officers.	11	21*	36	11	3	10	16*	30	7	2

(a) Includes one temporary Engineer in-charge of a Section.

*N. B.—Accountants, Accounts clerks, Drawing Branch Establishment not included.

146. (a)—Scheduled castes are entitled to 12 per cent. appointments in the Sylhet and Cachar districts.

(b)—Scheduled castes are not yet fully represented in all services.

(c)—It is the Government policy to see that every community gets its share of appointments.

Rural paths in Karimganj Subdivision

Babu BALARAM SURCAR asked :

147. (a) Do Government propose to sanction more money for repairs to rural paths which are washed away by floods or damaged otherwise in Sylhet and Cachar districts ?

(b) If not, will Government be pleased to state how will those paths be repaired and improved where public are unable to maintain them.

148. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether the amount sanctioned in 1940 for repairs of the path in Karimganj Subdivision have been paid by Government ?

(b) If not, for which paths, grants have not yet been paid and why ?

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

147. (a)—The hon. member's attention is invited to the provision of Rs. 25,000 at page 134 of the Budget Memorandum for 1941-42. The cases referred to will come up for consideration along with others at the time of distributing the grant.

(b)—Does not arise.

148. (a)—Orders sanctioning the payment of this Board's share of this year's grant for flood damage repairs have been issued.

(b)—Does not arise.

Repairs of roads damaged by flood in Nowgong

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN asked :

149. (a) Is it a fact that a sum of money was sanctioned by the Government for distribution to some of the Local Boards including that of Nowgong for the repair of roads damaged by flood in the year 1938 ?

(b) If so, what sum was sanctioned to the Nowgong Local Board ?

150. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether the roads so damaged by the flood of 1938 or 1939 in the district of Nowgong will be repaired by the Board with the said grant ?

(b) If so, when that money will be available to the Nowgong Local Board ?

151. (a) Is it a fact that the Nowgong Local Board also submitted a separate prayer for the money so sanctioned by the Government only for the specific purpose of flood damage works ?

(b) If so, what action has been taken on it by Government ?

152. Will Government be pleased to state whether the Nowgong-Dhing-Buragaon road damaged by the Brahmaputra flood will be repaired and raised above the flood level with the money so sanctioned by the Government ?

153. (a) Are Government aware that the said road, having been so damaged, the flood water easily submerges the road causing damage to crops of the Lahorighat and the Bokoni mouzas ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to raise the said road above the flood level as early as possible ?

154. (a) Is it a fact that this is the only Local Board road now in those two mouzas from East to West affording passage to persons and cattle ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to give the inhabitants of those two mouzas the benefit proportionate to their contributions to the Board regarding the improvement of that road ?

(c) Do Government propose to help the Nowgong Local Board with some money for the specific purpose of improving that road early so as to save the people and their property from the ravages of flood in those two mouzas ?

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

149. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Rs.5,000.

150. (a)—The grant has been given for flood damage repairs and it is presumed that the Board will take action accordingly.

(b)—Orders have already been issued for payment and it is expected that the Board will be able to draw and utilise the grant before the financial year comes to an end.

151. (a)—Yes.

(b)—The request was taken into consideration in distributing this year's grant.

152.—It is for the Local Board concerned to decide as to whether this road can be taken up.

153. (a)—It may be so.

(b)—The question is under the consideration of Government in another connection.

154. (a)—It may be so.

(b) & (c)—The hon. member's attention is invited to the reply to question 153 (b) above.

Allotment of seats for the Assam Legislative Assembly

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

155. (a) Is it a fact that it was decided after the Joint Parliamentary Committee Sessions, that there was to be two seats for the Assam Legislative Assembly, in the Sunamganj General Constituency ?

(b) Is it a fact that according to the recommendations of the Hammond Committee, one seat was transferred to the Sylhet Sadar General Constituency ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to lay on the table the following papers :—

(1) Representations submitted and evidences given for the afore-said transfer of seat to the Delimitation Committee presided over by Sir Laurie Hammond.

(2) Representations submitted and evidences given to the afore-said Committee, for the retention of the above seat in the Sunamganj General Constituency.

(3) Papers containing orders for the transfer of the above seat from the Sunamganj General Constituency to the Sylhet Sadar General Constituency.

156. Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a comparative statement showing the area, population and number of voters of both the Sunamganj General Constituency and the Sylhet Sadar General Constituency ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

155. (a)—No.

(b)—There was no question of transfer, as the report of the Indian Delimitation Committee was the first systematized set of proposals.

(c)—The printed representations have been laid on the library table. Government have no other recorded opinions. The report of the Delimitation Committee will be found in the library, and for the final orders reference may be made to the order in Council.

156.—A statement showing the estimates made by the Delimitation Committee is given below.

ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
GENERAL CONSTITUENCIES

Serial No.	Name of the Constituency (Provincial)	Area in square miles	Population of each constituency excluding population of backward Tribal constituencies	Number of voters on provincial roll	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Sunamganj (General).	1,443	203,000	22,000 (Scheduled caste 7,000).	Vide pages 183-184 of the Delimitation Committee's Report, Vol. II G.T.
2	Sylhet Sadr (South).	380	80,000	10,000 (Scheduled caste 3,000).	
3	Sylhet Sadr (North).	710	80,000	8,000 (Scheduled caste 3,000).	

Demands for grants

GRANT No. 24

(43.—Industries)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now, we shall take up demands for grants. The Hon'ble Minister of Industries may move her motion.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, on a point of order.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There is nothing as yet before the House on which the hon. member can rise on a point of order.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I like to rise on a point of order with regard to certain cut motions appearing in to-day's list.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: When any cut motion will be placed before the House, the hon. member may rise on a point of order.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I find, Sir, that there are innumerable cut motions in the name of Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. He is now in Jail and we do not know how he could get forms to submit all these cut motions?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does it require any question to ascertain this fact? True, the hon. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy is in Jail now, but he has got the right to carry on correspondence with any one outside the jail or any department of Government through the jail authorities. It is through correspondence with the Assembly Department that he succeeded in getting some forms for tabling cut motions.

Order, order. The Hon'ble Minister of Industries may move her motion now.

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN : On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,46,200 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 "43.—Industries".

There are as many as eighteen motions for reduction and most of them relate to the policy of Government.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI : I rise on a point of order, Sir. In every province, particularly in Bengal, we find that while a Minister moves a motion for demand, he or she makes a speech on the subject but here we have found during all these days that no such speech was made, no ground was prepared and no case was being made out ; simply motions for demands were placed before the House. The Chair might call upon the Hon'ble Ministers to make speeches when he or she comes up before the House with a demand.

It would have been better if the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge had stated his or her case when such a demand comes before the House. Actually this is the practice which has been followed in other Legislatures. I do not know why there is a deviation in our Assembly, Sir ? I think, we have come to the last day of our labour with regard to budget demands, and the Hon'ble Minister's labour will be well done if he or she will please state the policy when making such a demand.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. member will please remember what the Hon'ble Premier said the other day on this subject. Of course, I told the Hon'ble Ministers that it would be better for each of them to state his or her policy in a short speech when making such a motion for a demand. When the Hon'ble Finance Minister presented the budget before the House, he spoke practically on all departments and indicated to the House the different policies that are going to be adopted by the Government in the coming year.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI : That was too general.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Of course, it is too general. When cut motions are tabled the Hon'ble Ministers get the points on which discussions are intended to be raised, and so when each cut motion is moved, the Hon'ble Minister will say what he or she has got to say on the points raised by the mover of the cut motion. But, I agree with the hon. Mr. Amjad Ali that it would be a better procedure if Hon'ble Ministers, when making motions for demands, make short speeches. However, we may look into this matter when the next budget session comes.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI : Is there any certainty that these hon. members will be here in the next budget session ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Very well, I am putting the motion. Motion moved :—

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.2,46,200 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 '43.—Industries'."

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 12,762 under Grant No. 24, Major head—43.— Industries, Minor head—B.—Industrial Development, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total), at page 177 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 111, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,46,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 111.

Sir, I would like to raise a discussion about Government policy regarding the industrial regeneration of the province.

We all know that the prosperity of a country mainly depends on its industrial development. Here in Assam, the Department has been neglected from the time of the pre-reform days. The expenditure under this head has always been meagre and ill-spent. Government have not followed a well-planned systematic policy for the development and revival of the industrial resources of the province. The result has been, that even after four years of working of the Provincial Autonomy, no big industry has sprung up, the small industries are fast dying out for lack of Government patronage and the unemployed youths have got no scope in the industrial fields. Assam abounds in raw materials of all kinds. With a little initiative the Department could utilise these materials and start new industries which could add to the wealth of the province.

The Department is not concerned with the large scale industries. Its activities are mainly confined to the encouragement of hand-loom weaving and sericulture and in imparting technical and industrial training to our youths on a limited scale. The actual expenditure incurred by the Government for industrial education and industrial development of the province was Rs. 1,54,000 in 1937-38, Rs. 1,56,000 in 1938-39 and Rs. 1,58,000 in 1939-40. The revised estimate for 1940-41, is the same as the actuals of 1939-40. These figures include the Government of India grant exceeding Rs. 25,000 per annum. Thus this nation building department has not been generously treated by the Government.

The industry of hand-loom weaving occupies the foremost place in our industrial programme. The Government Weaving Institute at Gauhati is being maintained at an enormous cost of Rs. 20,000. Weaving classes have also been attached to the Surma Valley Technical School. But we are sorry to find that this important cottage industry in the villages is not getting adequate help and guidance from the Government. The produce also cannot find an easy market. The number of looms at work at the present moment is entirely smaller than it was 10 years ago. The four Peripatetic weaving parties with 27 demonstrators are too inadequate to meet the requirements. The small addition of 5 to the number as provided in next year's budget will bring little improvement.

Sir, I am constrained to say, that we have not been able to make good use of the handsome grant from the Government of India which was specifically provided for the improvement of the hand-loom industry. It is a matter of deep regret and disappointment that the Department could not utilise the entire grant from this source for the year 1939-40 and a big sum of Rs. 6,000 remained unspent. The hand-loom industry of our villages, properly organised and equipped with modern appliances, will go a good way in the reconstruction of our villages.

Most of the small cottage industries of the districts have not received proper encouragement from the Government and they are not received their existence. Private enterprises in the manufacture of struggling for goods, toys, brass ware, buttons, combs and many such things could not succeed for want of help and patronage from the State. The cane industry of Sylhet has got a good market all over India. But it fetches no price for the manufacturer. The big paper mills of Titaghar and Calcutta are dependent on the bamboo pulps of Assam. Perhaps it will be news to the hon. members that bamboo-mats worth Rs. 30,00,000 are annually exported from the interior of the Karimganj subdivision. Government could easily assist these persons to organise themselves on a co-operative basis to get better price for their labour. Government intervention could also secure for them better freight rates. Until very recently, the hockeystick

dealers of Calcutta had their supply of canes from the Sunamganj subdivision. But now they have been ousted by Singapore and Mallecca. We are training our students in various technical subjects but for want of state aid they have failed to start independent enterprises and all money spent after them are thus being wasted. Government should come forward and help them to build up new industries in the province.

Sir, in the year 1939-40, a sum of Rs. 15,900 had been provided for the purpose of granting industrial loan for the development of cottage industry but a small amount of Rs. 600 only could be issued and the balance was allowed to lapse. Surely, Government cannot shirk its responsibility in the matter. There was no dearth of application. If the rules stood in the way, these could easily be modified and relaxed to suit the general condition. A big sum of Rs. 22,000 has been provided in next year's budget for industrial loan. We do hope that Government would try their best to utilise the amount. The budget estimates show that a big sum is annually allotted as contribution to local bodies for industrial development. We would like to know how the amount is spent.

In other provinces, exhibitions and fairs are so often organised in important centres to demonstrate the utility of industrial pursuits. But Government has not thought it necessary to provide any sum for the purpose.

Sir, we are glad that some new schemes have been provided in the next year's budget. Provision has been made for installation of silk throwing plant at the Government Institute, Gauhati. We would have very much appreciated Jute weaving plant at the Surma Valley Technical School Sylhet. Assam now is a potential jute growing country and this industry has got a large scope for development. I would request the Government to undertake an industrial survey of the province and on the light of that survey to formulate the policy for the development of industry of the country. 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. 12,762 under Grant No. 24, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—B.—Industrial Development, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total), at page 177 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 111, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,46,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 111".

There are as many as 18 cut motions and the Hon'ble Minister is right when she says that practically all the cut motions want to discuss the general policy. Of course, motions Nos 5, 13, 14, 15 and 16 raise some questions about some local needs. I think, hon. members who have tabled cut motions may take their chances of speaking and discussing their respective grievances for which they have tabled cut motions.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this motion. Sir, in my opinion, the need of the province is an extensive and ambitious scheme of industrialization. Sir, for raw materials, I think, we need not go beyond the boundaries of our province. What is really needed is a comprehensive scheme of systematic industrialization of the province in which the Government should take a leading part and they must help to provide persons who take up some industries. The Government must ensure that the private enterprisers should get all possible help. Sir, if I remember aright, during the Budget Session of 1939-40, the Hon'ble Prime Minister gave some suggestion to the then Hon'ble Minister in-charge of Industries that our pinewood, if tarpentine and resin

are extracted from it, may profitably be used for match sticks and that match also may be manufactured in our province as cottage industry. But Sir, I do not think, anything like that has been taken up by Government even during 1941. Sir, from the Budget, it will be found that so far as the industrial development is concerned, practically Government has done nothing. There are only two remarkable changes—the first change is under ‘contingencies’ and the second change is with regard to ‘other contributions’. By referring to these two items I mean to say, Sir, that they are vague and there is no definite policy before Government. Then again, Sir, at page 181 of the Budget some figures are so misleading that some explanation is necessary *e.g.*, under the head ‘Overseers, demonstrators and rearers’—the number of these were 23 during last year and the number is just the same this year also but in the revised estimate the figure is Rs.9,600 and under the budget estimate of 1941-42 the figure is only 723. I wish, Sir, the Hon’ble Minister will explain the cause of this discrepancy. The total of the expenditure also under the head ‘Sericulture’ in the revised estimate is Rs.34,800 and for this year it is Rs.26,758. I hope, the Hon’ble Minister will explain this also.

Sir, mere agricultural products would hardly be of any use in enhancing the wealth of the province unless they go hand in hand with industrialization. Sir, the Department of Industries is not ready with any scheme by which the majority of the people who remain idle without any work for about six months in a year could be given some work, which would give them some benefit and thereby improve their lots. Sir, in my opinion, the Government should re-organize the spinning and weaving sections at once. What is being done is not at all satisfactory. It was said by my hon. friend the mover that this department has not been generously treated but I should like to say, Sir, that it has been shabbily treated. Sir, what has most contributed to the economic backwardness of Assam is our industrial backwardness, I mean, not only lack of industrial development but also neglect of the existing industries, for example, brass and bell metal industries. Again Sir, if I remember aright, I think, the Hon’ble Premier while discussing a cut motion during the budget session of 1939-40 gave some suggestion to the then Hon’ble Minister-in-charge of the Industries that the products of bell metal are so very heavy that it becomes impossible for the ordinary people to utilise them and he suggested that the weight of these should be reduced and Government should see that they can help the enterprisers in this respect also. But, Sir, I find that nothing has been done in this direction also. Sir, we purchase most of the necessities of our lives from other provinces at a comparatively high price because we have no industries of our own. This backwardness is not only responsible for failure to create fresh employment for the people but also contributes to make the people purchase thing from outside by allowing the money to flow out of the province. Sir, the scope of employment under Government is limited, so there must be something else to fall back upon. For the solution of our unemployment problem, simply the opening of a register won’t do. So, Sir, I suggest that to solve the unemployment problem it is the duty of Government to industrialize the province in a proper way. Sir, the economic salvation of Assam entirely depends on a plan of industrial development as this alone can eradicate poverty and unemployment and other evils that are eating into the vitals of the province.

Sir, the wealth of a province is not the gift of Heaven, but we are to create it by our works. We have got natural resources, mines, minerals power and good lands for cultivation ; in short, we have got everything that

is necessary to improve the economic condition of the Province. But, Sir, due to lack of enterprise not only on the part of Government but also of the people we are far far behind. It is high time that Government should pay their most careful attention to this department.

It has been said some time, Sir, that good many soap factories have been opened in our Province and they are making very good progress too but I would like to mention that for the two principal ingredients we have to depend on others. These two principal ingredients, *i.e.*, palm oil and soda, are entirely in the hands of a particular group of outsiders who charge as they like. So, those who have taken to this kind of industry are also suffering a great deal, and I think this is a sphere where Government should extend their helping hand.

Sir, in my opinion, big industries should also be taken up in order to protect the small industries; otherwise the money that is being spent by the Government will be of very little or no use at all. Sir, it may be said that in this year's budget there has been some increase in the provision because all the expenditure under the head "Direction" has been transferred to the head "Co-operation". But I find, Sir, that in most cases this is due to increment of salary, increase in travelling allowance, and to some extent due to the increase under the head "Works" where in place of Rs.5,800 Rs.17,088 has been provided. Nevertheless, after a careful scrutiny it will be found that very little has been done for the real benefit of the Province.

So, with these few words, Sir, I support the motion moved by my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also rise to support the motion. The Garo Hills has been totally neglected in industry and co-operative movement. At present there is practically no industry in the Garo Hills. In Bengal, we find, Sir, that the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Industries and Co-operative takes great interest in the movement. There are as many as 6,000 co-operative societies in Bengal with 1,20,000 members.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We are not discussing Co-operation now.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: I am speaking on industries and co-operation both.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member would do well to speak on industries.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: All right, Sir. There was one weaving institution in the Garo Hills, and that institution was established as a token of the good services rendered by the Garo people during the last Great War. The late Sir Beatson Bell said thus: "I do recognise that it will require money to improve education and industries in the Garo Hills, but I do not grudge money because the Garos played so well in the last Great War" (*hear, hear*). Sir, that was the promise made by late Sir Beatson Bell. I am sure that had he been the Governor for some more years in Assam, the position of the Garo Hills would have been different. I am extremely disappointed, Sir, that that gift has been removed from the Garo Hills. We were getting some stipends to read in that weaving institution, and some thousands of rupees as recurring grant for that institution. But the whole thing has been stopped, and nothing at all has been replaced as a gift for the good services rendered by the Garos during the last War. So, I have asked the Government several times to see their way, if possible, to reopen that institution. Sir, that institution

was closed down on account of the activities of a Deputy Commissioner, who was against industrialisation. He clearly said to me "I am wholly against industries".

Sir, some changes are coming in the Garo Hills. There will be bamboo mahaldari system in the Garo Hills. I had a long talk yesterday morning with Mr. Smith, the Junior Conservator of Forests, regarding Garo Hills affairs. He explained in detail what was his programme about cultivation, about mahaldari system, about royalty, about reserves, etc. He also proposed to increase the number of forest reserves. I have got nothing to say against his projects, but I told him this much "I hope you will do this in concurrence with the India Government's order", which order I have read before the House during my budget speech.

On my way back from Ranchi last time, I visited the Titaghar Paper Mills and had a talk with the Manager of the Mills regarding the use of bamboo for paper-making and also about the extraction and transportation of bamboo for the purpose from Garo Hills to Calcutta. I have learned that the question of extraction of bamboos from Garo Hills is a very difficult one and that a man with good experience of the work would be necessary. The next point is the difficulty of transportation to the nearest railway station. If the bamboos are to be taken in a wet condition their weight will be very much. The most important difficulty of all is to get the necessary capital to undertake the work. So my point is this: the material is there, the labour is there, but only capital is wanting. So I would ask, whether it be possible for this Government also, as the Bengal Government has done to lend a sufficient sum for this purpose, either without interest or on a small rate of interest?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member should remember that there are other members also who would like to speak.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: There are many more things also to be said, Sir, for instance, there is the virgin soil in the Garo Hills for industries.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I would ask the hon. member to cut short his speech.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Very well, Sir. There are thousands of maunds of Cotton collected in different localities, for instance, Tura, Bhagmara, Garobadha, Dainadubi, Rome-Agar, Bajeydoba, etc. Ginning machinery should be set up in these places and it would be a great boon to the people if this is done. At present, the profit is being taken by the Marwaris and the cultivators are not benefited in any way at all.

Now, Sir, with regard to the sericultural industry, I have visited the Upper Shillong Farm and I have seen that very small and very unhealthy *muga* trees are planted and a big amount of money is being spent on those trees. If you go to the Garo Hills, Sir, you will find healthy and beautiful trees fit for *muga* rearing. Thousands of such trees are available without any cost. But somebody should introduce the method of rearing of *muga* and *endi* there.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: May I inform the hon. member the name of the tree he has in mind?

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: I know, Sir, there are *muga* trees. For *endi* there is the castor oil plants. There are millions of these plants near Sameswari river banks.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member is certainly full of ideas and feelings, but he should place his points within the time limit of his speech.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: The Garo Hills, Sir, are full of potentialities.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: I wish, Sir, the Government would visit the Garo Hills and instruct us so as to improve gradually.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I whole-heartedly support the motion of my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury. We had expected that after her Lucknow tour the Hon'ble Minister would throw some new light on the development of the industries of the province. But we are disappointed to find that the same absence of proper initiative and sound scheme continue as before. The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge has moved her demand as silently as the other Hon'ble Ministers and there is no indication of any better result of her experience at the Lucknow conference.

Sir, I do not like to deal with all the points but I will only speak on two or three points. From the newspapers, we find that in other provinces Government are trying the manufacture of paper from water hyacinth and straw. I do not know whether it has drawn the attention of our Government or not. Our cultivators can only take to the hand-loom industry. I know, Sir, as I represent 541 square miles of low-lying areas in the Sunamganj subdivision, that for some six months of the year the cultivators pass their time in forced idleness, due to absence of any agricultural labour. During that time they can take to the hand-loom industry. But I am sorry to find that Government have not made any attempt to introduce this industry in those localities. I put some questions in this session in proper time asking for figures about the subdivision of Sunamganj, but I am sorry that the replies have not yet been supplied. I would only draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in-charge and the Hon'ble Premier to consider the case of those localities where only the *boro* crops grow once and the cultivators pass their non-season time in idleness, with a view to introduce hand-loom industry and help the cultivators in ameliorating their economic condition.

I find in the Budget that Government have provided Trs. 3 as a contribution to Local Boards for the development of Industries, but I think that this sum is quite inadequate if you take into consideration the number of Local Boards in the province. I would therefore call the attention of the Hon'ble Premier to this also.....

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: The Local Boards get nothing at present.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: For the Fishing Industry Government have appointed an officer, but I would ask the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge, who, I am afraid, has got very little experience of fishing industry, to see how fish can be protected, and how this industry can be developed. The appointment of an officer only will not do.

I simply draw the attention of Government and I hope Government will give their best consideration to all these matters.

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Assam being an agricultural country.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I was anxious to give an opportunity to those hon. members who have got cut motions to speak first. Has the hon. member got a cut motion?

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: No, Sir, but no one is rising.

Assam being an agricultural country, agriculture is the main occupation of the people, and a great bulk of the people are employed in this department, but while most of the men take to agriculture there will be some men yet who have not got any employment. Industry comes next which ought to help a lot of people to earn their living. But when we look to industries we find that there are many difficult questions to be solved before Government can take upon themselves to have a policy that will be good for the province. Now, agriculturists, after doing their cultivation, have generally a lot of spare time available which they can utilise for cottage industries and thereby supply their daily needs. In this respect the people are to blame and not the Government, because there are many kinds of industries which the people can take up, but lack of initiative and idleness are the reasons for which agriculturists do not take up to any cottage industry.

Now, there are industries which require some capital and help from other quarters. In this case if these industries are really to be developed, something else is necessary besides capital. Certain articles are produced in this country, but if there is competition as these articles are also coming from outside, naturally those who begin late will not be able to sell their articles because of this competition. Government must consider a definite policy regarding checking this. There must be some law whereby foreign articles could be prohibited so that they may not be able to compete with local produce. In other countries, there is some arrangement under which local products are protected. Of course, when the industries come to the level of those of other countries then the market may be opened. But unless our people are protected from foreign competition I do not think our industries have a chance of developing.

There is lot of talk about jute industry. I am afraid, our people are taking to jute cultivation and not to rice cultivation so much. There may be a lot of profit in jute, but in time to come we will see that there is a lack of food in our country where in the rice fields jute is being produced. Therefore, I would ask Government to keep always in mind that jute does not take precedence to rice which supplies the vital needs of the people.....

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: On a point of information, Sir. Is it not a fact that in some places jute and rice can be cultivated in the same field?

Several Voices: Yes, Sir.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: But not in the Garo Hills.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Why not? (*Laughter.*)

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Then, there is the question of loans. Government ought to guard itself and be sure, when they give loans that they are repaid. Now we remember that Government gave a lot of loans to agriculturists which were never repaid and they had to be written off. We do not want a repetition of that. Loans may be invited from private individuals, and our people who have got money ought to come forward with loans and Government can only direct how things should get on. Looking to Government only for loans will not develop our industries.

Therefore, I oppose this cut motion because it says to criticise the general policy, but there is no general policy. There are a lot of things to be discussed in this connection and unless we sit together, I do not think we can solve the difficulty.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been tempted to speak a few words in support of the cut motion under discussion.

We had expected that the Hon'ble Minister now in charge of the Industries of the Province being a she-Minister will help the female section of our people in the matter of developing cottage industries. And this was not the expectation of this poor fellow only but this was also expected by a reputed gentleman of the province like Dr. S. K. Bhuyan, Ph. D., etc., etc. He, while presenting an address to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Industries, Assam, made the following remarks:—"A few weeks ago, I had met Miss Dunn in the Gauhati Circuit House in a hurried interview in the company of a large number of visitors. I had not much time to speak to her at length, but I managed to utter the following words:—"Now, Miss Dunn you must do something for the ladies of Assam". To this she replied—"Yes, tell me what to do". I make the same request to her now in a public manner and I am confident I am getting the same reply from her though in silence—"Tell me what to do". At the same time I am confident that as Miss Dunn is inspired by a genuine desire to serve her sisters we shall see something during her tenure as Minister in the way of advancing the women's cause in the province".

This is all that I have to say with regard to the woman class of the province.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: She may also ask hon. members to tell her what to do.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, everyone of the hon. members, who have taken part in this discussion, has referred to the general policy of the Ministry. It is my duty as Leader of the Ministry to reply to these remarks. The Ministry welcomes all the suggestions that have been given by various speakers how to improve our cottage industries. As the hon. mover of this cut motion himself admitted that the Department of Industries relate really to small and cottage industries and not to any big scale industries, therefore I am not going to refer to any big capitalised industries in my reply. The general trend of the criticisms seems to me to be firstly, that there is no well planned policy behind the Ministry's action or behind the new schemes which have been adopted by the Ministry. Secondly, that industrial loans have not been freely given, though certain provisions were made in the Budget. Thirdly, Government should make serious attempts to provide some suitable subsidiary industries to our agriculturist population, whether they be placed in submontane areas of Sunamganj or in Shillong, so that they may utilise their leisure hours in adding some little revenue to their total income.

Sir, I will take all these few items together. From the very nature of the criticisms it appears that our planned scheme must consist of such small industries as will be within the means of our poor agriculturists. Therefore, Sir, ever since this Ministry, as well as my previous Ministry took up office, we took up only these small subsidiary industries which would be within easy means of our poor people. That means, Sir, that we

took up the question of handloom industry which is in vogue in a very popular manner in the Assam Valley and which is now gaining ground in the Surma Valley as well. We took up the question of introducing such cottage industries as washing soap which does not require much capital. The teacher goes from place to place to teach our unemployed youths who make and sell the product locally. We also took up the question of training some pupils of the province, preferably from the professional class, so that after their training in more advanced methods, they may be able to improve these cottage industries in the province. Sir, taking into consideration these facts, we sent some students to institutions in Upper India to learn curing hides with local tanning vegetables. We also sent our students to learn improved methods of bell metal and brassware manufacture. We have also trained some people in hosiery to start small factories in the province. Lastly, we have trained some people in the art of pisciculture, so that cultivators may rear their own supply of fish in their small tanks, or if anybody is minded to take up the fish culture as means of livelihood, he may get expert advice from them. I hope, Sir, that the line on which the Ministry works has the support of hon. members.

I will now refer to the few criticisms that have been levelled during the course of the speeches. I need take only one remark of my hon. friend Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury who says that small industries are dying for want of state aid. I will challenge this statement of my hon. friend and say that so far as Government is aware no cottage industry has died out at least during the time of this Ministry, *i.e.*, from November 1939 onwards. On the other hand, great encouragement is being given to these industries on account of the fact that imports to this country are practically non-existent on account of the European war.

My hon. friend has mentioned that the cane industry and bamboo mat industry of Sylhet has languished, and in most places the Sylhet cane has been ousted by Malacca and Malaya canes. Sir, it is needless for me to say that the best cane that is available in the world comes from Malacca and the richer section of the people prefer to have their wickerworks from Malacca cane. If they do so they are welcome to it. But the cheaper variety of wickerwork produced in Sylhet has a ready sale.

The bamboo mat industry is more or less a specialised one. I have referred to this industry in some earlier speeches on the floor of the House. Those hon. members who have travelled by our steamers that ply in navigable rivers may have noticed that the roofs of these steamers are covered by bamboo mats which generally come from Karimganj. While I was in charge of the Co-operative Department many years ago I tried to safeguard the interests of these manufacturers of bamboo mats by means of a co-operative association. But my attempts proved abortive on account of the unwillingness of mat makers themselves to form a co-operative society. They say that they have got a ready market for their goods and so they do not want to pull their resources to withhold their goods and so modities from the market in order to get better prices. Public opinion is necessary and a little propaganda amongst these people. I asked all my co-operative staff as well as the honorary organisers of the Co-operative Societies to take up this question but I am sorry to say that up till now not much headway has been achieved in that line but only one or two societies of artisans have been formed and that shows that propaganda has worked to some, if not to the desired extent.

My hon. friend mentioned the question of freight. There he is perfectly correct. This question of freight over the commodities to the outside world must be tackled by our Marketing Department. We will place this suggestion to our Forest Utilisation Officer because it is the Forest Utilisation Officer who deals in matters of freight reduction of forest produce, such as bamboo, etc. Now the point raised by my hon. friend will be placed in the hands of the proper authorities so that the question of freight may be decided to the benefit of our bamboo mat makers.

Next item, Sir, is as regards the question of industrial loan. We have been criticised by the hon. mover that although we have got a sum of Rs.15,000 in the budget as state aid for our industrial ventures, only a sum of Rs.600 was spent. Sir, I will place all relevant matters before the hon. members to judge whether the action of Government is correct or not. We have got our rules for state aid to industries wherein it has been laid down that any one who applies for industrial loan must give security in immovable property. Whenever any person submits any petition to Government, we ask him to show whether he has got sufficient immovable property to cover the loan that will be given to him. The money which the Ministry handles is not their own money; it is the public money and therefore in the interest of the public we have got to lay down such conditions by which the money cannot be eventually lost.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Rule may be relaxed to some extent.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am coming to that, Sir. Last year, we found that unless the rule of security is relaxed to some extent in certain deserving cases, industries will go to grave. I will refer to the case of small hosiery factory at Gauhati. Certain students trained, some at their own expense and some by Government, started a small factory at Gauhati but they were faced with the difficulty of capital and applied for loan; they could not produce any security in immovable property. The result was that this Ministry relaxed the rule and advanced them the money on the security of their machineries which are only movable properties. Sir, in deserving cases like this institution or private enterprises, Government have given aid as far as possible but I would leave it to the fair sense of justice of the hon. members of this House whether they would like that the Ministry should issue loans indiscriminately or whether they should impose certain conditions about the repayment of the loans. If we have followed the rules with relaxation where necessary, I submit before the House that we will come out unscathed. The rules for industrial loans have been modified and I hope, Sir, in future, there will be no difficulty of prospective enterprising young people who want to start small industries if they be able to hypothecate their machineries to Government in place of landed security.

My hon. friend Mr. Mookerjee was good enough to remind me that I, as opposition Leader in 1939-40, stated three different lines on which industrial development of the country may proceed. I am accused of giving out three different experiences but nothing whatsoever has been done by me. This criticism is born of want of information. My hon. friend has suggested that attempts should be made to have a turpentine industry or resin factory started in this province as this can be extracted from pine. But I should say, Sir, in some other provinces, some State industries were started with raw materials that were obtainable from their own province but each province came to grief and had ultimately to give up such industries. I would like to mention here that instead of trying to start a State industry in this province, we tried to induce some big merchants from

Calcutta to come and see whether they could not exploit our Pine forest for the purpose, and as a matter of fact a representative of a reputed Indian Firm came up to Shillong a month and a half ago to study the question of raw materials and to see what facilities he can get. My hon. friend also stated that I promised support for manufacture of match to be started as cottage industry. My hon. friend Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya, whose absence from this House to-day I deplore, had such a small industry at Karimganj.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I know it very well ; I know it better, Sir.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: My hon. friend knows many things better than myself.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I mean that I know better than Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Aditya was good enough to send me some literatures on the subject and he also requested me to join that venture not in my capacity as Premier but in my private capacity. Since then on account of war, the prices of chemicals have gone up high. Chlorate of potash which is essentially necessary for the purpose of match industry is largely used for the manufacture of explosives and its price has gone up very high.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Aditya has applied for a loan ; will he get it ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If he can give security, then he will get it.

My hon. friend also mentioned that I had suggested in my speech that we should try to improve our bell metal industry as well as our brass ware by having finer things instead of very heavy utensils and plates, etc. My hon. friend may remember that we have sent some students to Upper India for training in this art. After they return we will see whether they cannot be induced to start their own factories where these new ideas can be introduced and where apprentices from families of professional people can derive benefit.

So far as the suggestions are concerned, I have got to refer to two more matters. The first is the suggestion of my hon. friend Mr. Jobang D. Marak to start cotton ginning factories in certain places in Garo Hills as Garo Hills produce the largest quantity of cotton within Assam. His suggestion will be given due consideration. He has also said that in Garo Hills *Som* trees on which Muga Silk can be reared grow wild in abundance, and they are in much healthier condition than the stunted *Som* trees grown in our Titabor farm. The Hon'ble Minister in charge has said that she will depute one of our Sericulture Assistants to find out whether Garo Hills people are willing to take up this industry and, if so, whether the raw materials, *i.e.*, Castor and *Som* trees are available so that rearing of silk may be started there as a subsidiary occupation for the Garo people.

My hon. friend Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury has been rather hard both upon the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Industries and myself. He said that after our sojourn to Lucknow he expected some greater results in the budget. Sir, the Lucknow Conference took place in mid December and as my hon. friend Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury knows fully, the budget is framed in October and is completed in November. As a matter of fact 31st October is the last date according to the standing order

of the Finance Department by which date all new schemes must be submitted to the scrutiny of the Finance Department. Unless it is a matter of extreme urgency and of great potentiality for the benefit of the province, no new scheme is accepted by the Finance Department after 30th November. So, Sir, this budget did not get the benefit of the experience of my Hon'ble Colleague from the Lucknow Conference.

Then my friend the same hon. member mentioned that he had read in the paper that water-hyacinth is being converted into paper. Experiments in chemical laboratories in that respect have been done, if I remember aright, by Professor H. K. Sen of Calcutta but the results though attractive in the laboratories could not be transferred for practical adaptation by the paper mills on a commercial scale. On the very face of it, speaking from a commonsense point of view or speaking from what I remember of chemicals after 35 years' lapse, I can say that the very rough fibres of water-hyacinth will consume proportionately larger quantities of soda before they could be converted into paper. (Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee—There are sufficient bamboos.) But I know the enterprise of a friend of mine who was staying in Germany during the last great war and who succeeded in extracting thymol from water-hyacinth. If some enterprising gentlemen could start a thymol producing factory somewhere in Sunamganj and Habiganj, they could have this water-hyacinth free.

Lastly my hon. friend Mr. Marak was deploring that the weaving school at Tura, which was granted to Garos as a mark of appreciation of their great service in the last great war, has been taken away on account of the whim of one particular Deputy Commissioner. I am afraid my learned friend is not quite correct. A similar institution, *i. e.*, a weaving school at Government expense was started in Shillong for the same reason. But in spite of every kind of inducement given to the Khasi boys and girls to come and learn there, the people did not take much interest. Sir, about 1928, when I took the leaders of the Khasi community into my confidence and asked them to make any suggestion as to how to improve the school, they told me that if I gave stipends to the people of Bhoi country, that is a country near about Nongpoh, who are adepts in weaving, the school would improve. I did try that experiment as well, by granting stipends to some weavers from that Bhoi country. Even then sufficient number of them did not come and ultimately Government had to close that institution. The reasons for closing down the institution at Tura are probably the same. The Garos did not like to take much advantage of this kind of technical knowledge and for want of appreciation by the people themselves, the school had to be closed. If my hon. friend can assure me that a large number of Garo people will join any institution of this nature, if reopened, then the matter will receive the best consideration of the Ministry.

There has been a suggestion that we should have a party of jute weavers. This is engaging the attention of Government and probably we will have a party of such weavers in future.

Lastly, Sir, I have to satisfy the eagle eye of my hon. friend Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. He has very rightly pointed out what apparently is a mistake in the budget estimates. As usual there ought to have been some mention of this in the memorandum so that the apparent discrepancy could be explained. The point which my hon. friend raised is that a very small, *i. e.*, a sum of Rs. 723 only has been provided in next year's budget estimate for overseers, demonstrators and rearers who are 23 in number as against a sum of Rs. 9,600 in the current year's budget. The explanation

is simple, but without the facts my hon. friend could not know the correct position. The facts are simply this. The provision in the budget has been made for one month's expenditure only as this sum comes out from a contribution of the Government of India and the Central Government sanction to the continuance of the sericulture development scheme had not come when the budget was framed. Since then we have received the sanction for the continuance of the scheme from Central Government and the necessary funds having been obtained, a supplementary demand will be placed before the House later in the year. Sir, after what I have stated I hope my hon. friends will see that Government is moving on the right path, though a little cautiously and slowly and, after the assurance I have given that the various suggestions given by the hon. members will receive the best consideration of the Ministry, I hope my hon. friend will see his way to withdraw his motion.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have heard with interest the sympathetic reply of the Hon'ble Premier and in view of what he has said I 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.2,46,200 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 '43.—Industries'."

The question was adopted.

GRANT No.13.

(28.—Jails and Convict Settlements)

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.4,87,900 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 "28.—Jails and Convict Settlements."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.4,87,900 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 '28.—Jails and Convict Settlements.'"

Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury may move his cut motion.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.3,100 under Grant No. 13, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—3.—Allowances and Honoraria (total), at page 94 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,87,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, my aim is to criticise Government for not providing any money as honoraria to Religious Instructors.

Sir, generally worst types of criminals are convicted and sent to Jails. We believe that religious instructions will bring change in their lives and when they come out of the Jails they are expected to be better men, if arrangement for religious instruction is made in the Jails. I regret, however, to find that there is no provision in the budget under this head. I simply draw the attention of Government to this and urge upon them

to make arrangement as far as possible in every way for religious instruction both for the Hindus and for the Muslims. With these few 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.8,100 under Grant No. 13, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—3.—Allowances and Honoraria (total), at page 94 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,87,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

***The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the religious instructions are now being given free by religiously minded people who think it a part of their duty to give consolation to prisoners in misfortune and so far Government has received no demand or request from any quarter for payment for such work done because it has been regarded as a sort of pious work for which no remuneration should be asked for. All the same, Sir, the Government has in some cases provided for payment of conveyance allowance at least to help those persons, i.e., religious instructors who live at a distance from Jail and has to use conveyance in order to attend in time—that has already been provided for. But if at any time we find that we do not get instructors unless we pay remuneration or honoraria then Government will take this question up. But I believe and hope that such misfortune will not occur.

***Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI:** On a point of information, Sir. During *Id* prayer prisoners and under-trials in Jails are sometimes required to be led by people from outside and some money for that purpose is required. For want of money to be paid to those who lead the prayer, sometimes difficulty is experienced. So some money ought to be set apart for that purpose, however small that may be.

***The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** I shall look into this question, Sir.

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

***Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY:** No, Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.19,000 under Grant No. 13. Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—5.—Contingencies, Detailed head—Clothing and bedding of prisoners, at page 95 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,87,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, my intention in bringing the motion is to draw the attention of Government to the urgent necessity of supplying mosquito curtains to prisoners in Jails.

Sir, fortunately human outlook towards the convicted persons has radically changed. Far reaching reforms have also been affected in our jails. A convicted person is no longer regarded as a condemned criminal, but as a fellow being who has suffered from some sort of mental aberration and has been segregated for treatment. As soon as he enters a jail, the authorities are responsible for his life, health and physical well-being.

There is no town in Assam which is free from mosquito. In our jails, swarms of these unwelcome visitors are ever present. So the convicts, after

*Speech not corrected by the Hon'ble Minister or the hon. member concerned.

the day's work cannot enjoy their well-earned rest. Many of them are attacked with malarial fever and impair their health. This means a new punishment for these unfortunate beings. Certainly this was never contemplated by the Jail Code.

We should not grudge the expenditure that the supply of curtains will involve. A big amount will be saved in quinine.

I would request the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Jail to take a humanitarian view of the thing and save these prisoners from the mosquito menace.

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 19,000 under Grant No. 13, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—5.—Contingencies, Detailed head—Clothing and bedding of prisoners, at page 95 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,87,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

***Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK :** Sir, I fully agree with the hon. mover in what he has said in moving this motion. I support the motion.

***The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am glad that this motion has been brought before the House, because the whole matter is engaging the serious attention of the Government. I am also thankful to the hon. mover for expressing noble sentiments and his sympathy for our less fortunate brethren in prisons.

Sir, it is indeed true that we do not supply any mosquito net to the prisoners in jail, but under the present rules we allow the prisoners to use their own nets if they can afford to do so, and the jail authorities make necessary arrangements for hanging those nets. The barracks are so constructed that it is difficult to issue a general order for use of mosquito nets because one of the most important things which we should always bear in mind is to prevent the escape of the criminals from jails. If we have mosquito nets spread all over the barracks the task of watching and successfully detecting escape of prisoners becomes rather difficult (A voice : This should not stand in the way.)

If we accept the proposal of providing nets to all the prisoners, the cost of rebuilding the barracks and of supplying mosquito nets will be indeed prohibitive, and it will not be possible for us to concede that we shall be in a position to spend that money in the near future. I may inform the House that when His Excellency the Governor recently visited the Sylhet jail this question was examined by him on the spot and he has been pleased to suggest examination whether it would not be less expensive to have net-proof barracks instead of rebuilding the barracks and providing mosquito nets to each and every prisoner. By "net-proof barracks" I mean the barracks of which doors and windows have been covered with nets. We have asked the Inspector General of Prisons to examine this and submit a report. We are awaiting his report.

In the meantime we are also considering whether it would not be possible to introduce the system of burning sticks or some sort of chemicals in order to scare away the mosquitoes. This is also under our examination because it may provide a less costly scheme for saving the prisoners from attacks of mosquitoes. I think, I should also inform the House that incidence of malaria is comparatively smaller inside the jails, although the

*Speech not corrected by the hon. member or the Hon'ble Minister concerned!

discomfort to prisoners is very great. I have seen prisoners wrapping themselves up with warm blankets in order to avoid mosquito bites. There is no doubt that the discomfort is very great. Sleep is essential for these people who work for the whole day; so, something should be done in the matter and I can assure the House that Government will not sit idle, but find out what means can be adopted in order to remove the discomfort of the prisoners.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before the demand is put to vote, may I make some general observations? The other day, I spoke something about under-trials...

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member ought to have spoken by means of a cut motion. It will not be at all proper for me to allow the hon. member to speak at any time he likes. There must be some regularity.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: I am glad to hear that the matter under discussion is engaging the attention of the Hon'ble Minister. In view of what he has said, I 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.4,87,900 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 '28.—Jails and Convict Settlements'."

The question was adopted.

GRANT No.26

[50.—CIVIL WORKS—(EXCLUDING ESTABLISHMENT, TOOLS AND PLANT CHARGES)]

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.43,06,400 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 "50.—Civil Works—(excluding Establishment and Tools and Plant charges)".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.43,06,400 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 '50.—Civil Works—(excluding Establishment and Tools and Plant charges)'."

There are some cut motions. I am afraid motion No.1 * cannot be moved because this Department has got nothing to do with the extension of Sunamganj Government High School buildings.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: I want to draw the attention of the Government.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It will be quite useless. It is the Hon'ble Education Minister who is responsible for deciding whether these buildings should be extended or not. I now come to motion No.2.

*1. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury to move:—

That the provision of Rs.20,000 under Grant No.26, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor Head—A.—Original Works, Sub-head—(a)—Buildings, Detailed head—Education, at page 187 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.43,06,400 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To urge upon Government the immediate necessity of extending the Sunamganj Government High School buildings.)

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.10,82,900 under Grant No. 26, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—A.—Original Works, Sub-head—(b)—Communications, Detailed head—5.—Petrol Tax Projects, at page 188 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.110, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.43,06,400 do stand reduced by Rs.110.

Sir, my intention in moving this motion is to raise a discussion about the slow progress of work in the Sylhet-Sunamganj Road that is under construction.

The hon. members are aware that an amount of Rs.8,25,000 had been sanctioned for constructing a all-weather road from Sylhet to Sunamganj, and the work was to be completed within three years. The road was taken over from the Local Board in the year 1939, but up till now earth work has not been completed. There are as many as 25 bridges awaiting construction. The rise of prices in materials has perhaps stood in the way.

The distance from Sunamganj to Pagla is only 13 miles. If this portion is completed first, a good deal of the inconvenience of the people will be removed. Then the dangers of the big Dekor Haor will be minimised, because the people of Derai, Jagannathpur and Chhatak will be able to go to Pagla by motor bus throughout the year and from there to proceed to their respective destination. Within this section there will be some four bridges to be constructed. Perhaps this can be undertaken, if the Department wants to do so. The road in this section has already been raised above flood level. I hope Government would realise the urgency of completing this portion of the road and give necessary directions to the Department accordingly.

With these few 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.10,82,900 under Grant No.26, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—A.—Original Works, Sub-head—(b)—Communications, Detailed head—5.—Petrol Tax Projects, at page 188 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.110, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.43,06,400 do stand reduced by Rs.110."

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Sir, I would like to speak some general things on this cut motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Under this motion no general things can be spoken, as only a particular point has been urged. The point which is going to be discussed is the progress of work in the Sylhet-Sunamganj Road. Has the hon. member got to say anything on this point?

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Not on that point, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. member to speak.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would submit to the House that there has been no avoidable delay in the case of the construction of the Sylhet-Sunamganj Road. For the purpose of construction, this road was divided into three sections—Sylhet to Gobinganj (14 miles), Gobinganj to Pagla (14 miles) and Pagla to Sunamganj (14 miles). Now, Sir, with regard to the first section, Sylhet to Gobinganj, a good deal of work has already been done. The roads have been widened and shingles will be collected in this rainy season and we may expect by the end of this calendar year to be able to finish the work in this section.

As will be seen, Sir, from the details in the Budget Estimates of Original Works, the amount of the sanctioned estimate for the Sylhet-Gobinganj section was Rs.1,26,000. Out of this, the probable expenditure up to the end of 1940-41 would be Rs.1,18,065, leaving a balance of work to be done for about Rs.8,000 only.

As regards the other two sections—Gobinganj to Pagla and Pagla to Sunamganj—quite a good portion of the earth work has been done. We have been handicapped in finishing this work, because the land has not been made available to us for the construction of the road. Unless we are put in possession of the land, it is not possible for us to proceed with the work. And, Sir, for those portions for which lands are made available the earth work has been done. As will be seen from this statement, out of Rs.1,95,426 of the amount of sanctioned estimate, about Rs.63,000 is estimated to be spent by the end of the year 1940-41. Similarly, Sir, as regards the Pagla-Sunamganj section the amount of the sanctioned estimate is Rs.1,72,628 and we have spent as much as Rs.55,000 in doing earth work in those portions of the road where land was made available to us. As regards the acquisition of the land, Sir, for the remaining portion of the road, a declaration of the acquisition of the land was published on the 8th December 1940, and we hope that by the next cold weather it will be possible to proceed with the earth work in this section. As soon as the lands are put in our possession, Sir, I can assure the hon. member that there will be no delay in pushing on with the work.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: What about the bridge work, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: Until the earth work is done we cannot begin the bridges.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Can we have an idea when the earth work will be completed?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: First the earth work will have to be completed and then only the bridges can be completed.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Will it require three years or more?

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

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: I do not want to press the motion, Sir.

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

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.20,30,000 under Grant No.26, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—B.—Repairs, Sub-head—2.—Communications, at page 188 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.43,06,400 do stand reduced by Re.1.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this motion contains no general attack on Government, but it only seeks to draw the attention of the House and the public to a long neglected problem, neglected not only by this Government but by many of its predecessors. To prove this neglect of the question of maintenance of roads I need only to quote from the Budget for the last 5 years and compare the amounts set aside for maintenance with the amounts provided in 1928-29. If we take 1928-29, we find that the cost per mile for maintenance was Rs 1,167 for all the roads under the Public Works Department. In 1936-37 it is Rs.961, but in 1939-40 it is brought to the very low figure of Rs.853 per mile. This serious drop comes at a

time when the roads are being used, not only by an increasing number of motor buses, but also by buses of greatly increased weight. There is obviously more wear and tear now than in 1928-29 and yet the cost of maintenance has dropped by one-third.

During this session you will find, Sir, that there were 57 cut motions under Education and only 7 are under Communications. There has been a recent scramble for glory by the various Ministers. The Education Minister, for example, has to his credit the Mass Literacy Campaign, the Excise Minister has his Prohibition Campaign—in fact the whole Ministry can bask in the publicity which has proclaimed them as public benefactors, except the unlucky Public Works Department Minister, who merely has to answer questions about indigenous and foreign contractors.

The object of my motion is to give the Hon'ble Mr. Matin Chaudhury his chance at least. In my opinion the biggest educational advance in the last ten years has not been the mass literacy movement, but that which comes from improved communications. If the cultivator will only move about and see what happens in other districts and other provinces, he receives the best education of all (*hear, hear*). He will acquire new wants, because he has got a new vision, and as soon as he becomes conscious of his wants, the first step has been taken to improve his standard of life. In my opinion, Sir, Mr. Henry Ford, who has not been in India, is the greatest benefactor of the country, because he has made it possible for a poor man to get round; he has made it possible for the poor man to buy and sell his produce in the most favourable market. And this mobility of the ordinary cultivator will increase, but the increase must depend on roads.

Assam has got a fine net-work of roads, but there is a very grave danger that these roads will lose much of their value unless more is spent on their upkeep. As I have already pointed out, there is a very serious drop on the cost of maintenance. The figures I have quoted show the danger to the Public Works Department roads. A more sorry experience is in the matter of tea-cess roads. Two are in such a condition that they will have to be rebuilt at the cost of about three-fourths of a lakh of rupees, because nothing or next to nothing has been spent on their maintenance.

Another aspect is that mechanical improvements for the comfort of the travelling public usually require heavier vehicles, and these heavier vehicles can only run on roads properly maintained. We hope the Minister, Public Works Department, will take the view that his roads must be made to fit the traffic, and not follow the retrograde policy of trying to make the traffic fit the roads.

In this age of mechanisation there is no limit to transport development, except the condition of the roads. Increased expenditure is required for maintenance, and though the petrol tax must be devoted to new roads, I hope the Provincial Government will see that their funds are devoted to maintenance. And, on this subject of maintenance, may I make a plea that main roads which pass through villages shall, within the village stretches be tarred. The dust menace in these villages is a source of disease, and the villagers have a first claim on a dust-proof surface.

Finally, may I ask for another form of maintenance—the maintenance of accuracy in the use of words, and I hope that you from the Chair will support me in this? I refer to the word “consideration”. When Government use this word we know from experience that consideration means procrastination (*laughter*); it often means condemnation; it sometimes means evasion and prevarication (*laughter*). In fact, as used by Ministers, it seems to mean anything but consideration. There must be some subjects on which Government need no time for consideration. I

think this problem of maintenance is one. As for that horrible expression "assurance of consideration", I think that merely means that a file will be started on this subject. What I should like to hear from any Minister would be these simple words in the simple language of a Churchill "I shall move with speed and decision", and I hope the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Public Works Department will accept the case as I have made out and act appropriately (*Applause.*)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs 20,30,000 under Grant No.26, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—B.—Repairs, Sub-head—2 —Communications, at page 188 of Budget, be reduced by Re.1, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.43,06,400 do stand reduced by Re.1."

Adjournment

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

After lunch

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I support this cut motion moved by hon. Mr. Whittaker to draw attention to the increasing and urgent need of more money for road maintenance. My point is this— not only do we need money for the upkeep and maintenance of these roads, but we need money for road making. What I mean to say is that for road-making more money should be provided. I am sure the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge while he visited Tura in Garo Hills has visited some of the roads there. I need not speak much. He has himself learnt of the condition of the roads and that of course in the best season of the year. So I hope the Hon'ble Minister will see his way to improve the condition of roads in the Garo Hills district.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There are some cut motions by which some hon. members want to discuss the question about the inadequacy of the grant to some parts of the province. They may speak in this motion if they like.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I think I shall be failing in my duty if I do not support the motion moved by my hon. friend Mr. Whittaker. I think, Sir, the way in which he has dealt with the subject requires anything but our support which I would like to express by a few words only. I am sure that Government cannot but agree with the hon. mover that we are in need of more money for the maintenance of our existing roads. Sir, what is the good of making new roads if we cannot maintain them and keep them in proper order?

With these words I support the motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I take it that no other hon. member is going to speak. The Hon'ble Minister may reply.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I say anything on the subject of road maintenance, I should like to thank Mr. Whittaker for espousing the cause of our Department and extending us his helping hand, so that we may also get a chance in having a slice out of the budget allotment. I particularly welcome this motion because it gives me an opportunity of placing before the House certain facts which I think the House ought to know, and of explaining to the House our difficulties with regard to the maintenance of roads.

The improvement of roads practically began from the year 1928-29. In that year, we received the first allotment from the Road Fund. The mechanised method of maintenance of roads was introduced from that year. The progress that we have made during the last decade in improving roads may be judged by the percentage of mileage that we had under the Public

Works Department in 1929-30 and what we had in 1939-40. In 1929-30 we had 489 miles of metalled road ; in 1939-40 we have 550 miles. As regards the unmetalled roads, Sir, we had 1,282 miles of unmetalled earth road in 1929-30 and not a single mileage of gravelled road, but in 1939-40 we have 1,281 miles of gravelled road to maintain besides 703 miles of earth road. Then as regards bridle path, we had 2,186 miles of bridle path in 1929-30 ; in 1939-40 we have 2,215. The cost for the maintenance of these roads in the year 1929-30 was rupees 22 lakhs 45 thousand, and in the year 1939-40, the cost was rupees 22 lakhs 95 thousand. That is, we have an additional length of over 12 hundred miles of gravelled road to maintain, and the increase in the cost of maintenance is only in the neighbourhood of half a lakh of rupees. In the year 1928-29 it cost us Rs.572 to maintain one mile of gravelled road. In 1939-40 it cost us Rs.650 a mile for maintenance. Now according to the latest figure, we require Rs.850 to maintain one mile of gravelled roads. So even for these miles of gravelled road that we have taken up during the last decade we require an additional sum of at least rupees 4 lakhs to maintain them in proper order.

That is not all, Sir. We have got another 149 miles of road which will be brought into the books of the Public Works Department as soon as the current Road Fund sanctioned programme is completed. That will mean an expenditure of another rupees 126 thousand. Besides, Sir, with regard to the Sunamganj-Sylhet Road, for bamboo bridges and other purposes we shall require another Rs.8,000, i. e., till permanent bridges are built, we shall have to provide bamboo bridges and for this we shall require additional sum of money. Thus, Sir, out of Road Fund, we shall require another additional sum of over 5 lakhs of rupees for maintenance alone. So far, we have been able to provide in the Budget an amount only to the extent of half a lakh of rupees.

This again, Sir, is not the whole story. We improve the Local Board roads out of the Tea Rates Fund and recently Government has approved of a certain programme which is to be financed out of the proceeds and anticipated income of Tea Rates Road Fund up to the March of 1944. When this is completed, we shall have 343 miles of road improved from Tea Cess Fund from its inception which will require to be maintained. So long our practice has been to hand over to the Local Boards the Tea Rates roads after the roads are improved, but we have received complaints and I should say justifiable complaints that these roads, when they are handed over to the Local Boards for maintenance, deteriorate very seriously as the Local Boards have no money to maintain them according to the standard to which they are improved. We had an example of this brought before the House by Mr. Morley when he moved a cut motion during the last Budget Session about the Happy Valley Road. In that road, we spent over Rs.38,000 for improvement and when it was handed back to the Local Board it relapsed to the same old deplorable condition in which it was before and so the money has been practically wasted. This is not the solitary example ; we have several instances of roads improved from Tea Rates Fund which, when returned to the Local Boards, shared the same fate. In view of this, fact, Sir,—I do not use the word ‘consider’ (*laughter*)—rather I should say that Government is contemplating whether it will not be advisable that after the present programme is completed, they should stop spending further money on the improvement from this Fund but instead spend the proceeds for the maintenance only. My hon. friend Mr. Mookerjee has said, it is no use spending money on improving roads if we cannot maintain them in proper condition. Even if we take up the maintenance of the roads improved from

the Tea Rates Road Fund, the proceeds of that Fund, will not be enough for the purpose. Because, we have an annual income of 1 lakh 56 thousand of rupees from the Tea Rates Road Fund. Out of this, a sum Rs.6,000 is earmarked for the Anipur-Monacherra Road and we have got a balance of only 1 lakh 50 thousand rupees. Now with 343 miles of road improved out of that Fund, it works up to Rs.440 per mile for maintenance, that is half of what it is costing to maintain the Public Works Department Roads. Even if we decide to take up the maintenance of these Tea Rates roads we shall have to accept a very much lower standard of maintenance than that has been possible in the case of Public Works Department Roads. Even then the amount provided will not be sufficient for the purpose. Besides this, Sir, as Mr. Whittaker has pointed out, there are roads which require to be restored to their original condition because they have deteriorated to such an extent that more money will have to be spent on them. In restoring them to their original condition, we shall have to incur an additional expenditure again.

But, Sir, our difficulties do not end here. We are improving Local Board Roads out of the Motor Vehicle Taxation Fund. We prepared a programme for this purpose and according to that programme, 135 miles are going to be improved. Now, Sir, if we hand over to the Local Boards these roads after they have been improved from the proceeds of this fund and if we ask the Local Boards to maintain them, then there is every possibility that these roads will fall back into the same disreputable condition which has been the fate of Tea Rates Road Fund roads.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: More money can be provided.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: That is what I am trying to impress upon the members. If more money can be provided from the public exchequer and if we stick to a lower standard of maintenance then it will prevent these improved roads from being relapsed again to the same old condition. When hon. members ask me to improve the roads or to extend the roads, I would ask them to remember that we have not enough money for maintaining the roads that we have improved. The most important question with which we are faced now is the question of the maintenance of the roads. I think Mr. Whittaker has rendered a distinct public service by drawing the attention of the House to this important aspect of the question. If, Sir, his speech has served the purpose of directing the attention of the House to the question of maintenance of the roads instead of its expansion, I think, it has served a very useful purpose indeed. I would like to assure, Sir,—I will not again use the word 'consider' because he will say that I am "prevaricating" or "evading", or "procrastinating",—that Government intend to take up the question and proceed with all possible speed.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I would like to hear whether Mr. Whittaker is satisfied.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Was there any previous arrangement between the hon. member and the Hon'ble Minister?

Mr. A WHITTAKER: As half a loaf is better than no loaf, Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

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

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.20,30,000 under Grant No. 26, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—B.—Repairs, Sub head—2.—Communications, at page 188 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.43,06,400 do stand by Re.1.

Sir, the object of my motion is to raise a discussion about the question of principle under which tolls are levied on the Shillong-Gauhati Road and the Shillong-Sylhet Road. I shall first speak, Sir, about the tolls on the Shillong-Sylhet Road. Shillong-Sylhet Road is about 86 miles in length. Thirty-five miles of the road from Sylhet to Dawki and 14 miles from Shillong to Umtyngar are not controlled. From Shillong to Umtyngar Gate there are two bridges. From Sylhet to Dawki, there are over a dozen bridges. From Dawki to Umtyngar gate, if I am not mistaken, there is only one big bridge. That portion of the road is only 37 miles and that is the portion which is controlled. To pass over the whole length of this portion or part thereof, a private motor car has to pay a toll of Rs.2-8-0. But the question is whether this toll is levied on account of the bridges or on account of the fact that a private motor car has to pass over the road. If it is a bridge toll, the principle must be the same throughout the whole province or throughout the whole road. No toll is paid by a private car that passes over the road from Sylhet to Dawki and from Shillong to Umtyngar. In going from Shillong to Sylhet a private car has to pass this Umtyngar gate and also the Dawki gate and over a dozen more bridges, but it has to pay the same toll of Rs.2-8. In previous years we had to pay two tolls—one at Myllem gate and one at Laitlyngkot gate. Now if a private car passes the Umtyngar gate to go to Laitlyngkot it has to pay Rs.2-8 for a distance of 3 miles from Umtyngar to Laitlyngkot, and that is for passing only one bridge at Umtyngar over which we never paid any toll before. Previously a private car used to pay only 8 annas at Myllem for going to Laitlyngkot.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I think the hon. member already raised this point, but he did not get any reply from the Hon'ble Minister.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : No, I did not get any reply. I raised this point at the time of budget discussion, but I did not get a reply. Probably the Hon'ble Minister had no time then. Now my point is this why such a high rate of toll is levied for passing over the Dawki bridge or passing over the Umtyngar bridge? Dawki bridge is no doubt a very big bridge and a large amount of money was spent over it. But why a sum of Rs.2-8 should be levied from the private motor cars simply for passing over the Dawki bridge and why the same amount is also levied from a private motor car for going over the Umtyngar bridge for which no toll was ever levied before? That is not at all reasonable. If any toll is to be levied it should be levied on certain principle. If it is a bridge toll, then why no toll is levied for passing over the 12 bridges from Sylhet to Dawki and why should a person pay for passing over one or two particular bridges only? On what principle Government has made this rule that a private car has to pay Rs.2-8 for passing over the Umtyngar bridge and also the same sum for passing over the Dawki bridge or for passing over both these bridges? From this it seems, that Government has not followed any principle in fixing these rates of toll. This small distance of 37 miles has been controlled by these two gates and whether a person goes over this road only 2 or 3 miles, simply for passing the gate either at Umtyngar or Dawki a private motor car has to pay the toll. Sir, this seems very very unreasonable. Therefore it is very reasonable that the rules should be revised and the toll reduced.

Then when a private car goes from here to Cherrapunji which is only 33 miles, it has to pay only 8 annas. Sir, I do not know for which bridge it is to pay 8 annas. (Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee :—It is road toll). If it is road toll then after passing how many miles of the road a man is to pay the toll? If he goes 2 or 3 miles also he has to pay 8 annas. So the present method of realizing toll seems to be very unreasonable. There should be a proportion. In the present state of affairs it is very hard for the people to go

from here to Laitlyngkot. Suppose a doctor has got to go to Laitlyngkot and if he goes in his private car he has to pay a toll of Rs.2-8. If he goes in a taxi, the taxi has to pay Rs.8. That is very excessive indeed, and that is very hard on the people.

Then again from here to Pynursla it is only 31 miles and for that portion of the road a person has to pay Rs.2-8 ; whereas if he goes from Umtyngar to Cherrapunji he is to pay only 8 annas. There should be a proportion. I hope Government can easily understand the position and will consider the matter.

All this is with regard to Shillong-Sylhet Road. Now I come to the Shillong-Gauhati Road.

Regarding Shillong-Gauhati road there is a timing called the special timing — early in the morning or late in the evening. If a person leaves Shillong at 5 in the morning he is to pay a toll of Rs.2 at the Mawlai gate and if he goes down to Gauhati and stays there till evening and leaves again at 6 in the evening and passes Jorabat at 6-10 standard he is to pay another Rs.2. That is for the same day he is to pay Rs.4. That is unreasonable. I know that nowhere in Assam such an excessive rate of toll is paid. Then if a person stays at Burnihat and goes from Burnihat to Gauhati and passes the Jorabat gate early in the morning, say 6 A. M., he has to pay Rs.2. If again he comes in the evening at 6-30 he has to pay Rs.2. By passing only 4 miles of the road he is to pay Rs. 4 in one day. Moreover he has to pay the bridge toll at Burnihat. That is, Rs.5 a day is a toll for a private motorist for passing 4 miles of the road between Burnihat and Jorabat. Sir, that is very unfair indeed. Therefore I say that these tolls are levied on no principle. There must be some principle adopted which will be fair, and people will be glad to pay a certain reasonable amount of toll for the inconveniences which may be caused to the time-keeper or the gate-keeper. But these tolls are very high. I hope Government will be pleased to see that there must be a principle followed, which will be satisfactory and fair. With these words, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Cut motion moved :

“That the provision of Rs.20,30,000 under Grant No.26, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—B.—Repairs, Sub-head—2.—Communications, at page 188 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.43,06,400 do stand reduced by Re.1.”

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I quite see the points raised by Rev. Roy and I also fail to see why the private cars should be made to pay these bridge tolls. Sir, the private car owners pay Rs.36 annually as licence fees. But in consideration of the fact that by running service cars large profits are made and the owners of the service cars are more benefited than the private car owners, I do not see why private cars should be made to pay these bridge tolls. As Rev. Roy pointed out, if it is a road cess, a system should be fixed for realising this tax. So I agree with Rev. Roy.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY : Sir, the hon. Rev. Nichols-Roy has raised the question of principle on which the tolls are levied on the Gauhati-Shillong Road and Sylhet-Shillong Road. Sir, in this matter we have introduced no new principle. The Tolls Act of

1851 was extended to the Khasi and Jaintia Hills in the year 1928 and it has been in force ever since. Rev. Nichols-Roy as a Minister of the Government of Assam had I suppose, tacitly accepted the principles under-lying the imposition of this tax.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Unfortunately I was not in charge of this Department and so I had no hand in it.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI : I suppose there was joint responsibility, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : It seems, Sir, that there was no co-operation.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI : My point is that the principle introduced have been in vogue for the last ten years or so and Rev. Nichols-Roy has tacitly accepted the principle. Not only that Sir when the toll.....

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : May I ask another point, Sir ? On the Shillong-Gauhati Road this special timing was introduced only about two years ago.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI : I am not talking of the special timing now, Sir, but I am talking on imposition of tolls on the Gauhati-Shillong and Sylhet-Shillong Roads, Sir. When the question of imposition of tolls in the Sylhet-Shillong Road was considered, Government invited an informal committee and in that committee Rev. Nichols-Roy represented the town of Shillong and he accepted the principle of introducing toll on that road. On the 6th December there was an informal discussion with the representatives of the Motor Companies in which the following gentlemen were present :—

Mr. Ward, Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy and others.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : What was decided at that time ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY : It was decided that some tolls should be levied and you accepted the principle that the tolls should be levied.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : But it was not decided that Rs.2-8 should be levied.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY : Then the question was asked whether it was to be a road toll or a bridge toll. The toll imposed is road toll. As those roads are very expensive and it require a large amount of money for their maintenance, it was decided that Government should get some return by way of tolls and therefore road tolls were levied.

Mr. Nichols-Roy has complained that for the road between Umtyngar and Cherapunji they pay only 8 annas whereas for road between Umtyngar and Laitlyngkot they pay Rs. 2-8 as toll, as also between Umtyngar and Pynursla. But Sir, if a car owner pays Rs. 2-8 as toll, he can go not only these 3 miles from Umtyngar to Laitlyngkot but as far as Sylhet.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : On a point of information, Sir. Does the Hon'ble Minister mean that because a man will pay Rs.2-8 he is to go up to Sylhet just to fully utilise the payment ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI : Not that, Sir. What I suggest is that he said that only for travelling 3 miles they are to pay Rs.2-8, but I say that by paying Rs.2-8 he can go as far as Sylhet. The difference between the tolls at Cherapunji Road and the toll at the Sylhet-Shillong Road is due to the fact that it is far more expensive road to maintain. To give some idea of the expenses that cost us to maintain these roads, I can tell the House that in the year 1936-37 it cost us Rs.1,73,381 to maintain the Gauhati-Shillong Road, Rs.2,38,746 to maintain the Sylhet-Shil-

long Road ; in the year 1937-38 it cost us Rs.1,85,421 for the Gauhati-Shillong Road, Rs.2,20,104 for the Sylhet-Shillong Road ; in the year 1938-39, Rs.19,286 for the Gauhati-Shillong Road, Rs.2,86,795 for the Sylhet-Shillong Road ; and in the year 1939-40 Rs.8,11,654 for the Gauhati-Shillong Road and Rs.2,10,279 for the Sylhet-Shillong Road. When Government has to meet such a heavy expenditure for maintaining these roads it is only reasonable and fair that those who can afford to pay should pay for the maintenance.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY On a point of explanation, Sir. I was not at all questioning Government to levy tolls. I only said that there must be certain principles and on those principles, I mean distance, tolls should be levied. It must be proportional to the distance. That was my point, Sir. Then the difficulty about a car going from here to Pynursla can easily be solved by issuing ticket one to Laitlyngkot and another to Pynursla. There is a gate at Pynursla and it can be checked. Another ticket may be issued for Dawki just like tickets issued in railways and buses. Sir, this can easily be done, if Government think of doing justice to public and I think that will be more reasonable.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: Sir, the principle on which tolls are levied is not necessarily the question of distance, but it is on the well-known principle of what the ' traffic can bear ' and with regard to private car owner I think they can afford to pay Rs 2-8 per trip up to Pynursla. But I can tell the hon. members that we shall examine the question of toll up to Laitlyngkot and see whether it is possible to do something with regard to this, but I do not say that it will necessarily be reduced.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Whether these rules will be placed before the conference of the Legislature which will be held, Sir, because these are under the Motor Vehicles Rules. These rules regarding tolls may be placed before that, Sir, because I find here that these are supplementary rules to the Motor Vehicles Rules which will be placed before the Joint Conference.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: If the rates are to be fixed by rules, I think this matter will come before the Joint Conference.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: The Hon'ble Minister has not said anything about the increased rates for special timing.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: We hope the Hon'ble Premier will enlighten us on the matter.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, as I have been referred to both by my hon. colleague as well as by other hon. members I have got to reply to this. This special timing is a concession to the demand of car-owning public. We have got to employ certain officials who are called time-keepers and who are employed on the basis of certain hours of daily work. In order to grant this concession to those members of the public who want to utilise special timing, we have got to reimburse the time-keepers for untimely hours of work because a check by them is necessary. In order to meet this extra expenditure, increased tolls have been levied for the special timing. But I may add that the entire question of different timings is under the consideration of Government and we will remember the suggestion made by my hon. friend at the time when the timings are revised.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : May I say that apart from the question of reimbursing the time-keepers, if there was no additional fee for special timing it might become so popular that the road will become more dangerous so as to lead to the abandonment of the special timing altogether?

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

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : In view of the fact that this matter will be considered by the conference that has been appointed by the Legislature and also the assurance that the Hon'ble Premier has given that the matter will be reconsidered, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

Rev. L. GATPHOH Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to, move that the provision of Rs.20,30,000 under Grant No. 26, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—B.—Repairs, Sub-head—2.—Communications, at page 188 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.43,06,400 do stand reduced by Re. 1.

The scope of my cut motion appears to be a narrow one. It relates to the means of communications in the partially excluded areas only. I take this opportunity to state here that I am equally interested in the improved means of communications in the plains of Assam as in those in the partially excluded areas. But my reason for drawing the attention of Government and of the House to the immediate need to improve the means of communication, such as roads, bridges etc., in the partially excluded areas are, to state briefly, these :—

Firstly, the parts of Assam which come under the category of “partially excluded areas” are hilly tracts of land and as such the physical feature of those parts of the country present a problem which does not exist for the people in the plains, i.e., the problem of transport.

Secondly, in the plains of Assam, roads—call them by whatever name you like—*kucha* or ordinary—once they have been constructed, it is only a question of time, that needs to raise them above the category of *kutcha* or ordinary roads. Even before they become properly metalled roads, they may be used for wheeled traffic during dry seasons. But in the hill districts, the best of the district roads are called *bridle roads* or *bridle paths*. They continue and will continue to be so even when the people will have forgotten how to hold the reins of horses.

It seems to me, Sir, that Government have no definite scheme or policy to gradually improve the road communications in the hill districts. No attempt has been made to widen any one of the most important district roads, to find better and easier gradients for parts and sections of the roads, to make good enough for a ponny cart or even a Baby Austin, except for some parts or sections of the road in the Jaintia Hills. No attempt has been made to improve the roads bit by bit, from time to time, so as to pave the way for a complete motor road or cart road.

I am tempted to think when I look at the long lists of roads and bridges recommended by the Communication Board, to be taken up by the Government out of the money provided by the Central Government for road development purposes, that it has never entered into the mind of Government to draw the attention of the Communication Board to the potential fact, that when the main arteries in the partially excluded areas will be improved the volume of trade in the province will exceedingly increase and the natural resources of the hills will be fully developed.

I do not mean to impute selfish motive to the members of the Board—I would rather be inclined to think that the members were under a wrong impression that it was not right to spend any money given by the Central Government on any road or roads in the partially excluded areas as they do not serve the purpose of feeder roads. But, Sir, that is a matter of opinion. The same may be said of some of the roads in the province on which money has been spent and proposed to be spent.

Let me illustrate my point, Sir, by singling out a particular road in support of my contention. I mean the road from Jowai, the subdivisional headquarter, to Dawki, the important trading centre and a meeting place for the plains and the hills. This road is growing in importance. It is attracting more and more people, and I am sure that in a very short time about three-fourths of the exports and imports will pass along this route. But the most difficult part of the road is from Sohkhā to Dawki—a drop of about 2000 to 3000 feet—measuring a distance of about 2½ miles. Supposing a sum of Rs.20 to 30 thousands was spent on that part of the road to make it motorable or fit for wheeled traffic it would greatly facilitate trade and let it end there—make no further progress until more money is available for its extension. Would such a measure be considered as waste of money?

Sir, we heard the other day that a sum of nine lakhs of rupees was spent on the buildings intended for a Medical School at Sylhet about nine years ago. For all these years the money was lying idle, unprofitably spent on buildings which serve no useful purpose. But after nine years the goal is in view, as we heard the other day that the school was going to be started in the near future. Can the money spent on it said to be wasted?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member will please finish.

The Rev. L. GATPHOH: We will not have to wait to see the utility of this road. It will serve to increase the volume of trade in the province and the number of people who utilise the service of the buses, railway, etc., will increase. Now, let me finish, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think the hon. member has given all his points. I am accommodating the hon. member and he ought to accommodate me also. He should finish his speech now.

Cut motion moved:

“That the provision of Rs.20,30,000 under Grant No. 26, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—B.—Repairs, Sub-head—2.—Communications, at page 188 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.43,06,400 do stand reduced by Re.1.”

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: The hon. Rev. Gatphoh has raised the question of communication in the partially excluded areas. I do not think, Sir, that the charge of neglect of these areas by the Government is justified. Partially excluded area means three areas—the Garo Hills, the Mikir Hills and a portion of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. As regards the Garo Hills, Sir, we have got 193 miles of Public Works Department roads in that district and even this year Rs.75,000 has been provided in the budget for the improvement of communication in the Garo Hills district.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: What about the extension, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: As regards the extension, with the recommendation of the Communication Board and the approval of this House, the Lakhipur-Mankachar Road has been included in the class I project sanctioned by the Government of India.

Then as regards the Mikir Hills we are now surveying the Doboka—Dimapur road and when the survey is completed it will be considered whether it will be possible to take up the construction of that road.

Of all people, Sir, for the people of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills to complain in that they have been neglected in the matter of improvement of communications is most surprising. The two most expensive roads in the province that have cost lakhs of rupees to build pass through the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

The Rev. L. GATPHOH: I would request the Hon'ble Minister to make a tour in these areas.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: I admit, Sir, that the access to Jowai is difficult and the access to heaven is very difficult. I know, Sir, the Hon'ble Premier and my Hon'ble colleague, Miss Dunn had to make a trip to Jowai and they came back with aching back and exhausted bodies (*Laughter*). I think, Sir, Rev. Gatphoh will agree that the question of constructing a motorable road to Jowai cannot be taken up at this time, because of the present financial position of the Government. It is suggested that from Sohkha to Dawki a road should be made by spending about Rs.20,000 by the Government. We shall have this examined, but I cannot guarantee that it will be possible to take up the work in the near future.

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

The Rev. L. GATPHOH: After I have heard the Hon'ble Minister, I 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.43,06,400 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—'50.—Civil Works—(excluding Establishment and Tools and Plant charges.)'"

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 23

(42.—CO-OPERATION)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Before the Hon'ble Miss Dunn moves the next grant, I may point out that the other grants to-day have been allotted 15 minutes each, which may not be sufficient. So some more time may be allotted to this grant.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I will allow 20 minutes to this grant.

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.1,40,500 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 "42.—Co-operation".

Sir, this demand will call for good deal of criticism, much of which will be justified. The co-operative movement was started in order to help the masses of the people. But it is regrettable to note that from the very start, the movement made no progress whatsoever. I would attribute this state of affairs to the fact that the people have not been trained to nor do they appreciate or understand the principles of co-operation—and not to the Department which is doing its best to make the movement a success. I shall wait and hear the criticisms that will be forthcoming.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.1,40,500, 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 '42.—Co-operation'."

As I see the cut motions, I find that only the question of policy is to be discussed. Any member may move.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: I beg, Sir, to move that the provision of Rs.30,644 under Grant No 23, Major head—42.—Co-operation, Minor head—A.—Direction, Sub-head—2.—Pay of Establishment (total), at page 172 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.101, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1,40,500 do stand reduced by Rs.101.

By this motion, Sir, I want to criticise Government for their apathy towards the Co-operative movement. The Hon'ble Minister herself has admitted that from the very outset the movement made no progress at all. This means that the whole movement was not understood properly. People could not understand the principle under which the movement and the village credit societies were started and also the policy of the Government underlying the movement. The persons who were in charge of the movement could not control it and guide the people to realise the policy underlying it. Most of the investments were bad investments and in consequence almost all the village credit societies have failed. Now the Boards of Directors of all the central banks which lent their money to the village credit societies are experiencing enormous difficulties; on one hand the Board of Directors are responsible to the depositors for their money, and on the other hand they are not able to realise even a single farthing from the village credit societies. And this difficulty had become enormous by the passing into law of the Money-lenders' (Amendment) Bill. This Bill has already been passed by both the Houses, although it has not yet come into operation. But by the passing of the old Act and also by the establishment of Debt Conciliation Boards and again by the passing of the Temporary Postponement of Execution of Decrees Act the situation has been much worsened. I do not grudge, Sir, to give due credit to the wisdom of passing these Acts, for their object is the amelioration of the condition of the people. But what I want to impress upon the Government is that they ought to have come forward with sufficient funds or at least with the assurances that they stand by the movement and that they stand as surety to the depositors for their money. In that case the movement would not have failed at all. But though several representations and deputations were made to the Government, they did not pay heed to them. Now the only alternative that remains for the Board of Directors is that they shall have to resign and lay the whole blame and responsibility on the Government.

Sir, I have absolutely no doubt that the Government deserve censure for their callousness, but I would only rest content with deploring the existing state of things. By the way I would like to make a suggestion, and that is that it would have been better if this Department had been placed in the hands of someone with better experience in co-operation.

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 30,644 under Grant No. 23, Major head—42.—Co-operation, Minor head—A.—Direction, Sub-head—2.—Pay of Establishment (total), at page 172 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.101, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1,40,500 do stand reduced by Rs.101".

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have only a few words to speak on this subject. At present there is no co-operative society or co-operative bank or anything of that kind in the Garo Hills. I want some help from the Government to introduce these societies there.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the motion moved by my hon. friend Maulavi Mabarak Ali. You have already reminded us to deliver our speeches with due consideration to what has already been said by the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge. I shall point out only one thing about the cause of the failure of this movement. The Hon'ble Prime Minister during the Budget Session of 1940-41 said "as I have many times mentioned on the floor of the House, the social customs, both of the Hindus and the Muslims, have compelled our simple villagers to divert this money borrowed from the Co-operative Society from being utilised for productive purposes in the expenditure on social function." Sir, this is the root cause of the failure of the Co-operative movement. I shall be glad to hear from the Hon'ble Prime Minister what has been done in this respect to educate the people by propaganda. Sir, when we know about the root cause of the failure of some movement, in my opinion it is our moral duty to remove that root cause which is a very simple matter and not a costly affair too. I think it was the bounden duty of the Government to take proper steps regarding that matter. Then it was also said in 1937 by the Hon'ble Premier that a conference would be held, but due to a change in the Ministry, neither the Hon'ble Premier in his first Ministry, nor the Congress-Coalition Ministry, could come to a decision and there was no conference. But fortunately we find that there was a conference in September last and the findings of the conference are also there. Sir, it took about four years to hold a conference, and I hope the Government will not take such a long time as that to give effect to the finding of that conference. Sir, it was pointed out by the hon. mover that by the passing of the Money-lenders' (Amendment) Bill, the situation has been made rather worse. I entirely agree with him, and I think that when such a Bill has been passed it was the duty of the popular Government—the entire Government bench whole-heartedly supported this Bill—to arrange in such a way that the poor cultivators might get loans at an easy terms when they are in dire necessity. With these few words I support the motion.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in supporting this motion I will simply refer to the opinions of some eminent gentlemen who are directly connected with the Co-operative Movement. In 1928 the Royal Commission on Agriculture, which is better known as the Linlithgow Commission, made the following remark—"If the Co-operative Movement fails, with it will fail the hope of rural India". Sir, if we want to ameliorate the condition of our people living in the countryside, I will simply say by way of contradicting the fear which the hon. Mr. Mookerjee has just expressed and which is also in the minds of the richer people of the province that after the passing of the Money-lenders' (Amendment) Bill the Co-operative Movement has failed. There is a cry also that new legislations are also primarily responsible for the failure of this movement. I hold, that this fear is groundless; the Money-lenders' (Amendment) Bill, which is waiting for the assent of His Excellency the Governor, is not yet in operation, and so cannot be said to have any adverse effect on this movement. Then about the other legislation which this House had occasion to discuss, i.e. the Temporary Postponement of Execution of Decrees Act—I may say that the movement had failed before this Bill came up to the House for passing. The movement had totally collapsed before this, and this is admitted by the people at large of the province.

Now I will speak a few words on the remark of the Hon'ble Premier, that the people spend the amount which they take as loans on their social functions.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Will the hon. member like to hear the Government reply?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I make the bold assertion that the co-operative movement had collapsed before the Money-lenders' Act was passed. Now I will come forward with some suggestions. With regard to this I may mention before the House the remarks which Mr. G. A. Khan, I. C. S., retired Commissioner of the Central Provinces Government, who was the Registrar of the Co-operative Department for a considerable length of time, made,—i.e., that if Money-lenders' (Amendment) Bill comes into force as an Act the movement will not be effected at all. His suggestions are—first try to relieve the people from the indebtedness through which they are passing and then and then only it is possible for the movement to thrive. I would ask the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge to call for that opinion, because I hold that he being an eminent person in this respect and having been in touch of the Department for a length of time, his opinion may shed more light.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does not the hon. member want that the Hon'ble Minister should reply?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I am finishing, Sir. Only one matter I would like to mention. We want Government to allow central banks to take loan on Government assurance in the form of floating debentures in the open market.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the co-operative movement is in a bad way not only in Assam, but throughout the whole of India, barring the province of Punjab. It is everywhere else more or less in a moribund condition. Richer provinces have come out with different methods of helping the movement. In Bengal, hon. members have already seen in yesterday's newspapers, the speech of the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge, there how they came out with a big sum of Rs. 50 lakhs to help the movement. Bihar has started a very sifting enquiry as to the realisable power of the primary societies. Here we are having this enquiry. As Mr. Mookerjee has just stated we had a conference—small conference—in which some members of this House who are interested in the Co-operative Banks were invited. They have made three suggestions which are now before the Government. The Committee could not come to any definite conclusion as to their suggestions. The Co-operative Committee wanted the following points to be examined—monetary help and increase of staff. In the Budget we have provided a small sum of a lakh of rupees to help the top bank, viz., the Provincial Co-operative Bank. We have every reason to believe that part of this money will be transmitted to central banks who, with this, will just be able to tide over immediate difficulties. Increase of staff has also been provided by the addition of nine Assistant Auditors during the current year. They will enquire into the paying capacity of individual debtors and the form this enquiry is to take is now being considered by the Government. My hon. friend Mr. Mookerjee said that when I have diagnosed the root cause what prevented me from remedying the evils of that malady. In his opinion intensive propaganda is necessary. We are doing propaganda in that respect through our inspectorial staff. Some of them have been provided with magic lanterns to lecture to the people. So we are doing a certain amount of propaganda.

Then we have got non-official organisation societies which are helped with small contributions by Government and whose business is to preach the gospel of co-operative movement amongst the people. In this way we have done what little you could to disseminate the true ideas of co-operative

movement amongst the people. A tide of helplessness and desperation that was noticed among the people has gone. We are trying to evolve a scheme by means of which we will start anew our endeavour to rehabilitate the movement. If we find that some money is required, we will come before the House with a proper supplementary demand in time.

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

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: I press, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the provision of Rs.30,644 under grant No. 23, Major head—42.—Co-operation, Minor head—A.—Direction, Sub-head—2.—Pay of Establishment (total), at page 172 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 101, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 1,40,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 101."

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now the question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,40,500 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 '42.—Co-operation'".

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 25

(47.—Miscellaneous Departments)

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.1,16,600 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 "47.—Miscellaneous Departments."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,16,600 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 '47.—Miscellaneous Departments'".

This demand will continue up to 3-35 P. M.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.7,150 under grant No. 25, Major head—47.—Miscellaneous Departments, Minor head—B.—Labour, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total), at page 184 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 50, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 1,16,600 do stand reduced by Rs. 50.

Sir, in moving this motion, I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the miserable condition of life and service of the inland and ocean-going seamen of Sylhet and other districts of Assam. As many as 30,000 seamen working in the different ports of India and sailing abroad, hail from the districts of Sylhet and Cachar. The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Labour who was at one time the General Secretary of the Indian Seamen's Union at Calcutta, is well-acquainted with the difficulties of the life and service of these seamen. In spite of the best efforts of the Indian Seamen's Union which is incidentally one of the biggest Trade Unions of India, bribery and corruption are rampant in the port of Calcutta. The *Bariwallas* and *Dalals* are sucking the life blood of these seamen. 'Gosh, Tal-gosh, Tin-talab and Ladabi', these are terms of bribery too well-known to the seamen. Until very recently the *Mahajans* used to exact from the seamen interest at the rate of 150 per cent. per annum. The miserable condition of these seamen cannot be judged from outside.

These people are the *bonafide* inhabitants of this province. They are adding to the prosperity of the country. Can the Government shirk their responsibility and sit idle?

With the outbreak of war, all the merchant vessels have been commissioned and the innumerable seamen of Sylhet are discharging the duties of a national militia. Already hundreds of them have lost their lives in the high seas by enemy action. We would like to know what arrangements have been made for the maintenance of the families of these men who have died in active service. 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.7,150 under Grant No. 25, Major head—47.—Miscellaneous Departments, Minor head—B.—Labour, Sub-head—1.—Pay of officers (total), at page 184 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.50, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1,16,600 do stand reduced by Rs.50."

Mr. W. R. FAULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. mover has stated that the object of his motion is to draw the attention of Government to certain alleged conditions affecting seamen from Assam. He has said little or nothing to substantiate his claim that these men serve under miserable conditions of life or service, nor does he clearly indicate what action or want of action on the part of Government warrants his cut motion.

So far as Assam itself is concerned, the number of seamen from Sylhet serving within the province is virtually nil, and I consider myself qualified to state that complaints of the nature indicated have not been voiced in the quarter where they might be most expected.

In any case, however, the condition of life and service of seamen generally is not properly within the sphere of Assam's responsibilities since there are no ports in Assam in which seamen are engaged.

The matter might be a provincial one in Bengal, where there are two major ports, and the headquarters of labour organisations operating on behalf of seamen. But, in fact, the present tendency being towards the largest possible measure of co-ordination, the subject, if it justifies consideration, is one which should rightly only be handled by the Central Government.

Sir, I oppose the motion.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the interest of accuracy, may I inform the hon. mover Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury

that only in February last there was an announcement given in reply to a Central Legislative Assembly question which asked how many Indian seamen have lost their lives during the war and the answer was between 600—650? Now that covers the whole of India including Madras districts, Chittagong, Sylhet and certain other districts in Bengal. Sir, it is scarcely correct to say that “hundreds of seamen” from Sylhet have lost their lives.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: This is a fact, Sir.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: All I can say, Sir, is that if Mr. Bari Chaudhury is correct, then the figures obtained by the Commerce Department of the Government of India from the office of the High Commissioner at London are incorrect.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a technical objection to discuss this matter for maritime shipping is covered by list No. 1 of the Seventh Schedule.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: We want a reply from the Minister-in-charge.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Well, I am in charge of this subject (*laughter*).

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: I am sorry.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I may reply to such questions on the floor of the House and my hon. friend need not challenge my competence to deal with the subject. Sir, I am not taking shelter under the technical objection; I am very glad to place all the facts that we possess before the hon. members.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of order, Sir. If the Hon'ble Premier is in charge of this Department, how is this that Hon'ble Mr. Matin Chaudhuri is moving for the grant?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, as I have already stated, these marine matters are not dealt with by the Public Works Department. It is a Central subject and correspondence on this subject between the Central Government and this Government on such general questions are dealt with by the Home Department and I am in charge of this Department.

Sir, it is perfectly correct that a large number of our Sylheti friends had signed on on previous occasions in inland as well as ocean going vessels but the difficulty so far as Assam is concerned, they sign on ports which are beyond the provincial jurisdiction. We have got no register to find out whether a man signing on in all these places belongs to Assam or anywhere else but from their private correspondence which some times passes through the district officers, we know that quite a large number of people are on the high seas at the present moment. All these recruitments take place in Calcutta and as I had spent quite a large number of years in Calcutta very near the centre which is known as Khalasitola, I know the conditions and I quite agree with my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury that various kinds of illegal exactions are extorted by “dalals” or brokers, but it is beyond my comprehension how can the Government of Assam help in this matter. There is Shipping Master and Assistant Shipping Master at Calcutta. If my hon. friend has got any facts and figures, I will be only too pleased to send his grievances in this matter to those Calcutta officers.

Then Sir, it is perfectly correct that a large number of people from Sylhet has died on the high seas. About a fortnight ago I got a resolution passed by the War Committee of Sylhet alleging that in view of the fact that as many as 600 lives have been lost on the high seas since the beginning of the War, Government of India should be requested to make special provision for helping the families and to have better particulars of the deceased so that the relatives may be able to trace them. Sir, as I replied the other day to the question asked by the same hon. member, Maulavi Mabarak Ali and Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy, that the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet in order to expedite matters has been authorised to communicate direct both with the Marine Department and the Government of India so that any compensation for unfortunate accident on the high seas may be available to the relatives as early as possible. If such matters are sent by the Deputy Commissioner through the Commissioner and then through the Provincial Government to the Central Government it will take a long time. Therefore the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet has been authorised to correspond direct with the Marine Department and the Government of India so that whatever compensation or benefit for these persons can be had, is had quickly. I am a member of the Provincial War Committee and I know what efforts are being made by this War Committee in this direction and we have reserved a decent sum for helping the relatives of these deceased or injured people. Recently we were told that the Marine Department had accepted an Insurance compensation scheme for the seamen who are either in British ports or in Indian ports. That shows that some of the people of Sylhet have signed on in British ports. Assam Government has no hand or control in the matter and as they are borne in the Indian register or British register, it is difficult to get information easily. We start correspondence with the Central Government whenever a case for compensation comes to our notice. As soon as we get any intimation either from the relatives themselves or from the higher authorities, the Deputy Commissioner will immediately make enquiries and bring it to the notice of the Marine Department to make such compensation. So Assam Government are doing their best to see that the relatives of those gallant people who have signed on in spite of the risk on the high seas not only in normal times but thousand times more now and whom we cannot but admire for their courage and patriotism, if we know that any of them have lost their lives on the high seas, get the full measure of the benefit funds that have been provided for such cases.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: May I know the approximate number of deaths?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As Mr. Whittaker just read the reply given on the floor of the Central Assembly the number of death was mentioned at 600 to 650. It is well known to my hon. friend that a large number of seamen from Noakhali, Chittagong and Portuguese Goa also sign and the number of deaths among these all is 600 to 615. Assam Government have not any statistics whatever, but the Sylhet War Committee passed a resolution stating that since the beginning of the war, 600 Sylhet seamen have lost their lives. Beyond that we have got no other information.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know whether our Government has got any responsibility to find out the actual state of affairs, i.e., whether a man has actually died or is still living? Recently a father of a

seaman came to submit a petition before the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, to ascertain whether his son had died and if so whether he would be entitled to any compensation, because he had come to learn from some other person through a letter that his son died in London. But the Deputy Commissioner could not give any information.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: All that I can advise is that the hon. member can send us the particulars of the man so that we can enquire from the High Commissioner of India. In London my first son is a Lasker Welfare Officer who is to find out all such cases and report to the High Commissioner, and to look after these people, and if there be any deaths, to bury them in the Muslim fashion.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Most probably Government are aware that in cases of death, compensation is allowed to the wife or children of the deceased, but no compensation is given to the father and mother if there be no wife or children. We want to see that compensation is given to the father and mother when there is no wife or children of the deceased.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: These compensations are regulated by certain rules and those rules are controlled by the Marine Department. We have no power whatsoever to revise those rules.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: In view of the information supplied by the Hon'ble Premier, I 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.1,16,600 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 '47.—Miscellaneous Departments'."

The question was adopted.

GRANT No.31

(57.—Miscellaneous)

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.3,30,700 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 "57.—Miscellaneous".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.3,30,700 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 '57.—Miscellaneous'."

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: I beg to move that the provision of Rs.15,000 under Grant No.31, Major head—57.—Miscellaneous, Minor head—E.—Petty Establishments, Sub-head—(a)—Circuit and Session Houses (total), at page 204 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.3,30,700 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

My intention in moving this motion is to urge upon the Government the urgent necessity of constructing a separate Circuit House at Sunamganj. At the present moment the Circuit House is combined with the Dak Bungalow. The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge and [some other Hon'ble Ministers

have personal experience of the difficulty and inconvenience which the public of Sunamganj are experiencing for want of a separate Circuit House at Sunamganj. Sir, Sunamganj is the only subdivision in the Surma Valley and perhaps in the whole of Assam where the Dak Bungalow and the Circuit House are accommodated in the same building. The public as well as the officers on tour are put to great troubles and difficulties owing to this arrangement. So, often officers have cancelled their tour for want of accommodation. Sir, there is no dearth of Government land in the town of Sunamganj. We suggest that the whole building be utilised as a Dak Bungalow and a separate Circuit House constructed at an early date. 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.15,000 under Grant No.31, Major head—57.—Miscellaneous, Minor head—E.—Petty Establishments, Sub-head—(a)—Circuit and Session Houses (total), at page 204 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs 3,30,700 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury is quite correct to say that at Sunamganj there is a combined Circuit and Dak Bungalow and that there are only two rooms—one for the Dak Bungalow and the other for the Circuit House and the central room is used as dining room. To settle some agrarian disputes between the tenants and the Bhatipara Zeminders myself, and my friends the Hon'ble Revenue Minister and the Hon'ble Minister for Local Self-Government along with the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police went there last year. They were good enough to give me the Circuit House room, whereas the two Hon'ble Ministers shared the Dak Bungalow room while the two district officers were put in tents. It was found that the accommodation there is very little. I will make enquiries, Sir, to find out how frequently the Dak Bungalow is utilised and what is the average rate per month of occupation of the Circuit House and if we find that the number of officials visiting that locality and non-officials using the Dak Bungalow require two separate buildings then we will take up the matter.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : In view of what has been said by the Hon'ble Prime Minister I do not like to press my motion, Sir.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Now I shall put the main motion. The question is :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.3,30,700 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 '57.—Miscellaneous'."

The question was adopted.

GRANT No.33

(LOANS AND ADVANCES BEARING AND NOT BEARING INTEREST)

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.5,32,000 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 "Loans and Advances".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.5,32,000 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 'Loans and Advances'."

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 30,000 under Grant No. 33, Major head—Loans and Advances, etc., Minor Head —B.—Loans and Advances by the Provincial Governments, Sub-head —Loans to Municipalities, Port Funds, etc., Detailed head—Loans to Local Bodies, at page 212 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 5,32,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, by moving this motion I want to bring a local grievance before the House. Of course this demand is moved by the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman but it has got a close connection with the Hon'ble Minister for Local Self-Government. Sometime back the Sunamganj Local Board applied to Government for a loan of Rs. 40,000 in order to improve and extend the mileage of roads in that subdivision but that application was rejected by Government on the ground that the financial condition of the Board was not satisfactory. I can tell the hon. members that the financial position of the Sunamganj Local Board is now better than as it was some days ago and my friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury, the Chairman, Sunamganj Local Board, will bear me out in this matter. I think, Sir, I will receive the best consideration from the Hon'ble Minister for Local Self-Government. We did not grudge to sanction a little over Rs. 15,000 for constructing a *pucca* road up to the house of the Hon'ble Public Works Department Minister and another Rs.5,000 for constructing a road to the house of the Hon'ble Minister for Local Self-Government and I hope, Sir, my motion will receive the same treatment. Sir, if I remember aright, during the time of the first Ministry under this Reform the Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhury said that what he could not expect from the son of Habiganj he expected from the son-in-law of Habiganj and to-day, Sir, I say with a change in the sentence what we could not expect from the son of Sunamganj I mean Maulavi Munawwar Ali we expect from the son of Sahib the brother-in-law of Sunamganj. (*Laughter.*)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Cut motion moved :

"That the provision of Rs.30,000 under Grant No. 33, Major head—Loans and Advances, etc., Minor head—B.—Loans and Advances by the Provincial Governments, Sub-head—Loans to Municipalities, Port Funds, etc., Detailed head—Loans to Local Bodies, at page 212 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 5,32,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100."

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the whole position is like this. In 1938 the Sunamganj Local Board applied for a loan of Rs. 40,000 and in their petition for loan they did not supply any scheme by which the loan was to be repaid. Over and above that, at that time the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, reported to the Government that the financial position of the Local Board was extremely bad. So in view of these circumstances, Sir, and

in view of the fact that the Board could not at that time show how the loan, if even advanced, would be paid back, the Government had to reject their proposal. Since then, Sir, no proposal has been put forward before the Government and until now we have got no such information that the Sunamganj Local Board want Rs. 40 or Rs. 30 thousands, by way of loan. This is the whole position, Sir.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: The application was renewed in 1938.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: The application was renewed in 1938 and that petition was also considered and Government had to give the reply that in that petition too no scheme was proffered with regard to the fact that how the loan was to be repaid and in how many instalments. So, Sir, until now by this cut motion the present Ministry's attention has never been drawn to the fact.

With regard to another fact which I have heard often repeated by my hon. friend the mover of the cut motion is that charity begins at home. The Sunamganj Local Board, I think, can apply the principle of this saying that 'charity begins at home'. From the figures it will appear, Sir, that mileage of roads maintained by Sunamganj have been gradually reduced—I shall give out only for the information of the House—the figures of the last three years.

The mileage maintained by the Sunamganj Local Board in the year 1937-38 was 248.65; in 1938-39 the same mileage was maintained; in 1939-40 the mileage has been reduced to 239.65.

I shall now mention the non-recurring grant for the communications that is being given to the Sunamganj Local Board for the corresponding three years. For the year 1937-38 it was Rs.11,300; for 1938-39 it was Rs.11,500, and for 1939-40 it was Rs.12,750; that means an increase of over Rs.1,000.

From this progress it will appear that the case of the Sunamganj Local Board is treated more favourably by Government than of any other Board.

Again, Sir, in that petition for loan, the Board mentioned that they would try to augment their income by increasing the local rate which is being paid by the landlords of the subdivision. At present the rate is fixed at 1 anna 4 pies in the rupee on the annual value of the land, but actually only 1 anna is levied now. The Board definitely said that they would increase their income by levying 3 pies extra in the rupee. So, if they at all want to improve their position they can do it now. If they do so they can increase their annual income by Rs. 15,000 as from the figures it appears that from the existing rate they get annually a sum in the neighbourhood of Rs. 60,000. I would therefore advise my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury, who, I am told, is the able Chairman of the Board, to see whether he can increase his income by levying an extra 3 pies in the rupee. I understand, Sir, that the Habiganj Local Board and the Silchar Local Board have already done so. By doing this I think he will not only accept the proposal, but act up to the principle that 'charity begins at home' which is so very familiar with the mover of this cut motion. Moreover Lord helps those who help themselves. If they accept my suggestions, no son or son-in-law or brother-in-law would be required to help them.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Has the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge got anything to say ?

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

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

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: In view of the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister that the proposal will receive his best consideration, I 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.5,32,000 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 'Loans and Advances'."

The question was adopted.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 A.M. on Tuesday, the 25th March 1941.

SHILLONG,

The 30th May, 1941.

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.