

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

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 11 A.M. on Saturday, the 27th March, 1943.

PRESENT

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

SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Eastern Banking and Trading Company, Limited

Mr. A. WHITTAKER asked :

5.(a) Is Government aware that a company known as the Eastern Banking and Trading Company, Limited, has been operating in this Province ?

(b) Is Government aware that numerous complaints have been made by the depositors against this Company ?

6.(a) Is it a fact that Government money in the hands of this Company could not be satisfactorily accounted for in the Kamrup district ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether a satisfactory settlement has been reached in the Kamrup case ?

(c) If so, what are the terms of the settlement ?

7.(a) Is Government aware that certain depositors from the poorer classes have deposited large amounts with this Company and have been unable to obtain payment ?

(b) Is Government aware that the Directors held a meeting at Karimganj on the 6th February, 1943 and are alleged to have decided to convert 60 per cent. of the depositors' money into shares ?

(c) Do Government propose to investigate the matter with a view to protecting the depositors and preventing other poor persons from losing their money ?

8. Do Government propose to order an investigation to ascertain whether cognisable offences have been committed by the Directors or other persons concerned with this Company ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI replied :

"As the hon. Member is aware, the Provincial Government are merely the agents of the Government of India in regard to this matter".

5.(a)—Yes, under the present name of Eastern Bank of India, Limited.

(b)—Some complaints were made by the depositors and the creditors.

6.(a)—Yes.

(b)—The Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup, reported on the 10th December 1942, that some arrangements to recover the money from the Bank were being made by him.

(c)—No information has been received from the Deputy Commissioner.

7.(a)—A letter to the Registrar, Joint Stock Companies, from the Divisional Manager, Consolidated Tea and Lands Company, Limited, Goombira, shows that a number of people of the estate had money in the Bank. About payment Government have no information.

(b)—The Bank has reported that such a meeting was held on the 7th February 1943, in which the creditors and depositors were present and that the arrangement mentioned in the question was unanimously adopted.

(c)—The matter is under consideration of the Government.

8.—This matter will be duly considered if and when an investigation has been made.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have two supplementary questions to ask on this affair. When Government funds are at stake the Deputy Commissioner can make some arrangement to recover the money on behalf of Government but when the deposits of people with no education and very slender means are at stake, the answer is in this respect the Government of Assam is the agent of the Government of India. Do Government consider that they are adequately fulfilling their responsibilities to protect the depositors in these mushroom banks?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: That is asking for opinion, Sir.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Do not Government think that the answer to their own questions show that there is an issue which I have stated, Sir?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister said with regard to an individual question that that was a matter of opinion.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May we know, Sir, what was the nature of the Government deposit in this Bank?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Sir, the Mauzadar in the Nalbari circle deposited the amount to the Bank for transmission to the Gauhati treasury.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On the 10th December Government was informed by the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup, that he made some arrangements to recover the money from the Bank but in reply to 6 (c) it is said that no information has been received from the Deputy Commissioner. May we know, Sir, when the last enquiry was made by Government regarding the realisation of the money?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: The last letter received from the Deputy Commissioner was on the 10th December 1942. Since then no information has been received.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, did Government enquire after that?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: I am not aware of that, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, my question is this, that the last letter was received from the Deputy Commissioner in the month of December and after that, Sir, more than three months have elapsed.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member will please put the question.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: My question is that, Sir, why nothing has been done in the meantime?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Government is awaiting the reply from the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, how long Government intends to wait for this reply?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: I think, the reply will come in due course.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, is not a period of three months more than sufficient to get a reply to such an enquiry?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Sir, that is also a question of opinion whether the time is sufficient or not.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, what is the Government opinion?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: An hon. Member cannot ask for Government opinion, Sir, he can put a question.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, when the Deputy Commissioner will be in a position to reply?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: He will certainly reply, Sir.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, may we know whether the Government money has been recovered or not?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Government have no information, Sir.

Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: May we know, Sir, when the Deputy Commissioner will be in a position to reply?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: That lies with the Deputy Commissioner, Sir, more than with the Government.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May we know, Sir, whether the mauzadars are entitled to deposit Government money in a private bank?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: That question does not arise but any way the Hon'ble Minister may reply.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Sir, the mauzadar probably took the most expeditious means for transmission of the money to the headquarters.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Sir, was there no treasury in the locality?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: That was in Nalbari, Sir, and I don't think that there is a treasury there.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given)

Hire money of a Bus

Maulavi ABDUL AZIZ asked :

*85. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether they have received a petition dated the 11th November 1942 from Babu Bhupendra Nath Gupta of Maulvi-bazar regarding his claim for hire money in respect of his bus No.ASE 425?

- (b) If so, what orders have been passed on the same ?
- (c) Whether it is a fact that the Inspector General of Police by his letter No.6644-50, dated the 19th March 1942, assured payment of hire at Rs.20 per diem until the date of payment of 1st instalment of purchase money of the bus at 75 per cent.?
- (d) If so, when Government propose to pay the hire money to the petitioner accordingly ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

85. (a)—Yes ; the petition was of 12th November.
- (b)—The petitioner was informed that hire charges would be payable only for one month.
- (c)—No. In his letter No.F.5644-50 of 19th March the Inspector General informed petitioner that hire charges could only be paid for the period prior to purchase, which would be the date of payment of the instalment of purchase money at 75 per cent. Petitioner was informed later that the date of purchase would be the date of service of notice of acquisition.
- (d)—Does not arise.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Sir, is it a fact that when the bus was taken it was given to understand that the hire money would be paid at the rate of Rs. 20 per day till the first payment of the 75 per cent. of the value that would be paid ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : No, Sir. What actually happened is this. Originally Government thought that these buses would be required for a month or two and therefore at the time of first requisition, it was stated that hire money would be given for the period but soon after when it was found that the buses would be required for a longer period, Government gave notice to the owners that the buses would be purchased and hire money would be given only for one month.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : May we know the number and date of the notice and the procedure as to how it was served ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : That is a new question, Sir, I want notice.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Will Government kindly enquire and let us know about the date and number of the notice ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : As we are proroguing today it is not possible to lay in this House the information required by my hon. Friend. If he wants that particular date, he should give me a chit and I will procure the information.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Is Government aware that the 25 per cent. of the purchase money has not yet been paid to the owners of the buses ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : It was not paid but I have instructed the Finance Department for immediate payment.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Which Department of the Government is going to make the payment, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Finance Department will produce the money and the Police Department will disburse.

Number of Muslims in class III of the Assam School Service

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

*86. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The number of Muslims appointed in class III of the Assam School Service, in the years 1940, 1941 and 1942 from each of the sub-divisions of Sylhet and Cachar districts (to be shown sub-division by sub-division separately) ?
- (b) The principle on which such appointments are made in the Surma Valley ?
- (c) The percentage of Surma Valley Muslims in the said service ?
- (d) The number of vacancies either permanent or temporary which occurred in the said service in the Surma Valley from January 1942 to February 1943 ?
- (e) By whom these vacancies have been filled up and what is the home address of each candidate ?
- (f) The number of registered graduate candidates from each of the sub-division of the districts of Cachar and Sylhet for the said service ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

86. (a) to (f)—Information is called for.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know from the Hon'ble Minister of Education when did Government receive my question? How long ago questions were received by Government?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: It was received on the 8th of March.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Could it not be possible to get the reply from the Director of Public Instruction within this time?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: No, Sir. The Director of Public Instruction could not supply the information and therefore the Inspector of Schools has been asked to supply it.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Did the office give any reason why this information could not be supplied?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: No reason has been assigned, Sir. The figures have been called for from the Inspector of Schools.

Incorporation of sectional holidays in the list of general holidays

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*87. Will Government be pleased to state what action they have taken on the following resolution passed in the tenth session of the Assam Educational Conference held at Shillong in May 1940 ?

“(c) Resolved that all the sectional holidays be incorporated in the list of general holidays and the total number of holidays be increased accordingly.”

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

87.—The question of incorporating the sectional holidays in the list of general holidays is under the consideration of Government but they do not see any reason to increase the total number of general holidays.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I enquire of the Hon'ble Minister how long Government will take to consider the matter finally ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: I think, it will be done very soon, Sir.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it not a very long standing complaint from the public that these sectional holidays are to be turned into general holidays ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: It must be. But this matter has been brought to the notice of the Government only by this question.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**UNSTARRED QUESTIONS**

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Dearth of paper in the Province

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked :

64. (a) Are Government aware that there has been a great dearth of paper in the Province and people are experiencing great inconvenience for it ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to make suitable arrangements so that school authorities may get papers necessary for their school purposes ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

64. (a)—Yes

(b)—The matter is under the consideration of the Government.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV : Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly inform us if they are considering the question of supplying paper to the Newspapers in view of the fact that some Newspapers are curtailing their spaces and even some have got to stop their papers ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : I am concerned with the Education Department only.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV : My question is about paper supplying, Sir. Will the Hon'ble Prime Minister please reply?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : As my hon. Friend knows that it is under the Central Government, I will refer the matter to them.

Grants-in-aid to Junior and High Madrasas of Assam Valley

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked :

65. (a) Will Government be pleased to state the amount of aid granted by Government in the current financial year to each Junior and High Madrasa of the Assam Valley ?

(b) Are Government aware that without increased grant it is difficult to maintain these institutions now ?

(c) If so, do Government propose to take adequate steps to increase the grants of these institutions ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

65. (a)—A statement is laid on the Library table.

(b)—Government recognise that increased grants would be very helpful to these institutions.

(c)—Increased grants are and will be given within the limits of the funds available for this purpose at the disposal of the Government.

Paper scarcity in the Province

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

66. (a) Are Government aware that the Province is passing through severe paper scarcity ?

(b) If so, what steps do Government propose to take to remove the scarcity and to ensure a proper supply of paper to students of educational institutions ?

(c) Is it a fact that the students are to purchase a good number of *Khatas* for their use in classes ?

(d) Do Government propose to instruct the school authorities to do away with *Khatas* which the students are to purchase ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

66. (a)—Yes.

(b)—The matter is under the consideration of the Government.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—Both the Director of Public Instruction and the Inspectors of Schools have issued instructions to the School authorities to explore all possible avenues to economise the use of paper.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: In view of the urgency of the matter, will Government make it a point to come to a final decision immediately?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Yes, Sir.

Out-patient dispensaries in Jowai Sub-division

Rev. L. GATPHOH asked :

67. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The number of Government out-patient dispensaries in the Sub-division of Jowai ?

(b) The names of localities where there are Government dispensaries in that Sub-division ?

(c) The distances intervening them ?

68. Will Government be pleased to state the reasons why there is no Government dispensary at the headquarters of the Sub-division of Jowai ?

69. Is it a fact that the people of the Sub-division of Jowai have been representing their medical needs to the local Government, in the form of memorials since 1925 until now ?

70. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The names of local bodies or Christian Missions or Medical practitioners in the Sub-division of Jowai to whom medical grants are given ?

(b) The amount of each such grant ?

(c) The conditions under which the said grants-in-aid are given ?

(d) Whether the people are entitled to get medicine free or by paying one anna per ticket from the dispensaries in that Sub-division, which are receiving grants-in-aid from Government ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN replied :

67. (a)—Three (two regular and one travelling).

(b)—The regular dispensaries are at Nongtalang and Dawki.

(c)—About 6 steep miles.

68.—The Welsh Mission Hospital there has so far served the needs of the Jowai town.

Rev. L. GATPHOH: May I know the intention of Government to give aid to the Mission Hospitals, the responsibilities of which are not borne by Government ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: It is in order to give medical relief to the poor people who are treated in the Mission Hospitals.

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN replied :

69.—Yes.

Rev. L. GATPHOH: Regarding Question No, 69, Sir, what steps Government have taken to remove the grievances of the people?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: We think, there were no grievances from those people. So, no step had to be taken.

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN replied :

70. (a)—The Welsh Mission at Jowai and Shangpung and the Roman Catholic Mission at Raliang.

(b)—The grants are as under—

				Rs.
Jowai	...	...	...	1,500
Shangpung	...	...	...	250
Raliang	...	...	...	750

} Recurring.

(c)—For maintenance of the respective dispensaries.

(d)—As far as Government are aware really indigent people served by these Mission dispensaries are receiving medicines free of charge.

Rev. L. GATPHOH: Regarding Question No. 70 (a), will Government please state whether the hospitals at Jowai, Shangpung and Railang are run by qualified doctors?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: Government have no information.

Rev. L. GATPHOH: Will Government enquire into this?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: Very well, Sir.

Rev. L. GATPHOH: As regards Question No. 70(d), what is the Government source of information and are they sure of it?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: We have so far received no complaints from the Civil Surgeon. We understand that the people other than really indigent people do not receive medicines free.

Rev. L. GATPHOH: Have Government made any provision for half of the people in this area in question to serve with medicines free of charge?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: We made no enquiry, but we believe, such provision is made for at least half of the people of the area.

Requisition of guns by Government

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

71. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Why the guns of Babu Nalini Nath Chaudhury and Babu Niranjana Roy of Beheli in the Sub-division of Sunamganj have been seized by Government?

(b) Whether the Sub-divisional Officer, Sunamganj has ordered for the seizure of the aforesaid guns?

(c) Whether the aforesaid gentlemen joined the recent political movement?

(d) If so, what are the reports against them?

(e) Whether the officer-in-charge of Sachna thana has submitted any report against the aforesaid gentlemen *viz.*, Babu Nalini Nath Chaudhuri and Babu Niranjana Roy of Beheli before the seizure of the guns?

- (f) Whether there had been any subversive activities within the Sachna thana area from the 9th August up till now ?
- (g) Whether the officer-in-charge of Sachna thana has seized the guns in his own initiative ?
- (h) Whether Government propose to return these guns to their owners ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

71. (a) & (b)—Government understand that the guns have been requisitioned by Deputy Commissioner in accordance with general orders for the purpose of obtaining weapons to supplement police armouries.

(c)—Government have no information on the point.

(d) & (e)—Government are not prepared to disclose the contents of reports in such matters.

(f)—Government have no information.

(g)—No.

(h)—Government will pass orders on receipt of reports of the results of the requisitioning.

Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: What was the principle of selection ? Why there was requisition to certain people only, and not to others ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It was done at the discretion of the Deputy Commissioner.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Do we understand that this requisition of the guns is made only for a temporary period ?

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

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Is it a fact that the local officers were asked to seize the guns of those persons only who joined the subversive movement in that circle ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No such invidious distinction was made.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Are Government aware that this order of requisitioning of guns renders the position of the local merchants helpless ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We have received no complaint to that effect.

Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: Is Government prepared to set down certain rules for the guidance of the local officials in this respect ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If instructions were not issued those will be given.

Maulavi ABDUL AZIZ: Have Government given any compensation to those whose guns were seized ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Not, so far.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I know of a case of a man living in Mankachar who had several guns and Government have taken away all of them without keeping a single one for his own use. Will Government consider the desirability of allowing one gun at least to every one of the owners who live in outlying places ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:
If the hon. Member will give me the name of the particular person, I will surely consider his case.

Total enrolment of Tribal students in all Schools in Nowgong District

Srijut DHIRSINGH DEURI asked :

72. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The total enrolment on the 1st of April 1942 and on the 1st of January 1943, of the Tribal students (both Hills and Plains) including girls in the Government and aided High and Middle English Schools in the district of Nowgong ?
- (b) How many of them were scholarship holders ?
- (c) How many of them were granted free-studentships in different schools ?
- (d) How many of them were newly admitted in those years in different schools of the district ?
- (e) How many Tribal teachers are at present serving in those schools ?

73. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The average number of the Tribal pupils (both Hills and Plains) including girls reading in the Middle Vernacular and Primary Schools in the district of Nowgong in the year 1942-43 ?
- (b) How many of them were newly admitted in that year in different Middle Vernacular Schools ?
- (c) The number of scholarship holders in that year ?
- (d) How many teachers from the Tribal community are at present serving in those schools ?
- (e) How many of these teachers were newly appointed in those schools in the year 1942-43 ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN
replied :

72. (a)—(e) & 73. (a)—(e)—Information has been called for.

Re: Divisional Forest Office at Sylhet

Maulavi Md. ABDUS SALAM asked :

74. (a) Are Government aware that early in February 1943 a temporary vacancy occurred in the office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Sylhet ?
(b) Is it a fact that the said vacancy occurred in the place of a Muslim who went on leave ?

(c) Is it a fact that some Surma Valley Muslims submitted their candidature for the said vacancy, but none of them was appointed ?

(d) Are Government aware that the Surma Valley Muslims are under-represented in the office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Sylhet ?

(e) If so, will Government be pleased to state why no Muslim was appointed in the said vacancy ?

(f) Will Government be pleased to state whether the policy of communal representation was followed by the Divisional Forest Officer, Sylhet in this case ?

75. (a) Are Government aware that a number of bamboo Mahaldars and other contractors submitted their tenders for the supply of Tarza matting and cane to the Divisional Forest Officer, Sylhet ?

(b) Is it a fact that the Divisional Forest Officer, Sylhet granted the lion's share of these contracts to one Babu Nani Gopal Das of Sylhet ?

(c) Is it a fact that the said Babu Nani Gopal Das is the son of the present Head Clerk of the Divisional Forest Officer's Office ?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state why the Divisional Forest Officer, Sylhet has ignored the claims of the bamboo and cane Mahaldars in this respect ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

74. (a)—Government understand from the Conservator of Forests' report that this was so.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Yes. They were not found suitable.

(d)—This is not the fact. They hold five posts of clerks out of seven.

(e)—For the reasons already given.

(f)—Yes. In fact the Divisional Forest Officer appointed the candidate whom he found best on a test by merit, but has been instructed to select a man from an under-represented community.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : In view of the reply given to question 74(d), may I enquire from the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge whether, in reply to my cut Motion in the Budget session of 1941, the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Forests definitely said that the Muslim community was very much under-represented in the Forest Department and the figures were also supplied by Government ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : Now it is 1943 and not 1941, Sir.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : Can the Hon'ble Minister assure us that by this time the quota of Muslims in the Surma Valley has been filled up in the Forest Department ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : The question is about the Forest office in Sylhet, but the hon. Member drags the question afar. But I am prepared to say that I am taking definite step to remove any such grievance.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : May I know from the Hon'ble Minister what is the Muslim quota of clerks in the Divisional Forest Office at Sylhet ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : That answer has already been given

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : But with regard to Forest and other offices what is the Muslim quota ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member is going far away from the main question.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

75. (a)—There has been no such recent contract.

(b)—No.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—The question does not arise. The individual named received only a minor fraction of a contract for supply of bamboos.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : It is stated that he is the son of the head clerk and has been granted a fraction of contract for the supply of bamboos. May I enquire of the Government whether it is a sound principle for the District officer to select one of his subordinate's son to be a contractor ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : Government opinion is that it is not unsound ; if the subordinate's relative satisfies all the criterion he should not be debarred on account of his being a relative of the subordinate.

Gratuitous relief, rent remission and Agricultural loan to the Raiyats of Goalpara district

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked :

76. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The total amount of (i) gratuitous relief, (ii) Agricultural loan and (iii) land revenue (rent) remission given to raiyats in Mechpara Wards Estate during the flood of 1345 B.S. ?

(b) Whether Government are aware that during the current year the flood was much more severe and devastating than that of 1345 B.S. ?

(c) If so, what is the total amount of (i) gratuitous relief, (ii) agricultural loan and (iii) rent remission granted in the same area during the current year ?

77. Will Government be pleased to state the total number of applications received for rent remission and grant of agricultural loan for the Raiyats in Jamadarhat, Chunari, Lakhipur and Goalpara Kacharies ?

78. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara and Sub-Deputy Collectors of Dhubri have submitted to Government any report after visiting the flood affected areas in Dhubri South Bank and Lakhipur regarding grant of gratuitous relief, agricultural loans and free seed distribution or seed distribution by return system recently ?

(b) If so, what action has been taken on these reports ?

(c) Is it a fact that the Hon'ble Revenue Minister has been approached and informed in various petitions and telegram that unless *Ahu* paddy seeds and *Aman* paddy seeds are distributed in these areas immediately about 25,000 bighas of land will remain fallow and the distress of the people will know no bounds ?

(d) If so, what steps have been taken to supply the cultivators of these areas with seeds ?

(e) If no steps have so far been taken, do Government propose to issue immediate orders for issuing seeds ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

76 & 77.—Information is not available and has been called for from the local officers. The hon. Member will be informed as soon as it is received ?

78. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Government have allotted the funds asked for by the local officers.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—Necessary funds have been allotted.

(e)—Does not arise.

Sale of Kerosene and Cloths by permit system

Maulavi MD. ABDUS SALAM asked :

79. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The names and addresses of each Kerosene permit holders of the Kanaighat, Gowainghat and Jaintiapur Thanas under the North Sylhet Sub-division ? (To be stated separately thana by thana and by each Sarpanch Circle.)

(b) The quantities of Kerosene which each of the permit holders gets every month ?

80. (a) Is it a fact that Kerosene permits for Jaintia Parganas are granted on the recommendation of the Sub-Deputy Collectors of Gowainghat and Kanaighat ?

(b) Are Government aware that on the recommendation of the Sub-Deputy Collector, Kanaighat, some permits have been granted to those who are not *bonafide* shop-keepers ?

(c) Is it a fact that these permit holders sell Kerosene in the black market at high prices ?

(d) Do Government propose to take steps towards better management and control of Kerosene supply in the Kanaighat Elaka in future ?

81. (a) Are Government aware that a standard cloth shop has been started in the Kanaighat Tahsil Office building under the North Sylhet Sub-division ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state (i) under whose agency the said shop has been started and (ii) whether the shop has been started for the benefit of the Government Officials only at Kanaighat ?

(c) If not, are Government aware that the general public has got no free access into the said Tahsil Office building for purchasing cloth ?

(d) Do Government propose to grant the said agency to some *bonafide* cloth merchant of Kanaighat Bazar for the benefit of the public ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

79. (a) & (b)—The lists received from Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, are laid on the Library table.

80. (a)—Yes, generally.

(b)—Yes, in places where there are no suitable permanent shop-keeper.

(c)—They sell Kerosene under the supervision of panchayats, village defence committees, etc. Their accounts are inspected by officers on tour who also make enquiries on their general conduct. Prompt action is taken on specific complaints.

(d)—With reduced supply no other arrangement is possible.

81. (a)—For the convenience of poor people of Kanaighat circle some standard cloth is sent to Sub-Deputy Collector, Kanaighat for sale to such people.

(b)—(i) under orders of the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, (ii) it is solely for the benefit of the poorer people who cannot afford to come to Sylhet.

(c)—Public have as much access to it as to the circle office but any and everybody cannot get the cloth as it is primarily intended for the poorer people only.

(d)—No, this will lead to corruption as the shop-keeper may sell the standard cloth as his own more costly stock.

Post of Mah-Sardarship in North Lakhimpur Sub-division

Srijut KARKA DALAY MIRI asked :

82. (a) Is it a fact that the post of Mah-Sardarship fell vacant in North Lakhimpur Sub-division in the year 1942 ?

(b) If so, who was the person appointed ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether there was any applicant from Miri community ?

(d) If so, will Government be pleased to state whether the authorities considered the cases of the Miri applicants ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

82. (a)—(d)—The information has been called for from the local officers and will be supplied to the hon. Member on receipt.

Shortage of iron and weaving yarn

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked :

83. (a) Are Government aware that there has been a great shortage of iron and weaving yarn for which cultivators in the Province are undergoing great hardships ?

(b) Do Government propose to make necessary arrangements early to make iron and weaving yarn available to the cultivators ?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA replied :

83. (a)—(1) *Shortage of iron and steel.*—Government are aware that there is a shortage of iron ; no case of hardship on the part of cultivators has, however, been brought to the notice of Government.

(2) *Shortage of weaving yarn.*—Yes.

(b)—(1) *Shortage of iron and steel.*—If enquiry, which Government propose to make, reveals that hardship exists, Government will take up the matter with the Government of India who have issued orders for the Control of Steel distribution under the Defence of India Rules, so that local stock holders' difficulty in obtaining permissible supplies of steel, if any, may be removed.

(2) *Shortage of weaving yarn.*—Yes. The Government of India for some months past have had under consideration a scheme for controlling the distribution of Cotton yarn from the producing mills to the various provinces with the purpose of equitably meeting the needs of the handloom weavers. This scheme, when it is given effect to, will go a long way towards solving the difficulties arising from the shortage of yarn. Meanwhile the Officers of the Weaving Department are trying to make arrangements for the purchase of yarn direct from mill agents and its supply to the weavers through the Government Emporium and Central Stores, Gauhati.

Settlement of Chapari land in Mangaldai with local Assamese people

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED asked :

84. (a) Is it a fact that the plot of Chapari land on the southern side of Mangaldai Town, *i.e.*, Mangaldai village No. 2 measuring about 246 Bighas 3 Kathas and 3 Lessas was declared town land under notification No.2591-R., dated the 28th August 1935 ?

(b) Is it a fact that with a view to provide the local Assamese people with town land, the aforesaid Chapari land was declared as town land ?

(c) Is it a fact that the aforesaid land has been ordered to be sold in public auction by the Deputy Commissioner, Darrang under order No. 114, dated 11th January 1943 ?

(d) Are Government aware that almost the entire land of Mangaldai town is in possession of non-Assamese people ?

(e) Is it a fact that the original proposal was to settle with the local Assamese people the land from the aforesaid proposed town area on realisation of reasonable premium to be fixed by Government ?

(f) Do Government propose to settle the said land with the local Assamese people on realisation of premium ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

84. (a) to (f) — Information has been called for from the local officers but has not yet been received and will be supplied to the hon. Member on receipt.

Reservation of land in Naoboicha Mouza

Srijut KARKA DALAY MIRI asked :

85. (a) Is it a fact that the local Tribal Member, of the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Miris of the Ranganodi Circle in Naoboicha Mouza, North Lakhimpur Sub-division submitted a representation in the year 1941 to reserve some portions of the land which is now settled with the immigrants in Naoboicha Mouza ?

(b) Is it a fact that the Hon'ble Premier on that representation gave an order to reserve some portions of land towards the east of the Guorakatajan for the Miris ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Local authorities have taken any action according to the Hon'ble Premier's order ?

(d) If so, what is that ?

(e) If not, do Government propose to take immediate steps in the matter ?

(f) Will Government be pleased to state how many families of immigrants have now settled in the areas towards the east of the Guorakatajan and whether the local authorities have now issued pattas in their names ?

86.(a) Is it a fact that the present immigrant Block is only one-fourth mile from Garhachigu Miri village ?

(b) Are Government aware that the Miris of some villages of Rangnodi Circle in Naoboicha Mouza often get trouble from the immigrants ?

(c) If so, what steps have been or are being taken in the matter ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

85.(a)—Yes.

(b)—Yes.

(c) to (f) and 86 (a) to (c)—Information has been called for from the local officers but has not yet been received, it will be supplied to the hon. Member on receipt.

Number of Madrasas and Title Course Classes in the Province

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked :

87. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The total number of Madrasas, Junior and High Madrasas, Senior Madrasas and Title Course classes in the Province ?

(b) The number of students reading in these Madrasas ?

(c) The number of Tols in the Province ?

(d) The number of students reading in these Tols ?

(e) The number of Sanskrit Colleges in the Province ?

(f) The number of students reading in those Sanskrit Colleges ?

(g) Whether there are any Islamic Intermediate Colleges in the Province ?

(h) The number of students reading in such Intermediate Colleges ?

(i) If the reply to (g) above is in the negative, do Government propose to take immediate steps to start an Islamic Intermediate College in the Province or to encourage any such private venture ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

87. (a)—Madrasas	...	...	...	...	192
Junior Madrasas	...	...	...	...	176
High Madrasas	...	...	...	...	7
Senior Madrasas	...	...	...	...	8
Title class	...	...	...	...	1
(b)—12,100.					
(c)—202.					
(d)—3,030.					
(e)—2.					

(f)—37.

(g)—No.

(h)—Does not arise.

(i)—The question will be considered in the proposed Muslim Educational Conference.

Adjournment motion re failure of Government to take action against persons responsible for assaults on political prisoners in Jorhat Jail

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I have got a notice of an adjournment Motion from Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to take leave of the House to move for an adjournment of the House to-day. The Motion reads thus :

"That this House do now adjourn to consider a definite matter of urgent public importance of recent occurrence namely, failure of Government to take any action up till now against persons responsible for the inhuman assaults on political prisoners in Jorhat Jail on the evening of 24th February 1943."

Sir, this incident took place on the 24th February 1943 and I drew the attention of the House to the matter on the 8th March, that is on the first day of the present session.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : On a point of order, Sir. The matter was brought before the House, but on the assurance of the Hon'ble Premier the matter had to be dropped, mainly on the consideration that the matter was *sub-judice*. How does it come up again ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : On the assurance given by the Hon'ble Premier the adjournment Motion was not pressed. It was not on the ground that the matter was *sub-judice*. But if it was *sub-judice*, then I do not know whether the matter is still *sub-judice*.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : When I brought this matter before the House on the 8th of March, it was said that a judicial inquiry was going on into the matter. But since then I have made enquiries and I am satisfied that there was no judicial inquiry into this case under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code. The Deputy Commissioner himself told the lawyers who wanted to attend this case that this enquiry was not made under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, but that he was making an investigation under certain rule of the Jail Manual. That rule says that whenever there is any disturbance in the Jail, the Superintendent of the Jail shall ask the District Magistrate to hold an enquiry into the cause of the disturbance and the conduct of the officials concerned, and the Magistrate's report will be sent to the Inspector General of Prisons. So the enquiry which was held by the Deputy Commissioner was not at all a judicial inquiry and the matter is not at all *sub-judice*.

Sir, it has also transpired during the enquiry that no house was set on fire at all ; there was not an iota of evidence produced to show that any of the political prisoners attempted to set fire to any house in the jail compound. It was also clear from the enquiry that the assault did not take place outside the barracks ; the assault took place inside the sleeping barracks and also inside the dining hall where some prisoners were actually taking food. On the following morning, the Deputy Commissioner accompanied by Mr. Gopinath Bardoloi and Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed who were

also prisoners in that jail, visited the dining hall and marks of blood could be seen on the floor of the dining hall. The attack was deliberate. The non-political prisoners who were serving food were asked to go out of the barrack, and after they had come out, the political prisoners were attacked. No non-political prisoners were attacked. The attack was therefore deliberately directed against political prisoners only. What appeared from the enquiry was that some cut bamboos were kept inside the jail gate on the morning of the day of occurrence or on the previous day. These *lathis* were used in assaulting the political prisoners. No information was given of the assault either to the Deputy Commissioner or to the Superintendent of Police. The Deputy Commissioner or the Superintendent of Police did not know anything about the incident till the next morning. The Superintendent of the Jail was informed about 2½ hours after the occurrence had taken place and all this, in spite of the fact that there was telephonic connection between the Jail and the quarters of the officers.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of information, Sir. The hon. Mover is giving so much information. May I know what is the reason for this assault?

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: As far as I could gather, the reason for this assault was this: there was a large number of political prisoners in the Jorhat jail and the jail authorities could not provide bedding etc., for them.....

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: On a point of order, Sir, is the hon. Mover in order in giving all these details in moving his adjournment Motion?

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Please do not get impatient.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It would be better for the hon. Mover to briefly state the facts.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I am coming to the point. There was dearth of clothings, utensils and beddings. The mid-day meal used to be given to these prisoners sometimes at 3 o'clock and sometimes at 3-30 P.M. and the night meal between 10 and 11 P.M. During the winter there were not sufficient blanket. According to rules three blankets had to be provided for each. But this could not be done. So there was constant friction between the jail staff and these prisoners. The prisoners used to find fault with the warders. There was friction between the two. There were two or three instances of hunger strike. All the hunger strikes ended on the assurance given by the Jail authorities that they would supply all their wants, but, Sir, these were never complied with.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member is proceeding in a way as if he is arguing

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: No, Sir, I am merely giving the information.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It will simply do if the hon. Member says that the political prisoners had their grievances which were not redressed and they were persistent in having them redressed.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Very well, Sir. There was a talk among the Jail Officials that these prisoners would be given a lesson; so this particular day was chosen. Then, Sir, I would like to state what happened at night. 151 prisoners were injured but no first aid was given to all these injured prisoners. At first the number of injured persons was roughly calculated as 181 but when the calculation was properly made, it was found that the number was 151. This correction was made by Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. Now, Sir, the

Jail staff did not give any first aid to these injured prisoners. The Superintendent ought to have requisitioned the services of the doctors from the civil dispensaries of which he was in charge but he did not inform any body with the result that nearly 100 or more than 100 prisoners remained unattended during the night. Their screams and cries were heard from the other barracks. There were several cases of broken heads and dislocation and fracture of bones, etc. This incident took place on the 24th February, i. e., more than a month from now. I brought this matter to the notice of the House on the 8th of March but till to-day what is the position, Sir? The assailants and their abettors are in charge of these wounded prisoners against whom they had made this murderous attack. Is it not a failure or an indifference on the part of Government not to take any action against those persons who had committed these brutal acts?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, that will do.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is absolutely no justification for any adjournment Motion of the nature which has been tabled by my Friend just now. He has not also in any way been able to substantiate the charge which he has levelled against the Government. This matter was discussed on the 8th of March when I told the House that the Deputy Commissioner mentioned in many telegrams that he was holding a judicial inquiry into the matter. When I pressed him for details, he said that he was still recording the evidence and if an incomplete report was wanted he could send it. I told him to expedite the matter and send a complete report but up till now no report has been received either by me or by the Secretariat. My Friend Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri said that this report had already been despatched by the Deputy Commissioner on the 23rd of this month. I thought, Sir, that this report would in the normal course come through the Commissioner and so I asked the Chief Secretary immediately, as I mentioned yesterday, to have telephonic conversation with the Commissioner to find out whether the report is with him. The result of this telephonic conversation revealed the fact that the Commissioner Mr. Gunning is now at Calcutta for the purpose of medical treatment. The Commissioner's office also could not inform the Chief Secretary whether they have received the report. When I made this statement yesterday, Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri pointed out that he had learnt from the Deputy Commissioner that this inquiry was made under certain provision of the Jail Manual and therefore the report should come through the Inspector General of Prisons. So, I again asked the Chief Secretary to inquire from the Inspector General of Prisons whether he received the report and just now Mr. Dennehy has sent me information that neither he has received the report nor the Inspector General has received it yet.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I interrupt, Sir? I asked the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Humphrey whether the inquiry was over and he told me that he had given the report for typing and that it would be posted on the next day, i. e., on 22nd March.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, as soon as it was revealed by Mr. Chaudhuri that the report had been finished and it had already been submitted by the Deputy Commissioner, I took every possible action to get hold of a copy of that report so that I could lay it or portions before the House. So, Sir, it is clear that I took all possible steps in order to get the report and then come to a decision. My hon. Friend wants to forestall judgment. He had the advantage of interviewing Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi in the Jorhat Jail. This concession, I gave to my hon. Friend in spite of Government of India's strict injunction

that security prisoners cannot have any interview except with their own family members. He has given me certain facts which he has collected at Jorhat. In short he held a non-official enquiry which I foresaw when I replied to his telegram early this month.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: On a point of personal explanation, Sir.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am not giving way.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: There is no personal explanation.

My hon. Friend has spoken in a manner as if he was an eye witness to the occurrence which took place on the 24th. He has said that sticks were collected previously in the Jail gates; this fact clearly shows that he must have made the inquiry from somebody else because Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi cannot come out to the Jail gate. So, I will not be far out of the mark if I say that on a plea for an interview with one of our colleagues he did hold some sort of inquiry. The concession which I allowed him enabled Mr. Chaudhuri to make an unofficial inquiry, the result of which he has placed before this House already.

If I fail to come to a decision after receipt of report, if I find that the Deputy Commissioner by reliable evidence has found certain jail officers guilty but still I fail to punish them, then alone this adjournment Motion would be relevant. At the present moment without any facts before the Government to come to a decision, it is improper to censure by an adjournment Motion.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very much surprised and sorry to find the Hon'ble Prime Minister speaking on mere surmises. I did not hear anything from Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi about the jail incident. The restriction imposed on me was that we could not discuss anything except family affairs; that the interview was to take place in the presence of either the Superintendent or the Deputy Commissioner and to be conducted in English. I think, the Hon'ble Premier is not at all correct in saying that I got these facts from Mr. Bardoloi.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Premier never said that. He said that these facts were collected from outside, that the hon. Member taking the opportunity of interviewing Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi went to Jorhat and made a non-official inquiry there. That is the substance of what he said.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: What is the wrong in that?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Nothing.

Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: I want to know what is the reply of the Hon'ble Premier to the charge that the inquiry was not a judicial one?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have not got the report of the Deputy Commissioner as yet. I read out to the House all the telegrams that were received from him; in every telegram, Sir, he used the words "judicial enquiry".

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: The substratum of my Motion is the failure of Government to take any action within such a length of time. More than a month has elapsed since the incident had taken place, and never in the history of Assam had such an outrageous incident taken place before. These people were assaulted inside the jail

of which Government is in charge ; no one came from outside and it is the jail authorities who are responsible for this assault, it does not matter whether they were assaulted by this warder or that warder, or this person or that person. The point is that these prisoners were in the custody of Government and Government are certainly responsible for their safety. Up till now not only has no action been taken, the assailants are still in-charge of the prisoners. Can you imagine a more astounding position where the persons assaulted are kept in-charge of the assailants ? The assailants have neither been punished nor removed from that place. Is it not a failure on the part of Government ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Granting all these, I would say that the hon. Member the other day postponed the matter on the assurance given by the Hon'ble Premier that an enquiry had been going on, the results of which would be placed before the House. Now, the enquiry has been made and a report would come to Government in due course. The Hon'ble Premier said that he tried his best to get hold of the report, but has not got it up till now ; and therefore he is not in a position to do anything now. The Hon'ble Premier has given reasons why he has not been able up till now to place the report before the House, and it is for the hon. Members to consider whether Government deserve any censure for that failure.

Srijat ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : I am afraid, I have not been able to make myself quite clear. My question is this : firstly, do Government admit that so many political prisoners were assaulted ; secondly, by whom were they assaulted—were they assaulted by persons not connected with the jail, i.e., outsiders who might have got entry into the jail compound, and if so, did the jail authorities know anything about those assailants ?

Sir, it cannot be denied that the political prisoners were assaulted ; it cannot be denied that they were assaulted by some persons belonging to the jail staff ; it cannot also be denied that this incident was known to the jail authorities. If all these facts are admitted, and it is also admitted that no action has up till now been taken against the jail authorities, are these facts not sufficient condemnation of the Government ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Before taking action Government are having an enquiry made ; that is the point the Hon'ble Premier stressed.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : All those questions that my learned Friend has put are questions of fact. My hon. Friend has collected certain facts, and I am trying to get the facts from the Deputy Commissioner who is supposed to make a judicial enquiry. Whether the enquiry is judicial or one under the Jail Department Manual, Government up till now have not received any report about the facts which my hon. Friend alleged. He wants Government to punish certain persons without ascertaining the facts. I leave it to the fair sense of the House whether Government should be censured for this failure. I have done my best to get the report ; I had asked for this Secretary to obtain the report from the Commissioner by telephonic message which revealed that the Commissioner was out of the station. His office could not say anything about that report. What more could I do ? I have done my level best. As I have said, if the report reveals that the jail staff is guilty, they will certainly be punished ; till then my hon. Friend has got to wait.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: What assurance the Hon'ble Prime Minister can give about the safety and better treatment of these prisoners in the meantime?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Up till now there have been no further complaints. I do not think the jail-staff will dare to do anything when the Deputy Commissioner is there and he has made a thorough enquiry.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of information. In view of the fact that the Hon'ble Prime Minister gave us an assurance that after the enquiry was made the report would be placed before the House, I want to know whether the purport of that assurance was sent in some form or other to the enquiring officer that the Government wanted the report in sufficient time early to be placed before this House. I find that whatever has been done by the Hon'ble Prime Minister has been done recently. May I know, after the adjournment Motion was moved whether Government took necessary steps to obtain the report in time for presentation before the House?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The Deputy Commissioner was asked to expedite his enquiry. He was not told that this was required for the purpose of placing the report before the House, but he was asked to expedite the enquiry and send the report immediately after the enquiry had been finished.

Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: As a result of this unfortunate incident there must have been created some sort of ill-feeling between the prisoners and the jail-staff. Is it not therefore desirable to transfer the staff pending the enquiry?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I don't think that steps should be taken without seeing the report.

Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: Not as a matter of punishment, but as a matter of expediency so that there may not be recurrence of such incidents in future.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am afraid, it will mean the wholesale transfer of everybody there, from the jailor down to the warder. Moreover, even if we transfer them on the ground of expediency, it will be tantamount to transferring them as a punishment; that step I do not want to take without looking into the report of the Deputy Commissioner.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: In view of the fact that the Hon'ble Prime Minister had kindly agreed to place the report before the hon. Members, if received in time, will the Hon'ble Prime Minister kindly consider sending copies of the report to each hon. Member?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The reports are generally treated as confidential documents, and are not published. But in view of the very serious nature of the charge, I propose to lay the report or portions thereof before the House where Members have got some rights and privileges which the public outside have not got. Therefore I do not propose to issue the report, even to hon. Members outside this House.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: I was not suggesting to issue it to the public, but to the hon. Members of this House.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am prepared to lay the report before the House, but not to send copies to the respective homes of the hon. Members.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Will Government please publish the report as soon as it is received ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I cannot say anything without seeing the report.

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Will any communique be issued on it ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Probably, a press note will be issued.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Will Government please expedite the matter and get the report as quickly as possible ?

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, is it in order for Minister of this Government to be cross examined in this way on an adjournment Motion ?

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: This is not cross examination.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: This cannot be called cross examination. The hon. Member is trying to get as much information as possible to satisfy himself.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: This is a very important matter and therefore as soon as the report is received by the Chief Secretary, I will take it into consideration.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: In the circumstances in which I am placed, I cannot but agree not to press this Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member does not press his Motion for leave. Therefore, it is not necessary for me to give a ruling whether the Motion is in order or not.

Presentation of the authenticated Schedule of authorised expenditure for the year 1943-44.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: I beg to present the authenticated Schedule * of authorised expenditure for the year 1943-44.

Presentation of the authenticated Schedule of authorised expenditure in relation to Supplementary Demands for Grants for the year 1942-43.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: I beg to present the authenticated Schedule * of authorised expenditure in relation to Supplementary Demands for Grants for the year 1942-43.

The Assam Court of Wards (Delegation of Powers) Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The next item is, consideration of the Assam Court of Wards (Delegation of Powers) Bill, 1943, clause by clause. There is no amendment. Is it not so ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Yes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then the Hon'ble Minister may at once move that the Bill be passed.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Assam Court of Wards (Delegation of Powers) Bill, 1943, be passed.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved is that the Assam Court of Wards (Delegation of Powers) Bill, 1943 be passed.

(After a pause)

Then I am putting the question. The question is :
"That the Assam Court of Wards (Delegation of Powers) Bill, 1943 be passed.

(After a pause)

The question was adopted.

*See Appendices E and F.

The Assam Debt Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 1942

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then we take up consideration of the Assam Debt Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 1942, clause by clause.

There is no amendment to the Bill. The Hon'ble Minister may at once move that the Bill be passed.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Assam Debt Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 1942 be passed.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved is that the Assam Debt Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 1942 be passed.

(After a pause)

Then I am putting the question. The question is:

"That the Assam Debt Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 1942 be passed.

(After a pause)

The question was adopted.

The Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The next item is No. 5A. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla to move for leave to introduce the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have already written to His Excellency to send his recommendation, but I have not yet received the same. This subject requires his previous consent.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: So I shall take up other items. Item No. 6.

Government Motion re Agricultural Marketing Scheme

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House approves that the term of the Agricultural Marketing Scheme, which will expire on the 31st March 1943, be extended till the end of the year 1943-44".

Sir, the Marketing Scheme of the Agricultural Department was inaugurated with the financial assistance of the Government of India. In 1935 the Government of India sanctioned a sum of Rs. 2 lakhs for the development of the Marketing in the different provinces of India and the allotment to this Province was Rs. 50,000. That sum was to be spent over a period of 5 years and that term expired on the 31st January 1940. The Retrenchment Committee of 1937 recommended that the life of the Scheme should not be extended beyond that date without taking the previous approval of the Legislature and in accordance with that recommendation approval of the Legislature was obtained every year since 1940. The hon. Members of this House approved the extension of the life of this Scheme till 31st March 1943 and as the Government now proposes to extend it till the end of the financial year 1943-44, this Motion has been brought before the House.

Sir, I shall briefly narrate some of the works done by this Department during the year 1942. It may be summed up thus:—

- (1) Regular marketing surveys for eight commodities were undertaken and considerable progress was made.
- (2) Fruits worth Rs. 5,078 were disposed of through the Fruit Marketing Scheme in Calcutta up to 31st December 1942.
- (3) Arrangements were made for the starting of four grading stations for oranges and eggs by 31st December 1942. Eggs worth

- about Rs. 4,000 were graded under the Agmark Scheme up to 31st December 1942.
- (4) From information obtained from traders who had been induced by the Marketing Section to deal in Agmark commodities it is found that during the calendar year 1942 Agmark ghee, *ata* and mustard oil worth approximately Rs.73,000 were sold in Assam markets.
 - (5) Large quantities of foodstuffs were supplied to deficit areas, *viz.*, potatoes worth Rs.55,000 were supplied to the Lakhimpur district and chicken and eggs were supplied through traders to Digboi.
 - (6) Seeds approximately worth Rs.2,38,000 (including freights) for the Grow More Food Campaign were purchased and distributed to the circles of the different Deputy Directors.
 - (7) The information in the possession of Marketing Section was of considerable help to the Government and the Military purchase officers.
 - (8) The Marketing Section made its contribution to the war efforts in various ways, in such directions as price control, requisitioning supplies, collection and supply of information of economic importance, etc.

I hope, the hon. Members, in view of the fact that this Scheme has done quite useful work for the Province, will fully realise the necessity of its further extension and I appeal to them to accept this Motion of the Government.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved is that this House approves that the term of Agricultural Marketing Scheme, which will expire on the 31st March 1943, be extended till the end of the year 1943-44.

Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in spite of the rosy picture which has been presented by the Hon'ble Minister to this House about the Marketing Scheme, we people outside this House have heard nothing of the work or seen any evidence except once when we saw a pineapple presented to the Hon'ble Premier as a result of the Marketing Scheme of this Province..... (Laughter).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: That was about 5 or 6 years ago.

Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: A huge pineapple was shown in this House but not in the market. Sir, since the Supply Department has been opened under this Government which is dealing with all foodstuffs we do not find any necessity of this Scheme to deal with the agricultural produce at the present moment.

Again, so far as the market outside the Province is concerned, the wheel of affairs has changed otherwise and we want to retain the agricultural produce within the borders of our Province. We do not want to have a market outside the Province, say at Calcutta or elsewhere. Even within the Province the agricultural produces are sold at such a high price that we do not want that our officers should go out of the Province to create a market. In the circumstances, there is no utility whatever for retaining this Section after the opening of the Supply Department. I appeal to the Members of this House not to support this Scheme and to put an end to this Scheme under the present circumstances. With these words, Sir, I oppose this Motion.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, during the last Budget session we heard from the Hon'ble Prime Minister that he came late before the House with the Scheme because the Constitution was under suspension and practically more than half of the year was over and he assured that he would see whether there was any necessity for the Scheme

being continued in the next year and whether Government of India sanction adequate amount for the continuance of this Scheme and in case he was not satisfied as to the utility of the Scheme, he would not come before the House in future.

Sir, so far as the duties of the Marketing Section are concerned he gave us a list. I have got that list with me. They were from (a) to (k).

(a) Furnishing information on marketing questions to interested officers and private parties.

(b) Securing facilities from transport agencies for the movement of agricultural commodities at concessional rates.

Sir, I think, it will be better if I read and criticise the items one by one with what I have got to say against all these.

Sir, so far as (a) is concerned, as it has already been said by my hon. Friend Mr. Dakshina Ranjan Gupta Chaudhuri that at present the conditions are such that we need not employ any officer or engage any staff for the marketing purposes because it is better for us if our produces are kept inside the Province not only for our use but for others who have for some reasons or others come to this Province and who can use even the 'costly' pineapple or oranges in the Province.

As regards (b), I mean, Sir, regarding transport facilities, I think, and the Hon'ble Prime Minister will also admit that not to speak of these marketing officers, even the Hon'ble Prime Minister himself feels the difficulty in arranging waggons for importing the most essential commodities of our life.

Sir, as regards (c), improving packing of perishable commodities particularly fruits, he gave us an example that wrapping of fruits by paper might save other fruits being rotten though there may be one or two such rotten fruits. Sir, this is well-known to us by this, time of course. But I do not think that anything else has been done in this direction. At least nothing has been mentioned by Government that they have made any improvement of any other kind of this nature.

As regards (d), Sir, exploring new market for agricultural commodities, the argument that I have advanced in the case of (a) stands good here also.

As regards (e), collecting information about prices, Sir, what is the good of collecting information about prices from outside if it is not possible for us to send these goods outside the Province and moreover, as I have stated that there is no necessity at present of sending these goods to outside.

Then, Sir, as regards (f), conducting marketing surveys for the Government of India, whether there is any necessity or not in this direction it is the Government of India to say. If they think so, I think, they must bear the cost of the Scheme and we should not pay anything.

As regards (g) organizing better marketing of agricultural commodities, my arguments advanced in the case of (a) and (d) may be equally applicable in this case also.

Then (h), planning production according to market requirements. Sir, as I have already said, that at present, there is no necessity of making any such plan separately because there is another Department i.e., the Grow More Food Campaign about which we have heard so much and expect so much. When there will be a separate Department for which an amount of Rs.16 lacs will be spent, I hope, there will be some proper organisation, and so far as this point is concerned, it may easily and well be done by that Department.

Then, Sir, (j), grading of agricultural produce. The hon. Members can well understand whether there is any necessity for maintaining any department for this purpose.

Then, Sir, (k), adoption of measures for the passing of Acts calculated to improve the marketing of agricultural commodities. The other day an hon. Member of the European Group brought in this point by a cut Motion before this House as to what Government had done in this direction. Sir, now it is for Government to show after all these points have been discussed whether there is any necessity or justification for maintaining such a department.

Now, Sir, as regards the financial side, it will be found from the Budget that the money that is required under this Scheme is gradually increasing and moreover last year we heard and it was shown in the Budget also that our Government received Rs.9 lakhs from the India Government to this account. But this year, Sir, very conveniently 8 to 9 heads of expenditure have been shown and after that a bracket has been put and a lump sum shown and it is very difficult for us to know how much we are getting from the Central Government for this Scheme. Moreover, this Marketing Scheme may well be termed as a 'bluffing scheme'. Sir, relying on the reports of this Section, what blunder our Hon'ble Prime Minister committed in declaring that our Province is a surplus Province so far as rice is concerned is known to all. Sir, this Department was originally meant for 5 years that expired on the 31st of March, 1942 and another year's extension was asked for by the Government for special circumstances. But, Sir, nothing has been shown to justify its continuance and I think, that the Government will drop this Scheme and save some money which may be conveniently used for other beneficial purposes.

With these words, Sir, I oppose the Motion.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I like to speak a few words regarding this Motion. I think, the services of the Marketing Officers are necessary for our Province for trade purposes and also for encouraging the growth of foodstuffs and fruits. There are fruits, e.g., oranges and pineapples which cannot be consumed in the Province because mass people cannot fully use them. For the encouragement of cotton cultivation also, I think, the services of this Marketing Section is necessary. Of course, the services rendered by the officer in charge to carry out the Scheme may not be satisfactory just at the moment but for this very reason I don't think we should drop this Scheme. We should rather encourage it by giving some time say another one year. I think, Rev. Nichols-Roy will be a great loser if he is precluded from selling his fruits outside the Province and there are many other reasons I will not mention here. I think, the Scheme should be extended for at least a year more.

With these few words I support the Motion.

Mr. F.W. BLENNERHASSETT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, all that has been said on this subject leads me to add my support to the Hon'ble Minister who moved for the extension of the Marketing Section. It has become quite obvious that the Marketing Section itself has at least two functions to perform. Those two functions—those two main functions—may roughly be stated to be ; encouragement of producers to produce more, and a greater variety of food and fruits ; and secondly to give producers of food and fruits guidance, advice and supervision in methods of marketing and, moreover, the discovery of new markets. Sir, the phrase 'new market' leads me to the confession that I have to agree in some measure with what Mr. Dakshina Ranjan Gupta Chaudhuri has just said. We indeed have a new market within our borders. Undoubtedly, we have it, Sir, and those consumers can consume as much as we can give them but, Sir, I would say in that regard that much money has been spent hitherto on the Marketing Scheme, and there is no doubt from what the Hon'ble Minister has just now said, the efforts of the marketing officer have met with a great amount of success. Now, Sir, if we are to

confine the production of our foodstuffs to meet only those requirements within the borders of our Province we should clearly have no balance left for our export, in other words such markets as have been built up through the efforts of the Marketing Board, for the duration of the war or as long as the proposal lasts, goes by the Board. Contacts with markets outside the province will be lost. Sir, you cannot make contacts, then drop them, and then pick them up again at will. If a contact is to be preserved it has got to be consistently preserved. For that reason I would like to suggest that Mr. Chaudhuri's advice is not wholly sound. May I suggest, Sir, that we should support not the curtailment but the encouragement of this Marketing Scheme in order that the cultivators may be encouraged to grow more and more, that the markets for their produce within the Province may be pointed out and also that a balance for export may be left over for contacts outside. May I remind the House that even in England at the present time though practically all the commodities which are used for human consumption within the borders of England are rationed she is nevertheless exporting commodities which are rationed inside her borders in order to keep contacts with markets which she has so ardently earned after many years of struggle? Our position is rather the same as that, Sir.

***Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY:** Sir, the Motion of the Hon'ble Minister is that the Marketing Section be continued by another year. We do not know what this will bring. But we know from past experience that the Marketing Section has been a great help to the cultivators. It is the duty of Government to see that the things produced in Assam should get a good market. There are many kinds of products in Assam all of which cannot be consumed here. So, the first intention of this Marketing Scheme is to find out markets for the fruits and other products which are produced in Assam and all of which are not consumed within the Province, for example, pineapple, oranges, etc. I may mention to the hon. Members who probably do not know that millions of these fruits have been wasted simply because there is not enough export outside. I speak this from my personal experience, and I know of experiences of many cultivators who lose a great deal because of the want of facility to export their produce outside Assam. It is owing to the fact that there was not enough market in Calcutta—last year especially on account of lack of transport. The Marketing Scheme should do all that is possible to be done to export all this produce to the markets outside Assam. The Marketing Scheme, Sir, is defective at the present moment. It needs a wider scope to get more markets than the only market in Calcutta, and for that our officers need more experience so that our products can go to many markets in Bengal—I mean whole of Bengal—which do not get much of our produce. If the Marketing Scheme will extend its operation which I hope they will do in future, that will be a great blessing to Assam. We must consider from the standpoint of the cultivators. They produce so many things in Assam that all of which cannot be consumed in the Province. One hon. Member has said that Assam should not lose contact with the markets outside the Province, and once the contact is lost it will be difficult to establish it again. Every province has a Scheme. The people whose oranges come from Nagpur to Calcutta compete with the growers of Assam oranges, because the Scheme of that Province is very perfect. They send their oranges straight to Calcutta, while we here undergo lots of difficulties and troubles. So, the Marketing Scheme is very necessary at the present time in order to help the cultivators. Sir, thousands of pineapples are produced both in the Assam Valley and in the Surma Valley and as all of them are not consumed in the locality they need export facilities. If we want to have the Grow-More-Food Campaign successful we must try to

*Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.

get a market also outside the Province. Just the other day a man came to me saying "Will you buy tomato at Rs. 2 per maund? I cannot sell it anywhere as the price has gone down". As a result of the Grow-More-Food Campaign I think, the price has gone down to an extent of Rs.2 per maund which we never heard of before.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Does the hon. Member want that it should be sold at Rs. 2 per seer?

***Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY**: My hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee speaks from the stand point of the consumers. He wants to give the cultivators one pice for a seer of tomato and he does not like that the producer should get some benefit. Only he wants to enjoy the food.

So, Sir, it is very necessary that certain things which are grown in Assam should be exported outside. We must think about the cultivators and if they get some profit out of the produce they grow, it will be a great blessing to the country and that is the goose that lays golden eggs. If the cultivators do not get the price for the produce they grow they would no more grow and the consequence will be that we will have to pay much high rate for the food-stuffs that will have to come from outside the Province. Therefore, Sir, I believe the Marketing Scheme is very necessary for Assam, especially in abnormal time and there should be contact with the markets outside the Province. We do not know how long the war will continue. But at any rate there is still a necessity of exporting our products outside Assam, and the Marketing Scheme will thus help the cultivators. It may be defective for the present, but it shall have to be made proper by experience. It is the duty of Government to see that the officers under the Scheme will get into touch with every market and not with the market of Calcutta alone. I, therefore, support the Motion moved by the Hon'ble Minister.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Sir, I may say that the activities of the Marketing Department were condemned by the Government itself when they chose to appoint Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Company to purchase articles in Calcutta market and also when they appointed Steel Brothers to distribute articles within the Province. We hear, Sir, that more agents are going to be appointed for distributing articles within the Province and in the face of all these I do not think there is any necessity for this Marketing Department at all at the present moment. I quite realise, Sir, that it is really necessary that there should be a Marketing Department but then it must be a real Marketing Department and not the sort of thing now going on. After these 6 years of activities the officers of this Department are not found competent to get in touch with Calcutta merchants for purchase of articles there. If that is so, what is the necessity of continuing this Department any more? So I say that the activities of this Department have sufficiently been condemned by the Government itself when they had to appoint Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Company and Steel Brothers. If we are to have any Wallace and Department at all let it take up the whole task of purchase and distribution. Let it be a real Marketing Department, otherwise there should be none at all.

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the achievements of the Marketing Section may not appear very outstanding on paper, but, Sir, it is to be noted that the year 1942 was a very difficult one and the staff of the Marketing Section was very small. Moreover, Sir, marketing investigations which form the basis of all future development require

*The Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.

a considerable time, and it would be wrong to say that we can develop a well-organised marketing for the Province without first obtaining the information regarding the local conditions in the different places of the Province. Therefore, Sir, any money that is spent for this kind of research work should not be considered as wasted.

In regard to the actual development work, Sir, the Province has certainly made a beginning, and by judging the actual conditions under which the Scheme has to work, we may say that the beginning is quite satisfactory. Sir, the task of organising marketing is not an easy affair and it has not been so even in more advanced countries. We have, Sir, some measures, viz., the Standard Weights and Measures Bill and the Agricultural Produce Marketing Bill, that have been initiated by this Department, and these are under the consideration of the Government. When these measures will come into force the administration thereof will naturally fall on the Marketing Section of the Agriculture Department. Therefore, if this Scheme is abolished, all the works that were done in the past will be lost. I will read out to the hon. Members the tentative programme of this Section for 1943-44.

The Department will have to do marketing surveys for millets, castor seeds, table poultry, honey and bees wax, onion and garlic, European vegetables and pulses. With regard to marketing reports the Agricultural Marketing Officer has already submitted 31 marketing reports. Supplementary information in regard to these reports is required by the Agricultural Marketing Adviser from time to time in order to keep the All-India reports up to date and to compile new India reports. The Department will have to start grading stations for oranges, pine-apples, potatoes, etc., under the Agmark Scheme as far as existing conditions permit. The staff will help the fruit producers in disposing of their fruits in outside markets. The Calcutta fruit market scheme will be continued.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of information, Sir. May I know when these 31 reports were submitted? May I have the date of the submission of the last report?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: During the course of last five years.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: They were submitted long ago. Last year these 31 reports were mentioned and again we hear about these 31 reports.

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Supplementary information in regard to these reports is required by the Agricultural Marketing Adviser. The programme also consists of the preparation of a list of principal merchants and Commission Agents dealing in rice, paddy, potato, orange, pine-apple, mustard seed, vegetables both Indian and English. The staff supply information to the public and Government officials in matters relating to agricultural marketing. They prepare schemes for the organised marketing of agricultural produce and also have to help in Grow More Food Campaign.

Therefore, the Government thinks that they should continue this Scheme for another year till the end of the financial year 1943-44.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"That this House approves that the term of the Agricultural Marketing Scheme, which will expire on the 31st March, 1943, be extended till the end of the year 1943-44."

The Assembly divided.

AYES—35.

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|---|---|
| 1. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla. | 15. Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin. |
| 2. The Hon'ble Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta. | 16. Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed. |
| 3. The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali. | 17. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. |
| 4. The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty. | 18. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman. |
| 5. The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhuri. | 19. Maulavi Muzarrof Ali Laskar. |
| 6. The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia. | 20. Maulavi Namwar Ali Barbhuiya. |
| 7. The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. | 21. Shams-ul-Ulama Maulana Abu Nasr Md. Waheed. |
| 8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman. | 22. Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett. |
| 9. The Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn. | 23. Mr. E. H. S. Lewis. |
| 10. The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma. | 24. Mr. C. W. Morley. |
| 11. Srijut Joges Chandra Gohain. | 25. Mr. R. A. Palmer. |
| 12. Babu Kalachand Roy. | 26. Mr. P. Trinkle. |
| 13. Maulavi Abdur Rahman. | 27. Mr. A. Whittaker. |
| 14. Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahbab Chaudhury. | 28. Mr. Benjamin Ch. Momin. |
| | 29. Srijut Bhairab Chandra Das. |
| | 30. Srijut Bideshi Pan Tanti. |
| | 31. Mr. Binode Kumar J. Sarwan.. |
| | 32. Rev. L. Gatphoh. |
| | 33. Mr. C. Goldsmith. |
| | 34. Mr. Jobang D. Marak. |
| | 35. Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy. |

NOES—13.

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| 1. Babu Akshay Kumar Das. | 7. Babu Kamini Kumar Sen. |
| 2. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. | 8. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. |
| 3. Babu Balaram Sircar. | 9. Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin. |
| 4. Srijut Bepin Chandra Medhi. | 10. Babu Lalit Mohan Kar. |
| 5. Babu Dakshina Ranjan Gupta Chaudhuri. | 11. Babu Nirendra Nath Dev. |
| 6. Srijut Ghanashyam Das. | 12. Srijut Santosh Kumar Barua. |
| | 13. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mahmud Ali. |

The question was carried.

Statement re disposal of business

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir. Before the House rises up for lunch, will you please make a statement about the manner in which the business in the afternoon will be conducted?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Very well.

The next item that will be taken up would be item No. 7 *i.e.*, a resolution which stands in the name of the Hon'ble Premier. There is also an outstanding item, *i.e.*, the proposed Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill. This will be taken up after item No. 7 is disposed of. The last item about the economic situation of the Province will be taken up last of all. Now what I can guess from the way in which the business of the House is proceeding to-day, I am afraid, we shall have to sit late hours this afternoon. If item No. 7 be not a very contentious matter, then I think, within half an hour's time, we shall be able to finish that item. Now with regard to other matter, of course, some more time will be necessary. The Hon'ble Premier will take at-least 40 or 45 minutes. I also find that there are notices of amendments in the names of three hon. Members. They will also have to make speeches. I think, three hours will be necessary for the disposal of the last item ; if we can take it up say at 4 P.M., I think, we can finish it by 7 P.M., at least.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : Will the Hon'ble Premier reply to the discussion, Sir ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Yes, he will have a right of reply. He will initiate the debate and at the close of the debate, he will wind up by giving a reply.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned for lunch till 2 P.M.

After Lunch

Government Motion *re* : appointment of four Deputy Superintendents of Police.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House do approve the appointment of four Deputy Superintendents of Police (two by departmental promotion and two by direct recruitment in accordance with the usual ratio) at an estimated annual average cost of Rs. 16,731 (recurring) *plus* Rs. 3,400 (non-recurring) for the usual allowances for purchase and maintenance of uniform, horse and saddlery, etc. for the two direct recruits.

In the explanatory notes which have been placed on each hon. Member's table, I have tried to explain the necessity for bringing this Motion. I could very well have taken in four Deputy Superintendents of police without coming to the House for its vote if I thought it expedient, for under the normal conditions such matters of expansion do not come to the House. But there is a principle involved and that is why I have come with this Motion for the vote of the House. On account of war conditions, there has been no recruitment of European personnel for the Indian Police cadre serving in this Province ; officers are urgently required in the subdivisions. I therefore propose to take four more Deputy Superintendents who will be able for the time being to replace the recruits to the Indian Police Service and who will also be able to look after the requirements in the subdivisions where we have had no Deputy Superintendents so far.

The Motion also provides for a non-recurring expenditure of Rs. 3,400 for the purchase and maintenance of uniform, horse and saddlery, etc. for the two direct recruits. Hon. Members probably are aware that at one time we had stopped this allowance on the recommendation of the Retrenchment Committee. Later on it was pointed out to us with a certain degree of conviction that our police officers did suffer while they were under training at the Police Training College, Sarda, Bengal, because the Bengal officers

got all these things free whereas Assam officers had to buy them from the small salary they got at the beginning. We do not want to start our recruits with any handicap ; that is why this provision has been made.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That this House do approve the appointment of four Deputy Superintendents of Police (two by departmental promotion and two by direct recruitment in accordance with the usual ratio) at an estimated annual average cost of Rs. 16,731 (recurring) *plus* Rs.3,400 (non-recurring) for the usual allowances for purchase and maintenance of uniform, horse and saddlery, etc. for the two direct recruits."

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : May I know whether this arrangement is going to be a permanent one ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : How can it be permanent, Sir, when I say that this is necessitated on account of non-recruitment of European personnel in England during the continuance of the war ? The situation will be reviewed after the war.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I take it that no debate is going to take place on this Motion.

The question is :

"That this House do approve the appointment of four Deputy Superintendents of Police (two by departmental promotion and two by direct recruitment in accordance with the usual ratio) at an estimated annual average cost of Rs.16,731 (recurring) *plus* Rs.3,400 (non-recurring) for the usual allowances for purchase and maintenance of uniform, horse and saddlery, etc., for the two direct recruits."

The question was adopted.

THE ASSAM LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS (MEMBERS' EMOLUMENTS) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1943

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943.

The history of my present Motion is well known to the hon. Members of this House, for they carried a private Motion only three days back to the effect that the daily halting allowance of hon. Members be increased from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7-8-0. I promised then that I would be guided by the vote of the House. As the House carried that Motion I have brought forward this Amending Bill. But unless you, Sir, waive the normal procedure and allow me to introduce the Bill and also to have all the three readings passed to-day, it cannot be carried through during this Session.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Motion moved is that leave be granted to introduce the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I should like to raise two points of order before the Motion to introduce the Bill is made before the House. I should like to know, with reference to your own ruling, Sir, whether this being a controversial Bill should have been brought before this House. That it is a controversial Bill is quite clearly proved by the fact that only three days back we went into Division on a very similar Motion. Secondly, Sir, on a point of privilege as a private Member of this House I should like to know whether there are really substantial reasons why all these four Motions should be rushed through in one day.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I quite understand the point the hon. Member wants to stress, but he has chosen a wrong time. Let the Bill be introduced and then he may urge whether this Bill should be proceeded with or not. I do not think the hon. Member is opposing the Motion that leave be granted to introduce the Bill. If we are really following the well-known Parliamentary procedure there should not be any opposition to the Motion that leave be granted to introduce the Bill.

Now I am putting the question to the House. The question is that leave be granted to introduce the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943.

(After a pause)

The question was adopted.

(The Secretary then read out the Title of the Bill.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Before the Hon'ble Premier makes the next Motion, the hon. Members would notice that this Bill involves an expenditure from the revenues of the Province. So under sub-section 3 of section 82 of the Government of India Act a recommendation to the Chamber from His Excellency the Governor to consider the Bill is necessary and now I will read the message from His Excellency the Governor which runs thus :

"Under the provisions of sub-section 3 of section 82 of the Government of India Act, 1935, I, Andrew Gourelay Clow, hereby recommend to the Legislative Assembly the consideration of the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943.

SHILLONG,

The 27th March 1943.

A. G. CLOW,

Governor of Assam".

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Sir, I beg to move that the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943 be taken into consideration.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Does hon. Mr. Whittaker like to place his points of order ?

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : I should like to place the first point of order.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support what hon. Mr. Whittaker has already said. I think that there is no cause for introducing the Bill in this hasty manner. Even if it be a fact that.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : This may be said when the Motion is discussed. Now the hon. Member should confine himself to the point of order.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV : I am coming to the point of order. When most of the Members of this side are absent from this House a Bill of this character ought not to have been placed before the House for consideration. I am at one with Mr. Whittaker as to the point of order he has raised.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Now as regards the point raised I may remind hon. Mr. Whittaker of what I said on two previous occasions. I said that it was not my ruling—it was my advice to the hon. Members of the House that a contentious measure should not be brought forward in a

depleted House. It was the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Revenue during the last November Session advised the House not to proceed with the Goalpara Tenancy Bill, which was contentious, in a depleted House. I also said that it would be better not to proceed with any Bill, which was contentious in a depleted House. At the same time I told the House that if such a Bill, in spite of the advice given by the Hon'ble Minister and by me, be proceeded with, then my duty would be to see whether there was any proper and sufficient debate on any question in connection with the Bill before putting the question to the vote of the House. Mr. Whittaker has referred to the Motion passed by the House the other day, on the strength of which this Bill has been introduced. When that Motion was moved in this House the argument that the question involved in the Motion was very contentious was not raised before the House. Only the merits of the Motion were then considered and I observed what could be said in favour of the Motion and what could be said against the Motion was sufficiently discussed on the floor of the House. Now on the basis of that Motion the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Bill has introduced this Bill and if I find that there is not a sufficient and proper debate on the Bill certainly I will not put it to the vote of the House. If I find there has been a sufficient discussion then I will put it to the vote of the House.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take it that in this view this Bill is a controversial measure.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It is a controversial measure no doubt.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As I have stated in my Objects and Reasons, Government has been persuaded to bring in this Motion not on the ground that was alleged on the floor of the House by the Mover of a private Motion, namely Mr. Jobang D. Marak, but Government has been convinced that hon. Members of this House ought to for the purposes of travelling and halting allowances to be considered as first class officers of the first grade. There was an anomaly before that hon. Members were treated as first class officers of the first grade for the purposes of travelling allowance and 1st class officers of the fourth grade for the purposes of halting allowance. That anomaly we have sought to remove by the Bill.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved is that the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943 be taken into consideration.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is perhaps not surprising that I rise to oppose this Bill, as only the day before yesterday I opposed the Motion which gave rise to this Bill. There seems no doubt that it was a fact that this House passed the hon. Mr. Marak's Motion that led Government to introduce this Bill. In fact the Hon'ble Premier has just said as much. Yet although Mr. Marak's Motion recommended the increase on account of the rise in prices of commodities, it is strange.....

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: The Hon'ble Premier has explained just now that we should get what a first grade officer of the first class is getting.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order. Let the hon. Member go on.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS: I stand by what is written in the Motion. The increase is from "Rs.5 to Rs.7-8-0 for the abnormal increase of the

price of commodities" and yet it is strange that this Bill makes no mention of this in the Objects and Reasons. The fact that it does not do so but advances an entirely different reason, savours to us of back door methods. It will appear to all outside this Assembly, whatever may be said inside the House, that the real reason for this Bill was that given in the Motion. Then again, I must comment on the unseemly haste in attempting to rush through all its stages in one day a Bill so small and so local in its application. Normally Government only take this step of rushing a Bill through if they are quite sure that public opinion and necessity demands quick action. We do not believe that public opinion would be in favour of this Bill, and if Government think otherwise, as presumably they do, we urge them to put it to the test by circulating the Bill to elicit public opinion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member may move an amendment to that effect

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS: Thank you, Sir, I shall do so when I have finished. Then again, Sir, if Members of this House were in favour of the recent Motion to the extent that the voting indicated it seems strange that beyond the Mover, no hon. Member supported the Motion, although two Members opposed it. Was it shame, Sir, that kept them in their seats?

We calculate that allowing for a full attendance of both Houses and also making some allowance for Select Committees, this Bill will cost the Province about Rs.15,000 per annum. Although this is a small amount and in itself will not affect the Provincial finances, it is worth recording that this amount would provide 420 primary school teachers with Rs.3 per mensem as dearness allowance (*hear, hear.*) As I have already said, Sir, the amount involved is small but we must not forget that the repercussions may be enormous. If this Bill is passed, it will be a direct invitation for other Government servants to put in for a 50 per cent. dearness allowance. Our Ministers, Sir, are the most poorly paid in India, but in spite of this they have not come forward with any Bill to increase their salaries. Yet, if in spite of this they are prepared to present a Bill to meet the demands of the Members of this House, we do not see how they will be able to resist a demand for similar treatment from other Government servants; and this would be the first step to inflation. Inflation is a common word, but few people understand what it really means. Put in as simple language as possible, it means that if the general mass of people are given more money, the prices of commodities will rise as the public has more money to spend, till the time comes when the public will want still more money to pay for the higher cost of commodities; and so the spiral goes on until money has no value. To avoid this, only the poorer sections or rather the poorest section of the people should be compensated for the increased prices; others should follow the excellent example of the Ministers and alter their standard of living to fit their reduced purchasing power. I do not think, Sir, that the Members of this House can count themselves among the poorest sections of the community.

To refer now to the published reasons for this Bill, will a translation to first grade officers make us better legislators? Will it raise the standard of the debates, or will it increase our stature? On the contrary, Sir, we from these Benches, feel that if we are parties to the passing of this Bill, our stature will be reduced because we shall be ashamed.

Lastly, Sir, I move that this Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : By what date ?

Mr. E. H S. LEWIS : By the 31st July, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The amendment moved is that the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943, be circulated for eliciting public opinion by the 31st of July 1943.

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** Sir, I rise to oppose the Motion which has been put before the House by my hon. Friend Mr. Lewis

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : Shame.

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** Shame ? Mr. Whittaker corrects me and says 'Mr. Shame'. We had no opportunity of knowing each other for a long time. So I hope to be excused.

Sir, perhaps some of the hon. Members of this House know that previously the halting allowance of a Member of the Assam Legislative Council was Rs.10 per diem. It was so because the first grade officers used to get at the same rate but when on account of the retrenchment of 1931 the allowance of the first grade officer was reduced from Rs.10 to Rs.7-8-0 the allowance of the Members of the Legislature was also reduced from Rs.10 to Rs.7-8-0. There were Motions during those days for increase of that allowance from Rs.7-8-0 to Rs.10 on the ground that this was not merely a question of compensation, not merely a question of actual cost but the question was one of prestige. There was a demand that a halting allowance of a Member of a Legislature should be superior to that of the halting allowance of a first grade officer of the Government. That was the point urged during those days. Now, Sir, after the passing of this Bill, i.e., the Members' Emoluments Bill the halting allowance was fixed at Rs.5 per diem probably with the idea that the Members were drawing the salary which they did not draw before. I think it is a wise move. By introducing this Bill at least the Government intend to keep up the prestige of the Members and put them on the same scale of first grade officers at least in the matter of halting allowance only. Therefore, Sir, on the ground of prestige also I welcome this piece of legislation. It is not surprising that some Members of this House who spend probably for their halting charges more than Rs 10 or Rs.20 per diem, to them it does not matter in the least whether the halting allowance is Rs.5 or Rs.7 8-0. When their ordinary bill excluding all their luxuries is Rs.20 per diem and actually they pay that amount, they do not mind whether the halting allowance is Rs.2, Rs.5 or Rs.7. Their opinions, therefore, Sir, in this matter should not count. There are also Members in this House, Sir, who probably get from their respective Associations or Organisations certain sum which is not less than a sum of Rs.40 per diem for their attendance in this House. To them also whether the amount of the halting allowance drawn or not does not count at all. So, I suppose, Sir, the opinions which come from such Members should not weigh with the other Members of this House. But the undeniable fact—unforgettable fact remains that whatever opposition you may make whether you like Members Salary Bill or not, whether you like Members Halting Allowance Increased Bill or not I have not seen yet a single Member who has either refused to draw his salary or who has foregone his halting allowance. I shall warmly embrace that gentleman who will say in this House that he has not

*Speech not corrected by the hon. Member

(*laughter*) drawn his salary although he may be a millionaire or a multi-millionaire. That being the position, Sir, the argument put forward by my Friend who has just spoken before me whose name I forget (*laughter*) or whose name I do not like to repeat should not influence us. After all, Sir, we have already given our opinion in favour of this Bill and I heartily support the Motion which has been brought by the Government.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reasons for passing this Motion have amply been made clear by the Hon'ble Minister. But I understand there is some mis-apprehension in the minds of some of the hon. Members of this House and just to remove it I like to speak a few words. To be more explicit, I should say that there is a set of people in this world who simply in disguise want to deceive the common folk. As has been suggested by Mr. Chaudhuri I request any of the Members of this House to declare here whether he is willing to volunteer to sacrifice whichever amount he likes from his emoluments or his travelling allowance for any better work of the Province. Mr. Lewis has suggested that this amount could better be paid to some of the lower primary teachers. I would beseech him to show the example first. Well, it is very easy to say but very difficult to make any sacrifice in the practical field. Is it a question of profit, Sir? If the allowance be increased from Rs.5 to Rs.7-8-0 will it be a very big profit for the hon. Members of this House? I think, Members of this House should be treated as first grade officers in the matter of drawing halting allowance. It is not the question only of attending meetings of this House by the hon. Members but they have got to attend other business for which also they cannot charge their halting allowance as that of the first grade officers. Sir, if this is to be remedied, I think, this Bill has got to be welcomed by all sections of the House. Money is not the only question, there is the question of status also. Mr. Lewis has found fault with the reasons which were given in the resolution—a private member's resolution which was carried by the House recommending to Government that the halting allowance of the Members be increased. Sir, if I take into consideration the whole fact, I think, the hon. Mover of the resolution had sufficient reasons to come before the Government for an increase of the halting allowance.

Mr. Chaudhuri has made it very clear that those who opposed the Bill they have no necessity for it or they do not at all care whether the halting allowance is Rs 5 or Rs.7-8-0 because these gentlemen are luxuriously paid by their Associations. It has been expressed that the hotel where these gentlemen live is a royal one and everybody putting up there has got to pay Rs.20, Rs.30 or Rs.40 per diem. So I say, is there any necessity for those gentlemen to care for this paltry halting allowance?

With these words, I support the Motion moved by the Hon'ble Minister and oppose the Motion which has been moved by Mr. Lewis for circulation of this Bill.

***Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV:** Sir, as I said the other day, I oppose the Motion for consideration. It looks very odd that we should try to increase our daily allowance in this way when money could not be provided for so many urgent and important things and since the Hon'ble Prime Minister has tried to improve upon the matter and has brought in a new argument of prestige. I only like to tell the House to accept the principle

of asking the opinion of the public of this Province on this Bill, as they did on the previous occasion when the hon. Members were trying once to increase their daily allowance. I do not think when the hon. Members will be getting Rs.7-8-0, *i.e.*, Rs.2-8-0 more per diem, their prestige will in any way be enhanced from what they maintain now. So, Sir, I do not see any necessity of increasing that amount. With these few words, I support the Motion for circulation of the Bill and oppose the Motion for consideration.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri to support his case has referred to me by name during this discussion, but I may tell him that I neither live in a "royal hotel" nor am I one of the millionaires whom Mr. Chaudhuri referred to, nor am I one who has the slightest use for this argument of prestige. This particular Bill affects me not-at-all, as I am a resident of Shillong and draw no halting allowance whatsoever. My point is that in the fourth year of the war every one should practise private economy as far as possible and should live with more austerity than in fact we do live. The present times, Sir, are out of joint for sanctioning money for increased allowance. However, when this Bill is passed, I am quite prepared to show Mr. Rohini Chaudhuri 50 per cent. more deference than what I pay him already. With these remarks I oppose the Bill and support the Motion of my friend Mr. Lewis.

***Mr. C. GOLDSMITH:** Sir, I rise to oppose the Bill and also rise to speak to prove that the Bill is not a sound proposition. One point I would like to mention. It is regarding the "prestige", as Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri has used the word. Now I do not agree with him when he bases the argument that we ought to get more allowance to raise the prestige of the hon. Members. Since 1937 all these Members have been drawing this Rs. 5 as daily or halting allowance and no question of prestige was raised. Now after a certain time, I mean, at this time, it is being argued that our prestige will be raised if the halting allowance is raised to Rs. 7-8-0 from Rs. 5. I think, it is not a good argument. And for one reason more I do not like this idea; we the Members of this House are not here to raise our prestige. We are hereto exercise our capacity as much as possible to do some good to our country, however simple we may be and however low position we may have. And if we stand for the principle of asking for increment of our allowance then for the future India and for future policy that question of principle will not be conducive for the betterment of our country. Therefore, I oppose the Bill.

***Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY:** Sir, this question of drawal of allowance does not interest me at all, for I am a local Member and I have never drawn any halting allowance since I am in the Legislature. But considering the circumstances of the country where the prices of all commodities have gone so high, I feel a great deal of sympathy for those hon. Members who come from the plains and who are so hard-pressed while living in Shillong. From that stand point, increment of halting allowance is, I think, justifiable. Therefore, I support the Bill and oppose the Motion for circulation of the Bill.

***Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY:** Sir, in supporting the Motion for circulation of the Bill I want to say in reply to Maulavi Abdur Rahman

that during these 6 years of my membership in this House, 50 per cent. of what I have drawn as halting or daily allowance has been spent on humanitarian cause. (*Applause.*)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There have been sufficient arguments both in support of and against the Bill. Therefore, I am putting the questions to the House.

The question is:

"That the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943, be circulated for eliciting public opinion by the 31st July 1943".

The Assembly divided.

AYES—11

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| 1. Srijut Bepin Chandra Medhi. | 6. Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett. |
| 2. Babu Dakshina Ranjan Gupta Chaudhuri. | 7. Mr. E. H. S. Lewis. |
| 3. Srijut Ghanashyam Das. | 8. Mr. C. W. Morley. |
| 4. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. | 9. Mr. R. A. Palmer. |
| 5. Babu Nirendra Nath Dev. | 10. Mr. P. Trinkle. |
| | 11. Mr. A. Whittaker. |

NOES—33

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| 1. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla. | 15. Maulavi Abdur Rahman. |
| 2. The Hon'ble Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta. | 16. Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahbab Chaudhury. |
| 3. The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali. | 17. Maulavi Dewan Ali Raja. |
| 4. The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty. | 18. Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin. |
| 5. The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhuri. | 19. Khan Bahadur Dewan Eklmur Roza Chaudhury. |
| 6. The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia. | 20. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. |
| 7. The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. | 21. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mahmud Ali. |
| 8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman. | 22. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman. |
| 9. The Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn. | 23. Maulavi Muzarrof Ali Laskar. |
| 10. The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma. | 24. Maulavi Namwar Ali Barbhuiya. |
| 11. Babu Balaram Sircar. | 25. Maulavi Naziruddin Ahmed. |
| 12. Srijut Joges Chandra Gohain. | 26. Mr. Benjamin Ch. Momin. |
| 13. Babu Kalachand Roy. | 27. Srijut Bhairab Chandra Das. |
| 14. Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri. | 28. Srijut Bideshi Pan Tanti. |
| | 29. Mr. Binode Kumar J. Sarwan. |
| | 30. Rev. L. Gatphoh. |
| | 31. Mr. C. Goldsmith. |
| | 32. Mr. Jobang D. Marak. |
| | 33. Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy. |

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is that the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943 be taken into consideration.

The question was adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Bill is also to be considered clause by clause to-day. Of course, under the rules, three days' notice is required for tabling amendments. Now, so far as this Bill is concerned it is really an one-clause Bill. That is, it seeks only to increase the amount of Rs. 5 in the main Act to Rs. 7-8-0. I would allow hon. Members to table their amendments on the floor of the House. If any hon. Member wants to table any amendment he may do so. If the intention is not to allow any increase they may refuse to allow clause 2 of the Bill to form part of the Bill. Therefore, I would allow the clause to be debated upon by asking the Hon'ble Premier to move that clause 2 do stand part of the Bill.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I beg, Sir, to move that clause 2 of the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' emoluments) Amendment) Bill, 1943 do stand part of the Bill.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved is that clause 2 of the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943 do stand part of the Bill.

Any member to oppose ?

(After a pause)

Then I take it that no debate is going to be held.

The question is that clause 2 of the Bill do stand part of the Bill.

The question was adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is that clause 1 do stand part of the Bill.

The question was adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is that the title and preamble of the Bill do stand part of the Bill.

The question was adopted.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I beg, Sir, to move that the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943, be passed.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved :

"That the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943, be passed".

(After a pause)

The question is :

"That the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 1943, be passed".

The question was adopted.

Statement regarding economic situation of the Province

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Before the Hon'ble Premier makes the statement, may I request the Chair that arrangement may be made so that the public outside the House can hear the speech of the Hon'ble Prime Minister as the speech that will be delivered by him will be a very important one ? I hope this may easily be done.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, I am arranging that.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I beg to move that the economic situation of the Province be taken into consideration.

The economic situation of a province cannot escape its repercussion from its environments. Therefore the position of Assam is not free from the position that is obtained in the neighbourhood. We have got the enemy at our gates—from air the mighty force of Nippon sometimes causes havoc in our country side. On the south also very near the borders of the Lushai Hills, the fighting is going on, between the British forces and that of the Japanese. Practically speaking, we have not much trouble from the north but a trouble of a different kind comes to our gate from our westerly neighbouring province of Bengal. The economic condition of a province or in other words the people inhabiting that province depends upon three things—(1) production of its main necessities of life, (2) its equitable distribution so that every person living in the Province may get the benefit of the production and (3) the production must depend upon the health of the producer at crucial times of production.

The production is again sub-divided into two parts *i.e.*, growing in the locality of the daily requirements of the staple food of the people. Next is the importation from outside the Province of such foodstuffs as is not grown or insufficiently grown within our boundaries and lastly the people specially the producing people is in good health at the cultivating season. The forces that are working on our east and western boundaries must make us ponder and think deeply how best to make a safe and sound solution of the food problem in the Province. We have sometimes differed bitterly on social as well as political questions but when the enemy is at the gate—when the country is in danger, we should lay down our disputes and present a united front to the foe. Speaking on the present situation, in my opinion, starvation or non-availability of the essential foodstuffs is the foe. How best we can meet the situation should be left not only to the Ministry but it should also be the concern of every true patriot of the country. It is in this light, that I agreed to bring this Motion so that I can lay before the House the situation of foodstuffs—its availability, its production and also the scheme of its distribution. If they find that there are shortcomings in the method adopted by the Ministry in this regard, they will make suggestions with a view to bettering the situation in order to ease the food problem that is facing the country just at the moment. I have always been under two fires. Some hon. Members have criticised me that we have never advertised sufficiently what has been done or what is being done in the Province of Assam, while other critics have condemned me that the various statements that I make are nothing but “blunders”. Only a few minutes ago, I heard the statement that I made at Delhi about the rice position of Assam as characterised by my Friend Mr. Mookerjee as “blunder”. I was recently reading a book and I was charmed with a few sentences thereof which very accurately summarises what passes in the mind of Administrators. I cannot refrain from quoting these few sentences.

The Author of that book delivered himself thus.—“I have never noticed that modesty is a characteristic of politicians in general, and I am not sure that it is a valuable one. A man who is in a position of responsibility can only act effectively if he is confident in his own judgment, he must be assured that he is right in the decisions he makes and this assurance he can only have if he has a good opinion of himself.”

So, modesty is unknown to any politician and we here, all of us, are politicians. If I have blundered I have blundered after weighing every factor that leads up to my statement, and as it concerns rice, I better straight away come to the point and place such materials before the House from which they will be able to judge whether my statement is based on facts or not.

This morning we discussed about the Marketing Section. Some hon. Members derided its utility, but if any of them had gone through the reports that had been published they would have found the reports contained a wealth of materials which are worth perusal. I find, Sir, that Mr. Handique, our Deputy Director of Agriculture now, who wrote as Senior Marketing Officer of Assam his first report on the marketing of rice—the report is dated November 1940—after giving facts and figures, states “during the last five years the approximate quantity of rice that has been produced in Assam was 4,87,26,080 maunds”. The report also stated that “during the last five years there has been an increase of 10 per cent. in the acreage under rice”. Since then, Sir, we have had the “Grow More Food Campaign” started, and we know that there has been further extension of cultivation since that report was published. Even if we do not take the full figures of percentage of extension as provided by the Agriculture Department, I shall not be out of the mark if I say that there has been at least five per cent. extension of cultivation in the Province since 1940. If we accept this 5 per cent. increase, then on the same basis of production, the total production of rice comes to 5,09,00,000 maunds in 1942. I can substantiate, Sir, that this must be correct, from the latest forecast of winter rice crop alone, the forecast which was published in the Supplement to the *Assam Gazette* of March 17th, 1943. “As estimated by the Deputy Commissioners, the total area under winter rice is 38,15,800 acres against last year’s actual area of 36,95,300 acres and this year’s second forecast estimate of 38,60,800 acres. Since the issue of the second forecast, the estimates of area have been revised in five districts and the outturn in six. From the summary of the district returns it will be seen that two districts expect outturn of 90 per cent. four districts 85 per cent. two districts 80 per cent. and one district 75 per cent. of the normal per acre. On the basis of the above estimates the provincial outturn is 81 per cent. of the normal per acre which is the same as the revised percentage outturn of last year, compared to 88 per cent. of this year’s second forecast. Taking 8 cwts. of winter rice as the normal yield per acre, the total produce in Assam amounts to 2,47,26,400 cwts. against 2,39,45,500 cwts. on the basis of actual area of last year”.

From these figures, hon. Members will find that in winter crop alone there has been an increase of over 10,00,000 maunds than last year. If we base our calculation on all the varieties of rice that was grown in the Province in the year 1942, the yield comes to in the neighbourhood of 5,09,00,000 maunds. We have got to see whether this staple food of at least 99 per cent. of the inhabitants of this Province is sufficient to meet their demand. This can be very well judged not only from the layman’s point of view, but thanks, to my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker, I am in a position to place before the House the calculations made by no less a personality than Dr. Ackroid of the Institute of Nutrition Research, Coonore, a Government established institution. Dr. Ackroid gives the average rice consumption per adult to be 15 to 25 ounces per day, and from survey he finds that consumption per day in Cachar and Jorhat is 19 and 19.4 ounces respectively. If we take these figures of Cachar and Jorhat as normal to the Province, we may hold that 20 ounces is the average daily consumption of an adult. Twenty ounces is equivalent to 10 chhataks, and 10 chhataks is 2 chhataks over half

a seer. Those who have taken the trouble of analysing the census tables have no doubt found that the percentage of adult population, *i.e.*, people over 15 years of age, is about 60 of the total. The rest, *i.e.*, those aged 15 and downwards, compose the remaining 40 per cent. If we give a ration of 20 ounces per day to every one, the total consumption comes to 4,59,99,000 maunds of rice, calculating on the basis of our actual figure of population of the Province, which is 1,02,00,000 according to the last census operation. So, when our approximate outturn is 5,09,00,000 and the maximum consumption is 4,59,00,000 there is a surplus in the Province of about 40 lakhs of maunns.

A voice :—50 lakhs maunds.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I am taking only very approximate figures. But could we say that this surplus is really 50 lakhs? Since the threat to the country from the enemy, the Province has been filled up with a very big military contingent and the surplus of Assam must of necessity be utilised in feeding those brave soldiers who have come to save our homes and hearths from the aggression of the Japanese. If we say that even 20 lakhs is taken away by the military in feeding their soldiers, still there is about 30 lakhs maunds surplus. Even if we say that there must be some mistake somewhere and we knock off 10 lakhs of our surplus, still we get the figure of 20 lakhs—a figure which I mentioned in my Delhi statement to represent the true quantity of surplus that is available in Assam. Some hon. Members seem to think that we should not proclaim to the world that there is a surplus so that we could have kept whatever surplus there was for our own use later on if necessary. That is hardly correct; but in normal times if we keep such a quantity unutilised there is chance of the rice becoming bad, for every one knows that new rice, unless it is boiled, becomes bad within three months of its harvesting. Will it be prudent, will it be wise to keep in stock such a big quantity of rice which probably would feed the hungry mouth of many souls in the neighbouring Province? The more I have studied the question, the more I have come to the conclusion that in Assam we have plenty of rice for the needy, but we have not plenty for the greedy. Since my statement appeared in the Press, Assam has been flooded with requests from the distant places to supply them with rice that is so scarce in other parts of India. Private merchants, Hon'ble Ministers—all approached me from the neighbouring province to allow them to take away rice from Assam as there is very acute shortage in Bengal. But in my opinion the shortage is far more acute in the southern parts of India as well as in Ceylon. Between January and February, from my personal talks as well as from official files, I have found out that in Ceylon where rice rationing is in vogue the adult is given only 2½ lbs per week and in Cochin ½ (half) lbs per adult per day. Although rationing has not been started in Bengal, every one who has followed the Calcutta Dailys has noticed that the average price of rice ruling there is in the neighbourhood of Rs.20 per maund. During all this time, the Assam Government under my guidance have followed the policy of conserving as much as possible of the available foodstuffs, specially rice and paddy, and of also regulating its distribution between our deficit and surplus areas. We have tried our utmost that all parts of the Province come to the same price level. Every effort was made by the Government in order to ban export of rice and paddy, but very unfortunately, being tempted by lure of gain certain set of people are bent upon to see the ban nullified. When Government stopped export of paddy by means of rail or steamer, certain people tried to evade that control order by exporting those

commodities in country-boats. I find, Sir, from the Marketing Report, extracts from which I have already placed before the House, that in a normal year the quantity of rice that is despatched by country-boats to Bengal is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs maund. But the acute shortage in Bengal has compelled flocks of these merchants to come in hundreds to try to get away, in spite of Government order, as much rice and paddy as they can place their hands on. To avoid this state of affairs, Government have opened certain checking stations down Dhubri on the Brahmaputra and also established a cordon of such checking stations between the boundaries of Assam, in the Surma Valley, that is, Habiganj Subdivision and Bengal neighbouring districts Mymensing and Tipperah. But I must say that the ingenuity of our Habiganj friends is far superior to that of Government. As soon as all these preventive measures were taken on export of rice they immediately started to fry the rice into *chira* and export a large quantity of *chira* or fried rice to Bengal. This was brought to my notice only the day before yesterday and I had to issue immediately another order only the ing export of rice in any form, dried or fried.

I beseech every hon. Member who has the best advantage of the Province at heart to help Government in this matter of enforcing total ban or prevention on export, so that not even a scer of rice can be taken away outside the Province by illegal means.

Some hon. Members of this House who have their own trade in rice had approached me for allowing them to send the quantities that they had purchased before this ban on export was issued. I had turned a deaf ear to those Friends and I hope they will excuse me, for, I was urged by a keen sense of duty in refusing all such requests (*hear, hear*).

If my hon. Friends take the figures that I have placed before the House to represent the genuine state of affairs then they cannot but agree with the policy which the Government had adopted. Before the question of the Central Government buying all surplus stocks of rice was mooted, the Assam Government in order to release a part of their surplus rice agreed to supply to the military, the army authorities and to the labour force employed in some military projects, a quantity as much as 14 lacs of maunds of rice. Then we had a scheme of conserving a large stock of rice buying on Government account so that the rice may be kept within the Province as a guarantee against future contingency, Assam being or at least part of Assam being liable to recurrent floods and also to use this stock as a stabilising factor at times when the price of necessities of life soars high. But since then, on account of the insistent demand for rice from various other parts of India, the Government of India has now stepped on the scene and parts to by the surplus stock from the Province to be transported to those areas where people are suffering from shortage of rice. Various conferences were called and attended by representatives of Assam and the ultimate result was that we were asked to send 8 lacs maunds of rice during the current months to Southern India. Export of such a big quantity of rice shall have only one result that is rocketing the prices sky high but luckily for us, that order was counter-mended and we were asked to supply to the neighbouring Province of Bengal.

Although, we have agreed to supply the military this big quantity of 14 lacs of maunds, but as it is to be delivered in 12 monthly instalment, the effect of supply of this has not had the effect of raising the price to a very high level. Since then, as the price of rice in the neighbouring Province has gone very high and in certain areas nothing could be had, Government of India have asked us now to send to Bengal, if possible, 15,000 tons of

rice. We sent our representatives and pleaded inability to supply all these rice at once ; but on account of humanitarian feelings we promised to send them 5,000 tons immediately. If by doing this, I have in any way done something which I should not have done, I will ask the hon. members to guide me in this matter. But one thing I can definitely assure that whatever export goes out of the Province, it will be on the account of the Central Government and no private export of paddy by any merchant or trader will be allowed, for we believe, if we release our surplus stock, it is with the humanitarian idea of relieving distress among the population of other Provinces of India. If the Assam Government wanted to make money, they could very well buy at the present level of price in Assam and sell it only to Calcutta and make quite a good sum. But we were not actuated or guided by any mercenary motive. I have spoken at length on the rice position. It is because without rice we cannot live. We are a rice-eating people. But I may be questioned that mere rice will not help us. We want many things else to eat. Therefore, the Assam Government since the troublous time of June 1942 had started commercial venture of buying with their own money or rather tax-payers' money to bring into the Province those essential food stuffs which were not available in the Province. I will give only a very short summary of our activities in that respect. I will only mention the names of the articles that we have imported and the total quantity because I do not want to load my speech with extra details. Up to 6th March 1943, we have bought and brought to Assam 6,70,640 maunds of salt, 2,01,355 maunds of sugar and various kinds of *Dal* to the extent of about 90 thousand maunds and about 19 thousand maunds of gram and 2,638 odd maunds of mustard oil and 31,253 maunds of flour and *atta*. We also bought 812 bales of cloth. Most of these articles have already been received and utilised in the Province and certain consignments are on transit. I have mentioned many times in the House that since the control of wheat by the Central Government we are given a very meagre quota. In January we were given a hundred ton for a month. For the months of February and March we were given 160 tons.

As regards *Dal*, one lakh maund will be purchased from new crop from Bihar which has been allowed by the Central Government. Sugar is also controlled by the Government of India and our allotment is 11 thousand tons for Assam. Out of these 11 thousand tons about 6 thousand tons will be sent out by the end of this month. The balance for the year we have been advised to bring before the end of May for nobody knows whether the course of nature will not again impede our line of communication. Then the poorer people may use *Gur* instead of sugar. Therefore we have arranged to purchase 1,20,000 maunds of *gur* from the United Provinces. There has been a shortage of mustard oil in Sylhet and Silchar of the Surma Valley and also higher up in the Dibrugarh areas. Since our first purchase of 6 thousand maunds we have now ordered 5 thousand maunds of oil for Sylhet, 2 thousand maunds for Silchar and 2 thousand maunds for Dibrugarh.

Then again it has been our policy to build up reserve stocks of these imported food-stuffs. We have arranged to build up stocks for three months' consumption before the rains set in. This matter is engaging our serious attention, but the question of transport is a great difficulty. Our representative saw the Hon'ble Member-in-charge of War Transport at Delhi and he has been kind enough to promise every help for the Province of Assam in the matter of wagon supply.

Sir, as I started by saying that in spite of our best attempts of growing more food in the Province and bringing in other essential food-stuffs from outside, the main problem is one of distribution. In this matter I again seek the help of every hon. member. We tried distribution of the food-stuffs through our distributing agents, the Deputy Commissioners, who in turn depute some other officers to take delivery of the goods and see that they are distributed into the interior of the localities. In certain places this system goes tolerably well, but in some districts there has been a big muddle. I am afraid, there is apprehension of general tax-payers' money being lost. I have seen preliminary report of the Comptroller who has audited the account that about 27 lakhs of rupees has still to be accounted and collected. Seeing this state of affairs, the Government has come to the conclusion that the distribution in general should be taken out of the hands of the district authorities who have neither the time nor the experience of trade conditions, to handle goods in a very efficient way. I think, Sir, that if this distribution is left to some reliable parties, then probably it will be better and more equitable. In this matter I seek the help and advice of every hon. member. For this also we must have men or our officers—men with a profound sense of service, of the masses. This is a very tall order, but I am confident that if we do not get cent. per cent. of such officers and traders there is every chance of getting 50 per cent. and let us make the start with this as an experiment and see whether the countryside cannot be provided with all those goods that have been brought to Assam. In this connection, I must mention the case of standard cloth and kerosene oil. As was stated by Mr. Lewis on the floor of the House, kerosene is now regulated under Central Government's orders. Assam will be provided with only 50 per cent. of the issue of 1941. This means that there has been acute shortage of kerosene and therefore I again seek the co-operation of my friends to make the country people realise that we should go back to our own system of having lights with castor and other kinds of oil including fish oil.

As regards standard cloth, the previous history reveals an woeful tale. Assam indented for 120 bales of standard cloth in May 1942 and another indent was sent for the same quantity in August 1942. But the cloth indented for in May could arrive only in November and this was sold through Government agency in various places to the poorer section of the people. The second indent that was placed in August is expected very shortly. We have asked the District officers to arrange distribution through reliable wholesalers, retailers, Mauzadars and, if necessary, through some out agencies, for example, Kutcheries of the Goalpara Zamindars, and volunteers of the National War Front Organisation. We have sent our third indent in February last and we have got assurance from the Central Government that we may get our standard cloth in April. The Government of India have formulated a scheme for the supply and distribution of standard cloth which is expected to come into operation towards the end of this month. The broad features of the scheme are as follows:—That the Industry have agreed to set apart upto 60 per cent. of their loomage for the manufacture of standard cloth.

That each Province will be given a quota according to its population basis and we have been given a quota of $1\frac{1}{2}$ crore of yards of standard cloth. Then, they have set up a committee of what is better known as Standard Cloth Panel at Bombay and we have been asked to have a Provincial Advisory Committee with representatives of both commercial interests and

consumers' interests as well as officials. We have formed such a Provincial Advisory Committee with majority of non-officials, and probably within the course of next week there will be a Gazette notification about this. I am the President of that Committee; I have every reason to hope that those hon. Members from this House who have found their place therein will give me the best of their help in the matter.

Now one word more. If we have got to get the best out of our production, the cultivator class must be kept healthy at the time of the production operation at least, *i. e.* tilling, sowing, etc. As we have heard on the floor of this House the other day, that malaria is the chief enemy of our people, very relevantly the question of quinine was debated on the floor of the House. Sir, I think it does not come within the food-stuff. But a survey of the economic situation will be incomplete if I do not place before the House what arrangements or what attempt the Government have made to get as much quinine as possible under the circumstances, for quinine is the medicine which can be used both as prophylactic and curative measure in the case of malaria. Due to fall of Java, the principal source of quinine production, the quantity that could be had from Bengal and Madras, the only two quinine producing Provinces in India, was inadequate and the Government of India, with the stock that they had in hand, introduced the system of restricted supply to the Provinces to 75 per cent. of the usual annual consumption. Against the minimum requirement of this Province, for Medical and Public Health Department dispensaries, Local Fund and other aided dispensaries and subsidized dispensaries, of 3252 lbs. of quinine and 3246 lbs. of cinchona products, Government of India have allotted 1,500 lbs. of quinine and 1803 lbs. of cinchona products upto June 1943. They also have allotted up till now 2,134 lbs. of quinine for sale to employers of labours, hospitals and dispensaries not under Government control, private medical practitioners and private individuals who hitherto obtained the drug from the trade. The latter allotment was made in different instalments and in the absence of exact figures as to the usual consumption by these bodies. Some of these figures have been obtained very recently and we moved the Government of India for an allotment of 7,000 lbs. The matter is under consideration with the Government of India. The Central Government have also advised us not to use this medicine for prophylactic purpose on account of the shortage of supply, but to use it only for purpose of treatment. We have also arranged to obtain from England a substitute for quinine known as 'Quina-crine' for 1943-44. From this it will be apparent that every step to increase the quantity of quinine that may be available both for Government purpose and for the purposes of trade, tea and other industries and also for private practitioners, has been taken by the Ministry. If we have failed, Sir, we have failed not on account of any attempt on our part to increased supply but we have been fighting against odds, over which we have no control. In the first place, Assam is far from the centre of distribution and our voice is drowned in the distance. In the second place our population is much smaller compared to other big Provinces like Presidencies and those on the north, the Gangetic valley.

Sir, I have placed every material that need be to describe the economic situation of the Province, before the House and it is for the House to say where we have failed and what improvement there should be. I find that there are certain amendments to my Motion. I think after what I have stated there is no necessity for the amendment tabled by my Friend, Babu Nirendra Nath Dev. My hon. Friend, Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy has retabled his

Motion, which he did not move the other day, as an amendment to my statement. His is a very comprehensive amendment which I doubt whether we can take into consideration alongside with this economic situation. Because its broad recommendations are intended to help the Grow More Food campaign. But in that case we must have mechanical methods of cultivation which should require tractors, a commodity which is unavailable at the present moment. Then he recommends collective farming, probably on the principle of Bolshevist Russia or the Communist principle which is very good. But here he says that this collective farming should be based on co-operative basis. That means that small holders of land shall have to merge together in order to produce a very big lot, say, about 3,000 Bighas, where mechanical cultivation can be started. This will require a very long time.

Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee, as usual, has made very thorough recommendations. But some of these recommendations, God forbid, we may not be compelled to adopt. For example, he recommends that we should introduce ration cards. Let us all use our brains—let us all co-operate to prevent such a stage when rationing will be necessary, especially of rice.

Then as regards other matters, I have touched every one of them and I would like to hear what my hon. Friends have to say on this statement on the economic situation. I claim no infallibility. Only my endeavour is to place before the House the blessings of God in the shape of rice surplus which should be utilised for the best interest of the Province. If I have failed, it is not on account of any wrong or bad intention on my part. I have failed because the country has not risen up to that stage of moral character which is needed in these difficult times of troubles and tribulations to avoid profiteering and black-marketing (*Applause*).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved: "That the economic situation of the Province be taken into consideration."

There are three amendments tabled by hon. Members. The first one stands in the name of Babu Nirendra Nath Dev, the second one in the name of Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee and the third in the name of Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. Mr. Mookerjee's amendment appears to be comprehensive enough to include Mr. Nirendra Nath Dev's amendment. So I do not know if Mr. Nirendra Nath Dev wants to move his amendment.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Mr. Mookerjee's amendment will do.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Both the remaining amendments are really within the scope of the Motion. Of course, the Hon'ble Premier said with regard to Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy's amendment that it would not be possible to give effect to all his recommendations in the present situation of the Province; but that is another matter. This amendment also formulates a principle which comes within the scope of the Motion moved. So I would allow both the amendments to be moved. Mr. Mookerjee may move his amendment.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that for the original Motion, the following be substituted:—

"Taking the economic situation of the Province into consideration, this Assembly is of opinion that Government do take immediate steps to introduce the following measures amongst others to protect the Province against the possible crisis due to shortage of essential foodstuffs and clothings:

1. The Grow-More-Food Campaign be properly handled by an expert and qualified officer.

2. To set up regional Food Advisory Boards throughout the Province to regulate the production, supply and price.
3. To introduce ration cards, if necessary.
4. To make adequate provision for the increased production of short staple cotton which may be utilised for making cloth by hand-loom process.
5. To make adequate arrangements for the supply of yarns in big quantities to the weavers.
6. To make arrangements for the adequate supply of standard cloth.
7. To stop export of all kinds of foodstuffs that are grown in the Province and are required to be stopped to meet the needs of the Province, and
8. To make arrangements for adequate supplies of other essential foodstuffs and other necessities of life."

Sir, I shall take up the question of rice position first, as I think that unless I can convince the Hon'ble Prime Minister about his mistake regarding surplus of rice, my other suggestions will be of no use. Sir, I shall rely on the same report and the Gazette notifications to which the Hon'ble Premier referred to. I shall show to the hon. Members that what I stated before them, while discussing about the Marketing Scheme, was absolutely right and the statement made by the Hon'ble Premier is not the fact.

Sir, I have heard with rapt attention the statement made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on the general economic situation of the Province. The Hon'ble Prime Minister began with putting blames on me; though he did not mention any name, yet the hon. Members could easily understand that it was really meant for me. He said that there were Members who still thought that there would be no surplus of rice in the Province and that he was wrong in so declaring and had made a blunder in making such a loose statement, but in his opinion such remarks made by me were wholly wrong and there was no justification for passing such remarks.

Sir, the statement that he has made at Delhi about a fictitious rice surplus has already done an incalculable harm to this Province. I do not know what motive he had in making such a faked statement. As is expected, his idea still continues to be at variance with the consensus of opinion in the country. He still sticks to his old and sterile statement that Assam is a surplus Province so far as the production of paddy is concerned. He, it seems, is making Assam play the role of mythological *Dadhichi* sacrificing the very bones so that other Provinces may live. In the name of the teeming million of hungry peasantry I would appeal to the human qualities of the Premier to retract his false step even now and declare categorically that Assam is a deficit Province and urge him to approach the Central Food Directorate in all humiliation for supplementing the provincial requirements. Sir, he relied on the forecast of a department whose activities can seldom be felt in the country-side, but which came out in great prominence on paper. The report that embodies the brilliant performance of different sectional high brows and which comes in cold print annually once, is indeed a voluminous one. No other report can probably excel it in numerical superiority of pages and yet when one goes through it he is shocked to find that so little has been achieved and so much has been bluffed in course of a year.

Now, Sir, I will make an attempt to give the House a true picture of the present rice position in the Province basing my findings on the published figures of the Government. The final forecast of winter rice, the main

crop which occupy about 90 per cent. of the total paddy areas for 1942-43 recently published in the *Assam Gazette* shows the total area to be 38,15,800 acres and the total yield in terms of rice at 2,47,26,400 cwt. The provincial outturn has been shown as 81 per cent. of the normal per acre. The normal yield being 8 cwt. per acre as against 88 per cent. shown in the second forecast. So the final forecast shows a deficit of 29,18,621 maunds of rice over the second forecast. Then, Sir, appendix 1 of the same forecast shows the percentage of outturn to vary from 75 to 90 per cent. in different districts with highly variable acreages. The Government calculation of percentage outturn has been shown as 81 per cent. for the whole Province. This is mathematically unsound, as for instance, the area in the district of Sylhet is more than 13,00,000 acres and the percentage outturn is only 75 per cent. Naturally for such a big area if the yield is calculated on provincial average outturn the figures will give out a highly inflated position. The calculation made on percentage outturn basis, district by district, over the average provincial percentage outturn reveals a deficit of 2,43,189 maunds. Thus showing a total deficit of 31,61,810 maunds of rice over the second forecast.

Let us now approach the problem from another angle, namely, from the point of view of normal consumption, production, import and export. In the report of marketing of rice of Assam published by the Senior Marketing Officer it is seen that the total production of rice in 1939-40, a typically normal year, was 4,87,26,080 maunds of rice. The total export in terms of rice including that by country boats was 14,77,367 maunds and the total import in the same year was 11,93,213 maunds of rice. Now, if we deduct export from total production and add import the figure for normal provincial consumption is found out and this is 4,84,41,926 maunds of rice. From the Government figures published we find that the total production of rice in 1942-43 is 3,37,69,912 maunds of winter rice, 80,02,648 maunds autumn rice and 25,03,796 maunds of spring rice totalling 4,42,76,356 maunds of rice of all classes. These figures when deducted from the normal requirement show that our deficit this year is to the tune of 41,65,570 maunds of rice.

Now Sir, let us approach from still another angle. Appendix II of the final forecast shows that the production of winter rice for the preceding 5 years (1936-41) on average was 2,74,40,200 cwt., as compared to 2,39,45,500 cwt. in 1941-42. So the deficit in 1941-42 was 34,94,700 cwt. equal to 47,73,248 maunds. The production in 1942-43 is 2,47,26,384 cwt., as compared to 2,74,40,200 cwt., which was the acreage of the preceding 5 years. So the deficit of winter rice alone in the current year is equal to 27,13,800 cwt. equivalent to 37,06,653 maunds. All these are published Government figures and the whole myth of a surplus is now exploded. Judging from all angle it is apparent that there is a huge deficit not only this year, but that there was a deficit also last year. This shows that there is no hold-over stock of rice on which the Province can fall back. The cumulative effect of this deficit for 2 consecutive years has verily created an unprecedented food shortage in this Province. The actual deficit is likely to be still higher owing to the total stoppage of import, temporary increase in population and shortage of complementary food like wheat, pulses, etc.

Sir, the other day the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Agriculture read from a publication of the Central Government of 1940-41 that in the permanently-settled tracts of Sylhet and Goalpara the areas of jute are reported by the village Chaukidar and Panchayats. For other crop except

cotton and tea the areas are estimated in Sylhet by the Deputy Commissioner on the basis of the population figures and the surveyed areas of the temporarily settled parts of the districts ; in Goalpara they are obtained from the Zemindars. The figures are checked only in the temporarily-settled tracts by the circle Sub-Deputy Collectors. In the permanently-settled districts of Sylhet and Goalpara there is no real check at all. The hon. Members will find in the replies given to my starred question No.72(a) that in the district of Sylhet, only where both acreage and production have been shown increased in the year 1942-43 in comparison to the previous year. Sir, so far as Cachar is concerned, the acreage is less than the last year. Sir, in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Naga Hills, Lushai Hills and Balipara the acreage are the same as after five years the figures are calculated ; so we are not in a position to know whether the acreage have been increased or decreased. But so far as Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Sadiya, Cachar and Garo Hills are concerned, it will be found that the acreage that was under cultivation during the current year is less than the previous year. It is only in the district of Sylhet that the acreage has been increased, and the hon. Members can easily understand that there is no harm or difficulty in increasing any amount of acreage in this district because there is no check or record of right which has already been admitted in the report of the Central Government as quoted above.

Sir, so far as production is concerned, you will find from the same reply that it is only in the district of Sylhet that the crop has been sown in excess in comparison with last year. I do not want to tax the patience of the House any more in exposing the situation with regard to other food-stuffs, viz., wheat, sugar, flour, pulses, mustard oil, vegetables, fruits, milk, meat, eggs, etc., all of which go to make a balanced diet for proper nourishment of the body. There is already a serious shortage, particularly of animal protein in the Province. Slaughter of our livestock is going on without any regard to sex, and without any conservation of female stock ; this will lead to a serious depletion of our livestock strength, the effect of which has already been noticeable, and ere long the cultivators will be forced to give up cultivating the normal arable area. There is already an acute shortage of milk and ghee. There is no more import of milch cows and draught bullocks from outside sources. The fodder of cattle, which is insufficient even in normal times, is being systematically taken away to meet army requirements. Over and above this, Government is also contemplating to dwindle further the existing grazing reserve by opening them up for cultivation. The Department of Livestock which ought to have added to the existing livestock strength of the country and augmented the supply of fodder, milk and eggs is, alas, working as a supply agency for slaughter of animals of all description. All the cattle-rearing farms are now working as depots of supply with diseased animals collected from all places and spreading disease freely in the paddocks. Such a state of affairs will surely give rise to epidemic among the bovine species and the Veterinary Department which is already running short of medicines and vaccines will be hard put to cope with the situation. In this connection I think it would not be out of place to suggest to Government that instead of purchasing goat tissue virus from outside, it would be both economical and effective if those vaccines are manufactured in the Province. Sir, the other day it was admitted by the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Veterinary Department that due to transport difficulty the vaccines brought from outside lose their potentiality to a great extent, and it may be found also from the Budget and the reports of the Veterinary Department that the cost

of goat-tissue virus was Rs.154 in 1935-1936, in 1939-40 it rose to Rs.3,575 and the budget estimate for the year 1943-44 provides a sum of Rs.8,000. So, if Government cares to give my suggestion a trial, *viz.*, to manufacture of goat-tissue virus in the Province under the supervision of an expert, they will ultimately be gainer from all points of view.

Now, Sir, coming to the question of food, it has been found out a dismal picture indeed. The Grow More Food Campaign initiated at the instance of the Government of India was indeed a timely move in the right direction. Now, I wish that the campaign had been rightly pushed through. But, alas, the Department of Agriculture had no plan or policy to guide the movement in the right direction. It seems that the entire fund was spent for the production of potato, of which there is already a surplus in the Province. Practically nothing was done for augmenting the production of rice and wheat, our staple food in which the Province is deplorably deficient. That shows definitely that this Department had no working plan to judge in which direction their field of work lay. Had the officers not lacked foresight there would not have been such a grave and alarming situation with regard to rice, the shortage of which threatens to endanger our social life and peace. Nothing calls for a more concerted action between the public and the Government than the Grow More Food Campaign for devising means and ways in tackling the various local problems connected with it. This is a sphere of activity in which all are equally interested because it touches the stomach of everybody. The Government should, therefore, initiate a bold and a positive policy on the following lines to tide over the crisis:—

- (a) To guide the work of this important campaign, the Government should appoint a special officer conversant with rural agricultural economics in all its bearings and capable of planning and directing the work in the right line. If necessary the Government should not fight shy to recruit a capable man even from outside the Province.
- (b) The activities of the Agriculture Department should be switched off exclusively to cope with the present emergency. If necessary, the peace time activities may even be suspended for the time being.
- (c) The Department should arrange supply of seeds of high yielding varieties and manures in sufficiently large quantities. Agriculture in Assam is entirely rain-fed and the success or failure of a crop depends a good deal on the vagaries of weather.
- (d) Arrangement for protection of paddy from flood, water hyacinth and insect should be made immediately.
- (e) Irrigation facilities for extension of *boro* paddy cultivation should be provided.
- (f) Provision should be made to supply sufficient quantity of soya-beans, mustard seeds, sugarcane cells, vegetable seeds, wheat and pulse seeds for local production.
- (g) To provide against possible shortage of kerosene oil, cultivation of castor, mustard and *tappi mula* (raddish) should be extended.
- (h) Extension of existing areas of grazing land by throwing open the reserves to the cattle owners free of cost and encouraging open the production of fodder should be taken up. The Livestock Department instead of frittering away their energies for vegetable production for the Military and supply of livestock for slaughter should concentrate their all in augmenting the production of fodder and livestock materials.

- (i) A number of propaganda officers capable of understanding mass psychology should be appointed immediately to preach to every village about the necessity of increased food production and give advice to the cultivators as to how the production can be increased by improved cultural method, preparation of land, seed rate, time of transplanting and spacing between the plants.

So far as I know, it is impossible for any industry and less possible for agriculture than for any other, to increase its productive capacity without an outlay of capital; so Government should help the agriculturists in all possible way. We hear a lot these days about opening up of new cultivable waste land and thus bringing about an extension of area. Has any body thought about the capital outlay and time that will be required to make it feasible? Instead of depending on extensive cultivation it would be more expedient to induce intensive cultivation and thus augment the yield per unit area by judicious application of manures and improved cultural practices and other demonstration as suggested above.

These are but some of the salient points that have struck me in my analysis of the situation which could probably be translated into action to make the campaign a success.

2. My next suggestion is that the Government should appoint regional food advisory boards with ramification in every subdivision to plan out food and fodder production programmes according to local conditions and give advice to the Agriculture Department with regard to its execution, to advise the authorities about equitable distribution of food and also to control prices of essential commodities. These boards should consist of officials and non-officials giving due representation to land-owners, merchants and should also include a local Member of the Legislative Assembly. All the subdivisional boards should be co-ordinated through a District Board consisting again of both officials and non-officials.

3. For equitable distribution of necessities of life and to guard against avoidable waste a system of rationing may be adopted with advantage. Sir, it has already been stated by the Hon'ble Premier and I hope his hopes will be crowned with success that there will be no such need. But if in case there is any such need Government should not hesitate to adopt this suggestion also.

4. The Government should supplement their Grow More Food Campaign by initiating another "Grow More Cotton Campaign" to meet the present acute shortage of cloth inside the Province. Sufficient quantities of short staple cotton which can be woven into coarse cloth or *khaddar* by handlooms should be produced locally. The Government ought to have foreseen the necessity of producing good quality cotton and ought to have fostered its cultivation by this time.

5. It is a known fact that in Assam Valley almost in every house there is a handloom for the manufacture of cloth. Huge quantities of cotton twist and yarns amounting to about 50,000 maunds were used to be imported from outside every year. This is reported in the Marketing Survey of Cotton in Assam. But the cotton weavers are not getting raw materials and the once firmly established indigenous industry is suffering a set-back and manufacture of cloth inside the Province is almost dead. The net result is that people are insufficiently clad and suffering from the rigour of winter. The prices of cloth have shot up to an extraordinary high level causing extreme hardships to millions of people. The Government should take immediate

step for the supply of yarns in sufficient quantities to manufacture cloth locally by handloom and encourage development of these industries to the maximum extent.

6. Alas, due to scarcity of cloth, India, the origin of cotton industry, is going to be converted into a country of nudes. Government is taking away the products of the Indian mills for military purposes to a great extent. Since 1940 Government are giving hopes to the public that they would make arrangements for cheap standard cloth which will give the people relief, but actually what quantity we are getting? Instead of standard cloth we are getting hopes. The persons in misery have no other medicine but hope. In the long history of India many famines and epidemics have taken place, but nobody has ever heard of such scarcity of cloth for millions of people. I would urge on the Government to take early steps for supply of adequate quantities of standard cloth to the public. A civilised Government, it is expected, will not like to see the people naked, as it is already the case in some villages where people are wearing gunny.

7. Unrestricted trade cripples the industrial tendency of a country and this is why India has become a non-industrial country. The economic condition of an agricultural country can never be improved. A country to be economically improved must be industrialised and its raw materials should be used to manufacture different kinds of articles. Difficulties and delays in obtaining permits for import and export of food-stuffs inside the Province should be promptly attended to. The Government should also arrange to open cheap grain shops all over the country. Facilities for transport of food grains from one surplus area to a deficit area within the Province are becoming difficult owing to the non-availability of railway waggons, motor trucks, shortage of petrol and tyres. In view of this situation, Government should make arrangements with the Railway Authorities for priority certificate for the movement of food-stuffs. For whom these railways are working? What benefit the general public is deriving at present from the railways? The regulation under Tyre and Petrol Rationing Orders should be liberalised to have recourse to motor transport on an increased scale. Sir, during the last November session while making a statement on the political and economic situation of the Province, the Hon'ble Premier said that the Government would endeavour not only to buy the monthly supply but also to keep at least a reserve of three months' stock so that in case there be again breach in the trainline of communication the Province would not be in denuded of the much needed commodities. That immediate steps would be taken for the amelioration of the conditions of the people and for seeing that all the food-stuffs that were necessary might be available at a reasonable price to the people in the countryside. But from what we find now, the hon. Members have already formed their opinion, I am sure, after hearing the Hon'ble Premier to day. There are sufficient coal mines, but still we are suffering from scarcity of coal. Why? It is not that the mines are empty, but it is because of transport difficulty. Here it is a case of mismanagement and not the result of much talked black market. Wood fuel is also becoming very dear? Small coins have become so very scarce for the last few months that businessmen, middle-class, poor people and all are experiencing great difficulty.

Paper is another article which is becoming scarce and causing difficulty to the public in general.

Government should immediately introduce cultivation of Jerusalem artichokes both for human consumption and more specially as a feeding stuff

for cattle since the crop of Jerusalem artichoke is 6 times as prolific as that of potatoes and can produce 30 tons of tubers per acre. Government should make it known as far as practicable its immunity from diseases and that it can be grown in almost any soil and situation and after the glucose has been extracted, the residue of the plant is available.....

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Will the hon. Member please tell me what article he mentioned? I could not follow him.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It is Jerusalem artichoke.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: The residue of the plant is available as a stuff for fattening cattle. Sir, a copy of the leaflet on the subject was published by the Home Government, and I urge upon the Government that they should bring a copy of the same and distribute its copies very liberally among the people. Sir, as regards the leaflet on the subject, I found this in the publication of debates of Commons, Volume 357, page 1574 and this point was raised in the House of Commons on the 22nd February 1940 and there the Home Government accepted the suggestion and they did whatever was possible on their part. Sir, I know that this Jerusalem artichoke is sold sometimes in the Shillong market.

Now, Sir, I shall request the Government to be more particular about the supply of kerosene oil. Without light what amount of time is being daily wasted? This is a time when everyone should make the best use of every minute, but that cannot be done. The work of cottage industry remains, closed at night, students cannot study, practically without light people are becoming idle and inactive after nightfall. Sir, I have dealt with the necessities of life that may be produced and manufactured in the Province and requested Government to make arrangements for adequate supplies of other essential food-stuffs and necessities of life that should be imported. I think, it is my duty to mention here that our actual (and not fictitious) surplus of any commodity should also be exported to other parts of the country where there is a demand for the same. Unless the situation is properly handled, there will be food riots; morale of the people cannot be maintained unless their stomachs are full. Corruption and bribery will degenerate the people; there are already signs of it.

Sir, now I shall touch the last point that was touched by the Hon'ble the Prime Minister, I mean quinine. Sir, Assam is a malarious country where the demon of malaria takes a heavy toll of human lives every year. During this year, the incidence of malaria is much more owing to the movement of infected army personnel and labourers from malarious districts to different parts of the Province and also due to the fact that there is practically no quinine in the market. Price of quinine has risen from Rs. 18 to Rs. 500 per pound, fairy tale indeed, which has made the stuff non-available to the poor peasantry and the middle-class and as a result of the exorbitant rise in price and scarcity of real quinine, people are dying like flies. Could not the Government foresee the necessity of this essential medicine and make big purchases for keeping a reserve stock for meeting this emergency? Four or five years back, the subject of cultivation of cinchona (quinine) on a large scale in Assam had been exhaustively discussed by various Members on the floor of this House. It was also pointed out that cultivation of cinchona would bring an enormous profit to the Government, which could greatly add to the provincial revenues and quinine could also be made available locally. The Government did not move at the time and their extreme apathy to this vital matter will be

responsible for the deaths of thousands of people. It is high time for the Government and their officials to plan their activities with sufficient foresight and move 10 or 20 years ahead. It is expected that Government will now see to the rapid extension of the cinchona cultivation, even though it is the eleventh hour.

We heard about 3 years' stock of quinine in India ; but where is that stock, for whom and at what quantity it is being used ? Such ambiguous declaration is really dangerous and most misleading. Knowing that the majority of people suffer from malaria, Government left the industry in the hands of the Buro Company, a Dutch concern, though there were full scope and lands for extensive cinchona cultivation. Government compelled us to depend on the Dutch East Indies Company for quinine. The inevitable result is there. Government have kept a few pills in the dispensaries and thereby keeping the prestige of the "Red tape".

Sir, it may be said that all these will require money ; yes, I admit, and my suggestion is that let Government borrow money from the Central Government for improving the condition of the Province to such an extent that people get their necessities of life and can live like so many human beings. After the war is over, it is certain that there will be a change in the Constitution and from our past experience we can also reasonably expect that we are sure to get relief so far our debts to the Central Government are concerned. Borrow money, do the needful, rise upto the occasion and save the Province from the impending crisis.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Amendment moved :

"That for the original Motion, the following be substituted :—

Taking the economic situation of the Province into consideration, this Assembly is of opinion that Government do take immediate steps to introduce the following measures amongst others to protect the Province against the possible crisis due to shortage of essential food-stuffs and clothings :—

1. The Grow-More-Food Campaign be properly handled by an expert and qualified officer.
2. To set up regional Food Advisory Boards throughout the Province to regulate the production, supply and price.
3. To introduce ration cards, if necessary.
4. To make adequate provision for the increased production of short staple cotton which may be utilised for making cloth by handloom process.
5. To make adequate arrangements for the supply of yarns in big quantities to the weavers.
6. To make arrangements for the adequate supply of standard cloth.
7. To stop export of all kinds of food-stuffs that are grown in the Province and are required to be stopped to meet the needs of the Province, and
8. To make arrangements for adequate supplies of other essential food-stuffs and other necessities of life."

***Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move : That after the words, "be taken into consideration" at the end of the Motion, the following be added :—

"and that this Assembly is of opinion that the Government of Assam do constitute a committee to devise plans for starting, with improved mechanical methods, industrial co-operatives and agricultural collective

farms, immediately throughout the Province, in order to put an end to the acute food crisis through which it is passing at present”.

Sir, it is true that this is not a comprehensive scheme. I want to place only the principle before the House and my Motion is to constitute a committee and if the Motion is carried, I shall place the contents of the scheme before the committee and the scheme may be discussed later.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been found that almost all the hon. Members of this House are unanimous in demanding from Government the increase of industrial and agricultural production, but no concrete suggestion about formulating any scheme has yet been advanced. I therefore suggest to Government for introducing socialisation of industry and collectionisation of agriculture with improved mechanical methods, by starting Industrial Co-operative and Agricultural Collective Farm in rural areas of the Province. The villagers should be educated to shake off their conservatism and defeatism and be imbued with the spirit of producing their own articles of consumption instead of clamouring for high prices of commodities and scarcity of articles of consumption. Government also should give up their sceptical attitude regarding raising of funds for Industrial Co-operatives in war time. When how a wonderful Indusco line has sprung up in unoccupied area of China amidst enemy bombardment and other inconveniences due to the Japanese invasion, is brought to the notice of the hon. Members of this House, every hon. Member would admit that the establishment of Industrial Co-operative Farm would not be an impossibility in our Province. Hon. members would do well if they have some quotation from the book ‘Scattered Earth’ by Edgar Snow which will substantiate how the Indusco scheme presented by Sir Archibald Ker Claxton—then the British Ambassador in China and how this has been made effective within a very short period of time by tireless energy, selfless devotion, incessant tenacity and patience of one gentleman, Mr. Alley, a New Zealander of British descent.

“In Alley’s case in two years Indusco set up a record in China for the shortest distance between paper planning and action. And judged against the difficulties overcome, Indusco can stand in a world where far richer peoples lost hope under infinitely lighter burdens, as a monument to a great nation’s courage, ingenuity and endurance. Industrial Co-operatives were growing so far that yesterday’s data was stale before it was printed. Early in October of 1940 there were over 2,300 of these vest-pocket factories spread across sixteen provinces and under the technical direction of seventy branch headquarters. The Indusco Line extended all the way from guerrilla territory, behind enemy positions into China’s deep operating machine-shops and mines. Indusco turned out its own equipment for many new industries, which appeared at a rate of about twenty-five a week. An army of 3,00,000 people was directly dependent on the organisation for a livelihood, and work had been created for thousands more.

Alley was, of course, only the ‘prime mover’ that had started the wheels. He and the unique backings which he had were necessary guarantees to Chinese members that the organisation would have a chance to develop along true co-operative lines free from the traditional incubuses of bureaucracy, nepotism and graft. Thus reassured, some of China’s ablest engineers and technical men had given up highly-paid jobs and volunteered for the new industrial army with an enthusiasm that amazed cynical onlookers.

Technicians and organisers started to work in the country and tackled

the tremendous task of educating the people to a new idea. Everywhere they went they called meetings, preached the principles and hung up their announcements and signs promising technical help and loans to those who would organise for production. Suspicions had to be dispelled by performance. Slowly the first units won public confidence. These men did exactly what they said. Applications soon far outnumbered the capacity of the small staff and available capital, and thousands were put on waiting lists.

Labourers were registered, selected according to health, experience and character and grouped according to crafts. Co-operators taught them how to organise, how to conduct meetings and how to study local markets. Technicians helped them with fine machine—often dragged hundreds of miles overland—how to locate self factory sites and how to use, and later how to make simple machines. Above all, they taught how to improvise with the materials available. Schools were stopped to train unskilled refugees, accountants, organisers and technicians.

Loans were made at from 6 to 10 per cent. annually, in a country where usuary rates are often too much. The producers' pledges to a common constitution was accepted as security. Through the deduction of a percentage of wages and profits the refugees pay up their loans on the instalment plan and become owner operators of industry. And so rapid is capital turned over for this new land, and so great the demand for goods that many groups have already paid back their entire original loans and borrowed more for expansion. Meanwhile hundreds of Co-operatives now manage their own business with only technical assistance from the CIC field staff.

Weaving, spinning, knitting, printing and transport units were the first to appear. One villager turned a stream so that it should provide bar for a machine shop and the idea quickly spread. Flour mills, paper mills, blowers and furnaces were driven by direct water power or Indusco engines operating on Indusco alcohol. Other industries quickly followed: glass making, coal, iron and gold mining, leather tanning, sugar and oil refinery, textiles, chemicals, printing and publications and so on. Iron foundries were stopped, and Indusco's many machine shops now included well concealed and compact units in the guerrilla districts.

Indusco factories made mechanical supplies, uniforms, hand-grenades, electrical equipment, wagons, tents, stretchers and other military necessities. Forty thousand Indusco spinners and weavers now equip the entire China's army with blankets—some of which were formerly imported from Japan. Over fifty different kinds of industry were represented in the hundreds of miniature factories."

Weaving, spinning and knitting can at once be taken up in our Province. Production of *ghee*, mustard oil and other necessary articles of consumption can easily be arranged by starting small democratic industry to be mainly managed by villagers themselves by electing a managing committee with a Secretary and Chairman. Capital (in shares) and labour would easily be forthcoming in this period of extreme necessity, but Government is to help them with necessary loans, expert opinion about machine and other particulars.

Similarly, agricultural collective farms may also be established in rural areas so that the agricultural productions may increase by at least 50 per cent. of what are being produced by now. The farms are to be managed by their own committee of cultivators. Government should assist them with loans, seeds and tractor machines. Every hon Member of this House is aware how gigantic results have been received in the Ukraine in U. S. S. R. The collective farming may be introduced in this Province

in areas where Government reserves are being opened. Details about the industrial co-operatives and collective farming are to be formulated by the committee which I have suggested. When the Motion is accepted by the House, I shall place before the House the names of its personnel.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Amendment moved:

"That after the words 'be taken into consideration' at the end of the Motion, the following be added:—

'and that this Assembly is of opinion that the Government of Assam do constitute a committee to devise plans for starting, with improved mechanical methods, industrial co-operatives and agricultural collective farms immediately throughout the Province, in order to put an end to the acute food crisis through which it is passing at present'."

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is difficult to take part in a debate which ranges from rice statistics in Assam to the collective farming in Ukraine of Russia and then comes to co-operative industries in parts of China. I think this debate should be brought to a much narrower platform from the one to which it has been stretched and I would suggest it should start from the fact that the Government of Assam has become the biggest single shopkeeper in the whole of Eastern India as the following figures quoted by the Hon'ble Prime Minister will show. A single grocer's shop which imported in six months 7 lakhs maunds of salt $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of maunds of sugar and more than 94 thousand maunds of *Dal* is a very big business indeed. We in the Assembly ought to examine this shop and attempt to draw up a Balance Sheet of Government's trading achievements since 31st August 1942.

Government did not willingly adventure in the grocery business. Necessity drove them to it and the main fact to my mind for which the Prime Minister should be given credit is that Assam was the first Province in India which realised that necessity and acted more quickly than any other Provincial Governments. It is quite certain that without Government intervention these large quantities could not have been bought and if any of them had been bought, they could not have been transported into the Province of Assam. Critics will complain that the distribution of these commodities was not as equitable as it should have been, but the fact remains that taken as a whole, the Province was fed and pockets of scarcity did not survive for periods long enough to cause major hardships.

For these trading transactions, Government appointed agents in Calcutta to handle imports into the Province and appointed agents inside the Province to handle rice and paddy. There will be criticism that these agents were European firms, but in making these appointments Government had to act quickly and they had to secure the most skilful agency possible.

It will be claimed that had other agents been appointed, more goods might have been handled, but we must remember that a multiplicity of agents would have forced up prices. War in every country is a time for amalgamation and for the elimination of competitive buying. The success of the buying policy within the Province is shown by the fact that during 1942 in the Assam Valley the price of rice did not go beyond Rs.9 whereas in adjacent Bengal districts the price rose to over Rs.18.

The second experiment made by the Government of Assam was to set up an Economic Advisory Board, representative of all public and commercial interests. This Board meets once a month in Shillong and the resident members under the guidance of the Hon'ble Prime Minister in Shillong meet more frequently. The economic condition of the Province, particularly its transport problems, are never lost sight of for these come under

frequent and extremely critical scrutiny. Transport Companies, Railway and Steamer Companies are represented on this Board and criticism of them is free and vigorous.

Mr. Speaker, if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery then the Government of Assam have reason to feel flattered, for Members will note that 6 months after the Government of Assam had appointed their own purchasing agents, the Government of India asked all Provinces to appoint monopoly buying agents. In other words, Sir, the Government of India adopted in 1943 the same system of dealing with the surplus and deficit Provinces that the Government of Assam had adopted in 1942 for dealing with surplus and deficit districts within the Province. Secondly, last month, the Government of the United Provinces announced the creation of an Economic Advisory Board; and this month, March 1943, the Bengal Government when severely criticised for their management, or perhaps mismanagement, of the food problem in Bengal announced the appointment of an Advisory Committee presided over by Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sirkar, *ex*-Commerce Member of the Viceroy's Council. Too often, Sir, have we complained from these benches that Assam has been content to follow other Provinces in India. But in the economic sphere Assam has led the way.

In all these discussions it is useful to have some yard stick of the measure of Government's success or failure. I suggest, Sir, that the best yard stick is the level of prices of the most important foodstuff of this Province, namely, rice. Whereas in Bengal, there are districts where you cannot buy rice under Rs. 25 per maund, in the Assam Valley the price level at the present moment is slightly over Rs. 10 per maund. This speaks volumes for the success of Government's policy. This price level has not been achieved by accident. It has been achieved by wise direction on the part of the Government of Assam assisted, I hope, by the Economic Advisory Board.

Moreover, whilst maintaining a price level at a round Rs.10, this Province has been able to release large quantities of rice for feeding the armed forces in Assam protecting our frontiers. It will also be able to export later in the year quantities to relieve scarcity conditions in other Provinces. Members of the Assembly do not appreciate their own good fortune. For example, in Cochin and Travancore at present the ration of rice is $\frac{1}{4}$ th seer per day for an adult and $\frac{1}{8}$ th seer for a child under 13. I know there will be an agitation for the stoppage of these Government exports, as Mr. Mookerjee has already, as usual, vigorously started the ex-rolling, but Members must consider that in present conditions the best guarantee for maintaining a flow of essential foodstuffs into the Province of Assam must be reciprocity. We have rice, we have paddy. The fact that in 1942 when there were no imports from Burma, the Province fed itself and helped to feed the Army and also fed 2,20,000 refugees, many of them taking more than 3 weeks to pass through this Province; that throughout the year the Province exported by country boats and also by rail large quantities of rice and still kept the price down to Rs. 9 per maund, seems to be a proof far more conclusive than Mr. Mookerjee's statistics that this Province had, in fact, a substantial surplus in 1942. If the Grow-More-Food Campaign has increased the acreage in rice, as I hope it has done, the surplus of rice in this Province will be greater in 1943 than in 1942. I know there is a great deal of mistrust of these statistics, and I will not go into that. But I do think that the considerations which I am now putting before are sufficient confirmation

of the statement made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in Delhi in January last and made repeatedly on the floor of this House. What I do ask Members to believe is the existence of a surplus. It is literally true that we have to export to live because only by exporting can we import essential foodstuffs such as sugar, *dal*, and wheat products. I would ask Mr. Mookerjee where should we be if every Province in India were to adopt his policy of concerning all their foodstuffs.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I am sorry, the hon. Member has mis-understood me. I definitely stated that whatever may be the commodities, if we have got any surplus, we should export them to an area where there is need for them. And it is not a fact that every Province is exporting and that we are only importing such commodities. He has twisted the thing and wants to put in my mouth such things which I did not utter. It is really not befitting the hon. Member who is the leader of the European Group.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: If in any way I twisted Mr. Mookerjee's statement I withdraw. But I insist that there is no reason to support the jugglery of figures to which Mr. Mookerjee treated this House.

A Maltese sailor very wisely said : "some is plenty, enough is too much" and I think that this should be the motto of the Province of Assam during war time. Some is plenty, enough is too much. The achievement of the Government of Assam is that, in my view, they have always been able to provide some foodstuffs; seldom, except in the case of salt, have they been able to provide enough.

Not all the items on my balance sheet are on the assets side. There are some very serious liability entries. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has already told us about the failure of Government authorities in Dibrugarh to maintain a system of accounts for foodstuffs which they disbursed. One of the advantages of having a reliable purchasing agency is that their accounts are properly kept. It is only prudent that a Government which goes in for large scale grocery should adopt large scale grocer's methods of keeping its books. There are also other debit items such as the growth of the black markets and the nominal sentences imposed on profiteers. There is also the illicit export of rice and paddy which enemies of this Province are making in order to reap 100 per cent. profit by sale in the neighbouring Province of Bengal. These debit items or liability items of my balance sheet are not permanent entries. They can be remedied by vigorous Government action. I believe that action has already been begun by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in charge of the Supply Department. I am very glad indeed to hear to-day from the Prime Minister that firm, unequivocal statement that in no circumstances will there be private export of rice and paddy from the Province of Assam; if there is export, it should be under Government control. If there is any mistake about this surplus and about this export, the repercussions will undoubtedly fall on the Government of the day. Hoarding has become a habit in all classes, merely because there is a widespread belief that sooner or later the Government of Assam can be cajoled into lifting this ban on export to other Provinces. In many ways a remarkable entry on the assets side of the balance sheet is the Provincial Motor Transport Organisation which has come under fire to-day. I think critics should remember that Assam gave up cheerfully a far greater proportion of its

motor lorries for military use and for the defence of India than any other Province of India. Now, in the fourth year of war, we are in a desperate situation and a desperate remedy was required. The remedy is the Provincial Motor Transport Controller's organisation, which is the creation of the Hon'ble Prime Minister. It is true that this organisation has not got sufficient lorries, but no organisation in war time ever has sufficient lorries. If every country had sufficient transport, there would have been no war.

I am going to anticipate some of the criticism in this Assembly by recalling a story from 'Alice in Wonderland'. You, Sir, will remember that the March Hare, the Mad Hatter and Alice sat down to tea. The March Hare said to Alice: "take some more tea"; whereupon Alice replied in a very offended tone: "I have had nothing yet, so I can't take more". This brought the Mad Hatter into the conversation with the remark: "you mean you can't take less. It is very easy to take more than nothing". This is the attitude of some of the critics; they are going to say, like Alice, that they have had nothing yet so they cannot take more.

Finally one of the attractions of serving in this Assembly is that I can always be certain of receiving some very chilly blasts and some very hot blasts from Members of all Parties. So much so that I am almost tempted to ask that I should be given the right of reply. Since I cannot have the right of reply, I hope critics will remember that when making their destructive criticism of this Supply Department, they should not do what the nurse-maid did—throw away the baby, with the bath water. If they do not like the present arrangements, will they at least put up something better? Having seen the Economic Advisory Board at work for the last 8 months, I can assure all members that the Hon'ble Prime Minister is always ready to consider any solution of our present difficulty and if they have any constructive ideas he will see that they are thoroughly investigated. The sober truth is that our problems are so serious that we need the help of all men of good will and all men with good brains and enterprise. In my view the brains and enterprise are at least as important as elements of good will (*applause*).

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will begin with Mr. Whittaker. It seems Mr. Whittaker is very much afraid of hot blasts from me. I can assure him Sir, that if I throw blasts at times, I am very much willing also to give credit whenever that is due. Mr. Whittaker being the Leader of the Tea Planting group naturally referred to a tea episode from Alice in Wonderland. I wish his party would treat us to tea at this fag end of the day.

At the outset I would like to disabuse the minds of hon. Members of this House from the idea that I am for this Province alone and do not care for the needs and requirements of the neighbouring Provinces. Sir, I have my fullest sympathy for every section of the people in this wide world. But at the same time I have to see also that I do not over estimate my capacity to be of any service to any body else, lest I be accused of giving false assurance to others and bring disaster for me as well. We have to guard against that and now I will show, Sir, by facts and figures supplied by Government itself that we have no right to tell the world that we can export any surplus from this Province when actually we shall have to face a huge deficit so far as our own minimum requirements are concerned. Sir, I have now to enter into the labyrinth of figures. Mr. Whittaker was

pleased to call Mr Mookerjee 'Master of Jugglery' so far as figures are concerned. Sir, this honourable House had been used to 'Mas er' of Jugglery' with figures at the hands of Hon'ble Sir Muhammad Saadulla as Finance Minister of this Province. Sir, I was wondering if he was not showing another jugglery with figures in connection with the agricultural statistics of this Province. Sir, I tried to keep short notes of his speech from which I find that he has quoted figures from the report that has been published by Mr. Handique, the Deputy Director. I have got that report with me now; this report gives the figure of rice produced in Assam during the last five years. It was 4,00,87,280. Then all at once the Hon'ble Prime Minister said that since the Grow More Food Campaign was started in this Province, there has been an increase of 10 per cent. of land under cultivation.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: No, Sir, I think the Hon'ble Premier said 5 per cent.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Yes, Sir, I find from my note that he then modifies his figure and says that there has been an increase of 5 per cent. On the basis of that he has come to the conclusion that this year the production has come up to 5 crores 9 lakhs of maunds. I have also tried to go through some of the agricultural statistics published by the Provincial Government as also by the Central Government and I think, I have yet to learn, Sir, that there has been any extension of acreage in this Province this year. From the final forecast which is published on 17th of March to which the Hon'ble Prime Minister was also pleased to refer, we find, Sir, that so far as winter rice is concerned the normal acreage for Assam is 33 lakhs 3 thousand acres. The actual area of last year was 36 lakhs—it was a flood year—and this year it is 38,15,800 acres. To the normal acreage of 33,30,000 acres, there has been an increase of at most 12,800 acres. I think, I will have to learn mathematics again to accept that 12,800 acres is as 5 per cent. of 33 lakhs of acres.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: There are two other crops as well. I think the Hon'ble Prime Minister meant the whole of the 3 crops in the year.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Sir, the figure of land under rice as published by the Government shows clearly that the acreage of this Province in 1937-38 was 50,50,000 acres, in 1938-39, 53,52,000, 1939-40, 53,52,000 and in 1940-41 it was 54,26,000. Sir, the final forecast shows the acreage on the basis of the above estimate. The acreage under winter rice was 38,15,800 against the forecast of 38,60,800. The latest figures show it was 38,15,800 and so this increase of 12,000 certainly does not mean an increase of 5 per cent. or 10 per cent. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has calculated an increase of 15 lakhs maunds of winter crop, but so far as the outturn is concerned, we find again that in the second forecast the estimate was 88 per cent. of the normal while actually in final forecast it has come down to 81 per cent. While the outturn has actually come down by 19 per cent. of the normal we are asked by the Hon'ble Prime Minister to accept that it has really increased.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir. May I again rise and point out that in the last sentence of the forecast dated 17th of March, there has been an increase, as compared with the previous year, of approximately 7 lakhs 8 thousand hundredweights and that should be turned into maunds. I think that is what the Hon'ble Prime Minister meant.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Does the hon. Member mean to say that it has increased?

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: It has increased by 8 lakhs hundredweights

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Sir, in the Press Note which was published by the Government of Assam in the month of February 1943, it was stated that in normal years after balancing the imports and exports we used to get a surplus of 7 lakhs of maunds. Sir, the forecast says that our outturn this year has gone down to 81 per cent. of the normal. On the face of all this, Sir, I cannot accept that figure of 50 lakhs of maunds of surplus. Sir, according to the final forecast of winter crop published by the Government of Assam in its official Gazette of 17th March, it will be found that the outturn for the current year is 81 per cent. of the normal. The normal tonnage in this Province as published in the Government of India's publication is so far as I have been able to gather near about 17 lakhs tons of rice; in 1936-37 it was 19,04,000 tons of rice; in 1937-38 it was 17,45,000 tons; in 1938-39 it was 17,42,000 tons; in 1939-40 it was 17,42,000 tons; in 1940-41 it was 18 lakhs tons; so on an average it was 17,42,000 tons.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: 17,40,000 tons is over 490 lakhs maunds.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Yes, I am coming to that. If 17,42,000 tons be the normal production of this Province, we have got 19 per cent. less than this quantity this year. The forecast says "the provincial outturn is 81 per cent. of the normal per acre", i.e., 19 per cent. less.....

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: May I again intervene finally? The fact of the matter is that there has never been a normal crop in Assam. If we go through the figures for the last fifteen years, we find that the average crop in Assam is somewhere between 71 and 75 per cent. of the normal. When we talk about 81 per cent. of the normal we are talking about an entirely fictitious figure. "Normal" is somewhere between 71 and 75. It is one of my main complaints about the Agriculture Department that they never trouble to explain to the laymen what they mean by "normal".

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Exactly, Sir, and that is why I say these figures are fictitious and speculative, and we cannot rely on them. The Hon'ble Prime Minister was trying to convince the House with those figures. We are not prepared to accept these figures or the statistics supplied by either the Provincial or the Central Government. We find that the acreage of cultivation has decreased in every district except Sylhet. Now, what is the condition of Sylhet? Normally the acreage of Sylhet is 13 lakhs; last year it was 10 lakhs due to flood; this year it has been 13,54,000—an increase of 54,000. But in every other district the acreage has fallen (Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee:—Sylhet is assessed on the population basis). The Hon'ble Prime Minister was pleased to say that Sylhet was a deficit district. The Government has got to rely on the figures and statistics supplied to them by officers, but they do not know which figures are correct, and which are not. So, whatever figures they get on their table they accept as correct, and are supplementing them by their own imagination they form an idea about the economic condition of the Province. Sir, without going through the figures let us see what idea can a layman form about the actual condition of the production in this Province. It is a fact that we used to import huge quantities of Burma rice, and rice to the extent of 4 lakhs maunds of rice imported from Manipur in addition to 1½ lakhs maunds of rice. Mr. Whittaker was pleased to say that we were able to feed some surplus population, i.e., Burma refugees, last year without having any surplus population. Mr. Whittaker forgot that even last year Manipur rice was available to import. But he was some carry over from the previous year. Very surely, Sir, the Province did not use to import all these huge quantities for the purpose of

silting up the beds of rivers, Brahmaputra or Surma. I know, Sir, some figures will be placed to show that the Province used to export rice also. As against that, as I have said, the Press report has stated that balancing the export and import in normal years Assam used to have a surplus of 7 lakhs maunds. If that is the condition, Sir—this year with a definite decrease in production it has been admitted in the final forecast that the outturn is 81 per cent. of the normal as compared to 88 per cent. of this year's second forecast—the Hon'ble Premier's statement at Delhi that the Province would have a surplus of 21 lakhs or 42 lakhs maunds, basing on the calculation of the second forecast does not reveal the true state of affairs, because since then there has been a further decrease of the total production by 7 per cent. Mr. Mookerjee has already given the actual figures.

Sir, any way, Mr. Whittaker also agreed to concede that there might be some mistakes. He said if there be a mistake let us take that contingency; Sir, I am afraid, when using that phrase he was fully conscious that those figures were not correct. There is actually some deficit in the Province. Again, Sir, these figures are only for winter crop; winter crop is supplemented by the summer crop and the rainy season crop, and thus we get the total crop for the whole year. So far as Surma Valley is concerned, Sir, I can inform the House that I have got reports that hailstorms have already visited some areas and we may not have our full quota of *boro* crop this year, and as for the rainy season crop we do not know how many floods are in store for us.

Sir, I shall be the happiest man in Assam to be convinced that this Province is really a surplus one. I am in no mood to make any destructive criticism in order to discredit the Hon'ble Premier or anybody else. I am here with the best of my motives, I am here to inform the hon. Members about the true state of affairs and to give my own warning to beware betimes. If there is a surplus of course we shall export it; but let us first be sure that we have really got a surplus, not paying much attention to fictitious figures supplied by Heads of Departments or any one else.

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

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: So I have tried to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Premier to the actual state of affairs as far as I could gather from the figures published by his own departments and as a layman my idea is that the Province is faced with an extremely serious situation. So I appeal to the Hon'ble Premier to exercise all his influence with the Central Government to see that no quantity of rice or paddy is exported from this Province till we are assured of any surplus at all. Even now we do not know our position, we are not sure whether we have got any surplus at all. These are nothing but speculative figures and we cannot rely on them in the least.

Various suggestions have been made about the Grow More Food Campaign. I have also placed my suggestions during the cut motion on Agriculture and I do not like to repeat them again. I can only submit to the Hon'ble Premier that we can stabilise the condition of the people only by producing more and in order to produce more the Cabinet will have to exert their energy more systematically and create a psychological atmosphere in the country so that the people can feel that they have got real sympathy from the administrators. With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: When we got the assurance that the Hon'ble Premier would make an announcement with regard to the supply question of the Province we expected that we should hear something which

mostly concerns the food policy hitherto followed by the Government. But I now find from the speeches of my predecessors that a tempest has come in a tea pot. Most of the hon. Members have exhausted their energy on the question whether the Province is a surplus one or a deficit one. Sir, the quarrel has so long been going on from one part of the House to the other. While the Motion was moved by the Hon'ble Premier I heard big figures of lakhs and lakhs and then Mr. Whittaker supplied us with crores and crores and now Babu Nirendra Nath Dev has come with thousands. But I am not prepared to hear all these things. I am concerned only whether by the food policy of the Government my country is getting relief, whether my poor people are not suffering from shortage of food-stuffs and whether the present quantity is up to the requirement. Sir, as we read the pages of newspapers we find that this question alone is agitating the minds of millions and millions of people throughout India. Go to Bengal—you will find that every debate in each House is mostly confined to this very vital question. Sir, I have got very little concern whether the Province is a deficit one or a surplus one. My point is that Government should adopt such a policy by which people should not suffer at all. The Government should be far-sighted and very careful with regard to the supply question that in the long run we may not have any person in the Province suffering from want of his daily doses. Sir, we heard terrible tales with regard to supply of food-stuffs to the people of Bengal. While the Hon'ble Premier moved this motion he said that in Bengal people have to purchase rice at even Rs.30 per maund. Is it not a very horrible thing? If such a thing repeats in our Province, our Province will not be in a position to maintain herself even with one meal per day. The people of our Province have no other subsidiary professions other than cultivation. Cultivation is the main occupation of our people and the main income of the Province is derived from cultivation. If our cultivators fail to get their daily meal, I am afraid, a day will come to our Province when epidemic and other calamities will appear in a horrible manner. I must warn the Government that in order to save our people from this sort of things they must be very careful. Sir, it is well known that anarchy and other disturbances come to a country when people find that they are not getting their daily meal. In order to avoid this kind of calamities, I warn the Government that they must be prepared. Sir, it is known to most of hon. Members of this House that our Province is maintaining several lakhs of people coming from outside in connection with the war. Lakhs of labourers are being employed in various parts of the Province and the military population has increased beyond imagination. If we take into calculation the total number of people who in connection with the war situation have arrived in this Province that will go up to 10 lakhs or more than that. If that be true, is it not an extra burden on this Province? Whether the Province is actually deficit one or a surplus one let me also speak on this point.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member began by saying that it was not necessary.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: What appears to my mind on this point I will just place before the House. Figures which have been quoted by both sides are conflicting. One party says that the Province is not surplus while the other party says that the Province is a surplus one. If the figures which are quoted by the Hon'ble Premier to justify his case that the Province is a surplus one be wrong then I think no reliance can be placed on the figures quoted by other side. The other day we found one of

the European Members moving a Cut Motion regarding the unreliability of statistics of Government and the Members of that group pressed so much that they did not care to vote on the Demand. If we cannot place any reliance on the figures what is the necessity of these figures? Let us say our Province is neither a deficit nor a surplus one, but for our needs let us assume that we want the whole quantity to remain in our Province; let it not go outside the Province because of the fact that we do not know what will be necessary for the consumption of our people. Has Government made any such announcement in the House that the actual demand of the people will be this? Have we got any such figure, Sir? I don't think up till now we have got any such reliable figure, that such and such quantity of rice will be necessary for the maintenance of the people of the Province. If on the population basis of the Province, Government tries to supply any figure that will not be correct because I have said that at present in our Province we have got to maintain about 10 lacs of outsiders. Sir, if this be the state of things how can we say that our Province is a surplus one? Now, Sir, why the question of surplus is coming? Why is it talked so much? The Government of India, it is reported, has adopted the policy that the deficit Provinces should get supply from surplus Provinces. We will find that the Government of India has got to maintain Ceylon. In 1942, India Government had to sell, 1,76,596 tons of rice in Ceylon in 1942. Well, in order to feed the people of Ceylon the Government of India had to contribute there and to fill up the gap it has necessitated export of our produce to Ceylon. It might be the policy of the Government of India that they want some produce from the Provinces which are said to be surplus.

Sir, I now come to another point which mostly concerns our people—the cultivators mainly. It is the policy of Government with regard to control of export. Well, owing to the policy of control of export even from one part of the Province to the other, the cultivators, the actual producers, are not getting the price which they are justified to get in comparison with the other commodities and other necessities of life. Our cultivators are deprived of getting the actual price of their produce. Some time back the Hon'ble the Prime Minister made a statement at my place regarding the current price of paddy in some of the districts of the Brahmaputra Valley. This statement he made in the month of January that the price of paddy was from Rs.2 to Rs.3. Very recently I have been told by the agent of the Steel Brothers that in Lakhimpur the present price of paddy is about Rs.4, but if you go to the Surma Valley you will find that the price of paddy is about Rs 6 per maund. Sir, my point is that owing to the control of export a section of the cultivators are not actually getting the real price of their produce and they are to purchase other things at a rate which is 10 or 15 times higher than what it was. Is it not an injustice done to the people? The Government will not purchase, but the agents they have appointed are purchasing paddy at a rate which is sometimes probably fixed up by Government and any profit which the company derives goes to their pockets; but our poor cultivators are not getting the benefit which they ought to have got. In this connection I should ask Government to see that our poor cultivators get their justified price.

Now, Sir, I will come to the control policy in another manner. I heard the Hon'ble Premier making a remark with regard to the Habiganj people. He said that in spite of the control policy adopted by the Government, the Habiganj people were trying to deceive.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Premier said that Government stood defeated by the ingenuity of the people of Habiganj.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, as I was not present here at the moment I did not hear him. The Hon'ble Premier said that by the ingenuity of the Habiganj people Government stands defeated. Sir, is the control policy of Government a sound one? Corruption reports are coming like anything. The number of officers appointed in this connection is very scanty. They have been stationed in certain localities, mostly, on the borders of Habiganj, Tipperah and Mymensingh. Naturally the ambition of the people will be to see that they can make money. Simply there is a river in between and then they can go to Bengal. The control policy requires thorough and further experiment and examination.

Then, Sir, the Hon'ble the Premier started by saying that there are two classes of goods. The first is paddy and rice and the second is imports of other necessities of life. What policy the Government has adopted with regards to the supply of these goods? Shaw Wallace and Company has been appointed by Government as their purchasing agent for import goods and the Steel Brothers has been appointed as their agents for purchase of paddy and rice. I am told, Sir, that this Steel Brothers Company has been given monopoly over the whole Province. They are to buy throughout the whole Province and supply goes to Government. And Government may send them to wherever they think it necessary. This principle of the Government was not very much appreciated by the Members of this House during the November session. There was a vehement opposition from all quarters that Government should make it a point to see that some indigenous concern of the Province get the contract. I do not see, Sir, any justification why a foreign company was backed up by the Government to purchase and sell paddy and rice in the Province.

Now with regard to import matter, I do not know who are the distributors that have been appointed by the Government in the Province. The Calcutta agents who are purchasing import goods are not to make distribution within the Province. In reply to certain questions I heard the Hon'ble Premier telling during the current session that the distributors of the Province have not yet been finally appointed. The distribution question hinges on distribution.

I heard the Hon'ble Premier starting with this remark that the success of this policy must depend on equitable distribution. I leave it to him alone whether he is satisfied with the present arrangement of the distribution of food-stuffs. Had it been equally distributed and had it been up to the satisfaction of the people of this Province, I do not think there would have been any opposition from any hon. Member of this House with regard to the food supply policy of this Government. This seems that with regard hitherto adopted by the Government is not up to the demand or necessity of the people of the Province. I will again urge very emphatically on the Hon'ble Premier that the policy which he has adopted either by himself or with the advice of his Cabinet or with the recommendation of the so-called Economic Advisory Board, must be revised. The present policy of the Government is not up to the satisfaction of the people of this Province.

Then, Sir, with regard to the Economic Advisory Board, I very often heard the Hon'ble Premier taking shelter on that. Sir, nobody knows when this Committee was formed and if we go back to the history of the formation of this Committee we find that it was constituted during section 93 regime and I am confident that this Committee does not enjoy the confidence of the representatives of this Province. I urge upon the Hon'ble

Premier to reconstitute it with the representatives of both the Houses. Sir, this Committee is, to my mind, a most responsible one because on account of its action the whole supply administration may be blamed.

I have another suggestion to make with regard to the distribution policy. This I have been urging for the last few months in the shape of putting questions and in other shapes also. Government should open stores in most of the trading centres throughout the whole Province and also see that proper supervision is made. The present system of distribution is extremely unsuccessful and I have got to oppose it with all my power. We have seen how it did function in the matter of distribution of kerosene. In this regard Mr. Mookerjee has also made certain suggestions in his amendment and I hope Government will consider all these.

Then, I come to the 'Grow More Food Campaign'. It is of most important consideration how much money we are going to spend for the much talked of Grow More Food Campaign. The paltry amount which has been provided for this campaign is now being spent mostly towards drawing travelling allowance and other allowances of higher officers. What these officers do? They go to the big towns, instruct their subordinates and draw travelling allowance. I will make an appeal to the Hon'ble Minister in charge that much money should be provided for propaganda among the masses and these high officers should not be entrusted to go to the localities. Sir, it is not possible that one big officer will go and enter a small village after walking a few miles. He will simply instruct his subordinate and come back and say that he went to such and such place and met so many people. During the November Session I heard the Hon'ble Premier say that 3 lakhs of people were approached by the Agriculture Department and they were instructed as to the scheme of Grow More Food Campaign. Sir, I can vouchsafe that these officers if they at all go anywhere, go to a big market near road-side and will say this and that. The country would not have at all suffered like this if these officers would do real work for the benefit of the poor people of the Province.

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN: Sir, I heard the figures quoted by the Hon'ble Prime Minister as well as by the friends opposite which show that there are discrepancies in the said figures.

I find that in the beginning of the season, *i.e.*, in January, the price of paddy was about Rs. 2-12-0 per maund, whereas it has now gone up to Rs. 6 in the district of Kamrup. Same is the case with mustard seeds. This year, our Province is in deficit so far as this commodity is concerned, and so its price is at present Rs. 11 per maund throughout Assam. In other Provinces also I believe the price is the same. It shows that there is a great demand of this commodity. Sir, the reason why our Province is in deficit of this seed may be due to war. Bengal is a deficit Province with regard to rice. Though the new season has begun in January last, it is now only three months, the price of rice has now gone up to Rs. 11 per maund. Here in Assam we are going to give the Military some 1 lakh of maunds of paddy per month. I hope our Government will urge the Government of India to be satisfied with that quantity. Because we will require more rice for consumption in the Province than before, as, formerly we used to get flour and *atta* from other Provinces which have at present been stopped practically, and those people who were taking flour and *atta* as their main food, had to fall back upon rice. And so the demand for rice in the Province is increasing to a great extent.

Sir, the main difficulty the trade is facing now is with regard to transport. We are not getting enough wagons here and so there is no movement of commodities according to the requirement. The other day, when we met in the Economic Advisory Board, the Railway Officer told us that we shall get 40 wagons daily for our business. But what these 40 wagons will do to us when there are so many business concerns and so many mills in the Province and when at least one mill requires a wagon daily. There is a great scarcity of wagons in Assam. So, I think, Government would urge the Central Government for supplying more wagons to this Province. If this difficulty can be removed, I am sure, at least half of our grievances will be redressed.

Sir, I have heard from the Hon'ble Premier that a huge sum of money is remaining unrealised and unaccounted in connection with our food purchasing scheme. I cannot understand how such a huge sum is unaccounted for. I think it is due to the fact that officers entrusted with this job are inexperienced in this line and some of whom perhaps have appointed whole-sale dealers from their friends and relatives who have no experience in the task and thus have at the cost of the tax-payers' money misused this amount. Sir, I know there are whole-sale dealers in our Province who are in this line of business for the last 50 years and they should only be preferred for the purpose. But things are mismanaged when lawyers and other laymen from *benami* companies without having previous experience. I hope, in future, Government will try to see that this state of affairs does not exist any more.

I hear that Government of India is going to send us some tons of flour in the month of May after they are milled by Shaw Wallace and Company in Calcutta. But, Sir, there are some flour mills in Assam which have got to be closed for want of wheat. So I suggest that Government would see that our mills get this business instead of Shaw Wallace and Company, as we must try to help our indigenous concerns as far as possible.

Sir, my hon. friend Mr. Mookerjee has made a suggestion with regard to industrial concerns. Here in Assam we have about 100 mills, but their difficulties are increasing daily when they are not getting sufficient coal, crude and lubricating oil and spare parts. I think, Government will see that our mills can get the required amount of coal and other necessary things so that they can run regularly and properly.

Government has banned the export of rice and paddy from our Province. But many of my friends have reported in this House that at Dhubri side, Sir, some people take away paddy by hundreds of maunds in country boats at dead of night. Although there are watchmen to detect them, they are allowed to pass after they give bribe, etc. So I suggest that responsible officers of Government or of Criminal Investigation Department should be deputed there to see that no more paddy and other commodities can be exported outside the Province.

Sir, it seems very easy to purchase commodities, but it is difficult to distribute them throughout the Province. For the purpose of distribution, Government appointed a company from Burma, called the Steel Brothers, Limited and now I have heard that this work of distribution has been entrusted to another company formed in Assam. But, Sir, the appointment of this

sort of company will not improve matters. So far the towns are concerned, the company manage easily, but the difficulty is with the villages. I suggest that Government officers only, like the Circle officers, Sub-Deputy Collectors, should be entrusted to distribute the goods as soon as they arrive from outside to the local dealers in the villages which has also been suggested by Mr. Abdur Rahman, and Mr. Mookerjee, or Government should open their own shops in the central places which are surrounded by many villages.

Sir, there is one black market against which every hon. Member spoke ; but I think, Sir, it is due to the Government that it exists. Today Government is buying goods and distributing the same in the market. Their duty is to see how the goods find its way in the said market. It must be through their agency that the goods are passing in the said market.

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I must confess that I am neither an economist nor an expert in figures. As a matter of fact figures always hold me in dread. I shall speak to this House what a layman feels on the question. I wish, Sir, we had closed this debate after Mr. Whittaker had spoken, because if we could have gone home earlier then we would have gone with an idea of everything as milk and honey in the Province of Assam. I have really listened with great attention to the speeches of the Hon'ble Prime Minister as well as of Mr. Whittaker and I think no body testifies the present unhappy position more vehemently than Mr. Whittaker does. The impression that I can gather from the speech of the Hon'ble Prime Minister is that everything that was possible and we could conceive of has been done, but the speech of Mr. Whittaker gives one the impression: go back home, we are taking care of you, you need not think of this at all. There is the only explanation in this difference of treatment of this question between the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Mr. Whittaker is that Mr. Whittaker, if my information is correct, is the Secretary of the Economic Advisory Board, and not only that Government is not merely satisfied by sending their Secretaries to represent this Government in the New Delhi Conference, but that Mr. Whittaker is also the representative of the Government of Assam in this matter and he is treated in this pleasant way. I would also like to tell a story, which I have heard from the Hon'ble Prime Minister, in my own language: A boy was bitten by a snake and he died instantaneously. A number of persons went to condole the death. One of them was very sorry, and enquired what part of the body the snake had bitten. When he was told that he was bitten on the leg, he said you must be thankful to God, his eye has been saved. That is the position here. If there is a surplus why there should be scarcity of rice in Assam? In this case, the price will remain constant; it will be now Rs. 10 per maund. There is this consolation that rice in Bengal is selling at Rs.25 per maund. So long as the price of rice in Assam does not come to that level, you ought to be thankful and you should not complain. It does not matter when you do not get enough rice to eat. The question is, you must not forget at any time that rice in Bengal is selling at Rs. 25 per maund, but rice in Assam is selling at Rs.10 per maund. That is a fundamental fact that you must not lose sight of. Some people may die for want of food; it does not matter. The boy may die, it does not matter, but the eye is saved.

*Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.

Sir, we are in a very difficult position if we say that rice should not be exported. Then the Government of India will come down on the Government of Assam and say that you must not look for your provincial interest only, you must look to the whole of India. It does not matter, for Government of India is responsible for it. India is in this position. Other Provinces which can, must help. The question is that other Provinces can offer help. I ask this simple question to the Prime Minister. Now he has stopped the export of rice. This has enabled the purchaser to purchase rice at a comparatively smaller cost. Because export has been stopped now, will he be able to stop export? Will he be able to resist the Government of India in this? If not, they are stopping export only for the time being. The only advantage is that the Government Agent will buy cheaper. We are told, we must not grudge this export because it has been found that those Provinces which do not export, if I understand Mr. Whittaker correctly, will not get import. What will be the position of Bengal? Bengal is not in a position to export paddy. We are being entirely deprived of the imported articles such as sugar, *atta*. Then why we are treated to this lesson? If you object to export the paddy, if you keep paddy to yourself, you will not get salt, you will not get sugar, etc. I do not understand the logic of this.

Sir, at the end of this year Government may say, we have to export certain quantity of paddy; we could not help it, but there was a surplus. Mr. Dev may talk for hours, may quote voluminous figures; Mr. Mookerjee may do likewise and produce several volumes of figures. All the same, facts and figures will be shewn that so many lakhs of maunds of paddy has been exported—no harm. Can you point out a single instance where a man has died of starvation? There is not a single instance according to Government. Their report—I mean the medical report will show that he has died of malaria, he has died of cholera—he has died of dysentery.

So, Sir, I would request in this connection the Hon'ble Minister in-charge of Agriculture to see and examine for himself whether there is enough stock and whether there will be a surplus for the purpose of exporting. Sir, by this time, I think, more than sufficient quantity of paddy has already been exported from the Province. Now we are taking all these figures after the event has already taken place. It is just like the taking of umbrella after the rain is stopped. Sir, a large quantity of paddy was exported from the districts. Large quantity of paddy was also exported from the districts of Kamrup and Goalpara by road. There is a simple method of export, Sir. If one books rice or paddy, say, to Mankachar or Tura, then it has got to go *via* Raumari which is in Bengal. As soon as it goes to Raumari, it can be diverted to any other place. Nobody can stop its booking to Raumari if it is meant for Mankachar and Tura.

Then, Sir, the price control system is no doubt a good one, but it should be very judiciously exercised. I have seen, Sir, that in the months of January and February, the import of rice was stopped from Assam Valley to Shillong. Every body knows that Gauhati is a place from where rice comes to Shillong, but the import was stopped at a time when rice comes selling at a cheaper rate. The result is that now rice has to be brought at Shillong at a much higher cost. The control prices of rice at Shillong is Rs.10-6-0 per maund whereas it is selling at Gauhati at Rs.10-4-0 and the freight is Re.1. So, Sir, what is the meaning of all these? Sir, some of the rice which the Deputy Commissioner of Khasi and Jaintia Hills brought to

Shillong was simply worthless and so he wanted to dispose of that rice. This rice could not find any market and therefore the Deputy Commissioner stopped the import of rice only with a view to dispose of the rice which he purchased. The result is that the people of Shillong have to purchase rice at much higher price in comparison with the plains districts. So, Sir, I would request the Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Hon'ble Minister in-charge and also Mr. Whittaker not to take things for granted and that they should closely examine the situation and devise some means whereby the people of the Province who have grown this food can get enough food for their consumption.

Sir, I am inclined to believe that the theory about the expansion of cultivation is not correct. There cannot be any expansion when no attempt has been made to check the influx of large number of cultivators to towns and other places of work. Most of the cultivators have really left their field and have gone to work as labourers in different places under the contractors, because there they can earn more than what they get from their field. So, unless and until there is propaganda against the going of these cultivators, cultivation will not be expanded. I think, Government ought to have some agency which should regulate the appointment of ordinary cultivators as labourers under contractors. A large number of cultivators were taken in different aerodromes for making roads, etc., with the result that the money which they get as wages will not be sufficient to keep them properly clothed and also there will be no food grown on their field. So there should be some sort of system. If there are three members in a family, one may go to work under the contractor, but if there are only two members in a family, no one should be allowed to go. So I hope, Sir, the House will accept the amendment which has been put forward by my hon. friend, Mr. Mookerjee. This is a very comprehensive one and I think that if Government works in this line, some effective steps will be taken.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at this late hour when the bright day has merged into the dark night, I would not drag this debate which started with a simple proposition into mire of confusion. I have been charged of producing faked figures and the Department of Agriculture has been proved, according to one hon. member, to be one of 'huge bluff'. When Government produced figures, it was said, that the Ministry has interlarded the figures with their imagination and have produced a fictitious surplus whereas these critics have imported confusion into their own arguments and further complication into their own figures. One hon. Member who charged me of having drawn upon my imagination, went deeper into the mire when he said that last year, there was a very big stock of imported Burma rice in the Province. He did not tell the House whether he got these figures from the trader or out of the figment of his own brain. I asked for suggestions and helpful criticisms and I have been rightly served for expecting suggestions from such quarters. I asked them for bread, but I have been given stone—I asked for co-operation, but I have been given vituperative criticisms. The point at issue was very simple—(1) whether the description of rice position of the Government is correct or not, (2) whether the effort of the Government to buy imported goods and bring them to the consumers of the Province is correct or not, (3) whether the method of distribution has brought good result, which everyone, both the critics as well as Government have got in view.

As regards the estimate of the rice production we have got only one set of figures that has been published by the Agriculture Department. If we do not accept this figure, then there will be only one method of coming to a

correct estimate of the production of paddy or rice in the Province, *i.e.*, to convert the whole of the Province into a weigh-bridge where the production could be weighed. That is an impracticable ideal which has been set before us. What is wrong with the figures supplied by the Agriculture Department? These figures have been collected at great labour, great cost and for a number of years. These have been checked by various officers, the District Collectors have got a hand in their collection, the Rice Marketing Section has been dealing with them for the last six years, and the present Agriculture Department, after weighing every factor, has given out their final forecast. And yet we have been told that all these figures are wrong. If hon. critics said that those figures were wrong by 5 per cent. or 10 per cent. I could have understood their criticisms, but when they scrap the whole thing, knowing well that nothing else could be produced, it means throwing the whole thing into a chaos. I said, Sir, we have only one set of figures, and these have been published. The very critics will tear from the context one part of the figures and rely upon those very figures for their unseemly criticism, but will discard the other part of the figures which do not support them. I was simply amused how one hon. Member tried to wriggle out of the last sentence of final forecast to which pointed attention was drawn by another Member of the House. It was pointed out that in most cases the acreage shown was lower than the normal acreage; it was also shown by those very critics that from an estimate of 88 per cent. of normal production in the second forecast the figure had come down to 81 per cent. Now, Sir, it redounds to the veracity and truthfulness of the Agriculture Department that instead of sticking to their wrong figures, they had the courage to come up with proper figures in the final forecast; instead of sticking to their original position that the crop would be 88 per cent. of the normal they now estimate it to be 81 per cent. and one hon. critic had jumped to the conclusion that because it showed a drop of 7 per cent. there could not be any extra production. He would simply ignore the figures that have been given in the very report which that hon. gentleman took as text for his sermon. I had already read this out to the House. In spite of repetition I would again place it before the Members. "Taking 8 cwts. of winter rice as the normal yield per acre, the total produce in Assam amounts to 24,726,400 cwts. against 23,945,500 cwts. on the basis of actual area of last year". I do not see any justification in thus twisting the figures, in thus putting a wrong construction on the detailed figures of acreage of production, if we discard the total estimate of yield of the very same authority.

One very simple criterion whether the Province is a surplus or a deficit one will be the mere process of multiplication. I did not hear any hon. Member challenging my statement that if the entire population of 1 crore 2 lakhs of the Province be taken to be adult and each is given 20 ounces of rice for consumption, even then the total quantity of consumption comes to 4,59,99,000 lakhs maunds. I have made a very big assumption here, and that is 40 per cent. non-adult population of the Province are given the same quantity of rice which the rest 60 per cent. normally eat. Yet even that consumption figure is well within the production of the previous years from 1940, a figure arrived at, when there was no controversy. Since then, it is admitted in that very report which was quoted by one hon. Member that there has been a 10 per cent. extension of cultivation. I said I would not take 10 per cent; I calculated my figures on the basis of a 5 per cent. increase. I therefore stand on very solid ground when I say that the

Province is a surplus one, no matter however twisting of figures and bluffing arguments have been advanced to show the contrary.

There is yet another very simple test about ascertaining whether the Province is a surplus or a deficit one. Government and the public are buying paddy and rice in the Province. Is it the case of my hon. Friends, the critics, that Government are compelling every one to produce their stock in the market, so that Government agents may forcibly buy it? No such thing is alleged because it is not the state of things. It is only the voluntary offering of the cultivators, who have got a surplus, to the market which is being bought both by private traders as well as by Government agents. Had there been no surplus, nobody would have brought any stock to the market. I was really amused to see the learned representative of the Indian Commerce propounding an unheard of theory of Political Economy. His argument was that because price has risen between January and March we must therefore presume that there has been a deficit. On the other hand I will contend and say that for the very fact that people are producing their stocks for sale and also for export outside the Province, the price has gone up. He spoke of mustard and *mati kalai*. I have got a report only yesterday from Dhubri district that a very big quantity of *mati kalai* has been exported outside by the constituents of the same hon. Member. Probably I will have to issue an order preventing the export because *mati kalai* is used as *dal*.

I am always open to conviction, and I have requested the hon. Members to give me their whole-hearted co-operation. But I get very much disturbed and perturbed when I hear very uninformed criticism advanced before the House with vehemence worthy of a better cause. Some hon. Members spoke very vehemently that Government is not raising the price or rather manoeuvring the price of rice to remain at a low level in this Province so that either the Assam Government or their agents or the Central Government could make a profit. Two hon. Members from both sides of the House have made the allegation that the profits go to the Government agents, but yet it has been stated on the floor of this House many a times that Government agents are remunerated by commission. They purchase the goods in the open market and keep regular accounts and after the goods bought have been transported to the proper destination, they are paid the commission. Whether the price is high or low the loss or gain is not of the agents, but to the people of these places where the goods are transported. One hon. Member has traversed a wide field in discussing this question. He has given the benefit of his researches from Hansard downwards for adoption by the Government. I am obliged to him for the trouble he has taken, but something which he has urged before the House seems to be contrary or contradictory to his own statement. At one place he says, start the Grow More Food Campaign not by extension, but by intensive cultivation, knowing full well that for the purposes of intensive cultivation we have to get chemical manure and chemical manure is unavailable at present. Is it worthy of him to make a suggestion which is utopian at the present moment? Therefore if he is consistent, he must allow extension of cultivable areas, but to this he says 'no'. Then, Sir, this is but a lip sympathy to the cause of the country just like the case of a patient who is being treated by a specialist who advises to procure a medicine which is not available in India to-day. The same hon. Friend spoke very vehemently about the slaughter of live-stock. I agree with him that live-stock, specially plough cattle which is so very necessary for producing food, should not be killed. But can I ask the public in general through the same hon. Member not to sell their plough cattle? Can we force them not to sell the

only means by which they will have to till their land? If the cultivator voluntarily brings his live-stock to be sold, it is up to the leaders of the public opinion to impress upon the people the gravity of their action.

The same hon. Member spoke that such a large number of goats are now killed in the Province probably to feed the military people that we should start manufacture of goat tissue virus in our Province. This again is not a real suggestion but a bantering one. Large number of goats have not been killed in one spot that a manufacture of goat tissue virus could be started there. Every body knows that military people are scattered throughout the country and if we are to take the same hon. Member seriously we shall have to start goat tissue virus manufacturing in hundred places in the Province.

One last point and that is about the question of short staple cotton in the Province which could be utilised for producing hand-woven cloth. This again is a suggestion which has in fact no foundation. Quite a considerable quantity of short staple cotton is grown in the Garo Hills, but not a seer of that cotton is purchased by our weavers or by our spinners in order to make yarn out of it. The whole quantity is carted away to Calcutta or other places in Bengal. If really my Friend is serious in this suggestion that Government should encourage the growing of short staple cotton in the Province, he should first experiment by buying a bale from the Garo Hills and my hon. Friend Mr. Marak will help him to get that and that cotton be introduced among the weavers of the valley from which my Friend comes. And if the cotton can be made into yarn successfully, I assure him, that the entire crop of the Garo Hills will be bought by Government and distributed to the spinners and Government will start a campaign to grow this cotton throughout the Province.

My hon. Friend cried and cried again about the nakedness of the populace, but the way he dresses himself belies that description (*Laughter*).

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

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes, Sir, I press my amendment.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"Taking the economic situation of the Province into consideration, this Assembly is of opinion that Government do take immediate steps to introduce the following measures amongst others to protect the Province against the possible crisis due to shortage of essential food-stuffs and clothings

1. The Grow-More Food Campaign be properly handled by an expert and qualified officer.
2. To set up regional Food Advisory Boards throughout the Province to regulate the production, supply and price.
3. To introduce ration cards, if necessary.
4. To make adequate provision for the increased production of short staple cotton which may be utilised for making cloth by handloom process.
5. To make adequate arrangements for the supply of yarns in big quantities to the weavers.
6. To make arrangements for the adequate supply of standard cloth.
7. To stop export of all kinds of food-stuffs that are grown in the Province and are required to be stopped to meet the needs of the Province, and
8. To make arrangements for adequate supplies of other essential food-stuffs and other necessities of life."

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then the other question is:

"That after the words 'be taken into consideration' at the end of the Motion, the following be added:

'and that this Assembly is of opinion that the Government of Assam do constitute a committee to devise plans for starting, with improved mechanical methods, industrial co-operatives and agricultural collective farms, immediately throughout the Province, in order to put an end to the acute food crisis through which it is passing at present'."

The question was negatived.

It is not necessary to put the main Motion to the vote.

Prorogation

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am now announcing the order of His Excellency the Governor proroguing the Assembly.

"In exercise of the power conferred by clause (b) of sub-section (2) of section 62 of the Government of India Act, 1935, I, Andrew Gourlay Clow, hereby prorogue the Assam Legislative Assembly at the conclusion of its sitting of the 27th March 1943.

A. G. CLOW,

Governor of Assam."

The Assembly was then prorogued.

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.

SHILLONG,

The 15th May 1943.

APPENDIX E

Authenticated schedule specifying the grants made by the Legislative Assembly and the sums required to meet the expenditure charged on the revenues of Assam for the year 1943-44 as required by section 80 of the Government of India Act, 1935

No. of grant	Description	Charged			Demand as presented to the Assembly (Voted)	Amount of cut made by the Assembly (Voted)	Amount included by Governor (Voted)	Authenticated amounts (Voted)
		Non excluded areas	Excluded areas	Total authenticated amounts				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1	Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax.	..	..	..	39,500	..	..	39,500
2	Land Revenue	37,200	27,500	64,700	17,89,100	..	..	17,89,100
3	Provincial Excise	2,700	16,900	19,600	3,90,900	..	..	3,90,900
4	Stamps	..	100	100	41,600	..	..	41,600
5	Forests	2,21,600	1,57,800	3,79,400	12,02,500	..	..	12,02,500
6	Registration	..	..	..	1,62,800	..	..	1,62,800
7	Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act.	8,200	1,800	10,000	3,81,000	..	..	3,81,000
8	Other Taxes and Duties	..	..	..	1,000	..	..	1,000

APPENDIX E—continued.

No. of grant	Description	charged			Demand as presented to the Assembly (Voted)	Amount of cut made by the Assembly (Voted)	Amount included by Gover- nor (Voted)	Authenti- cated amounts (Voted)
		Non exclud- ed areas	Excluded areas	Total authenti- cated amounts				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
9	Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works.	2,200	..	2,200	1,32,200	..	..	1,32,200
	Interest on debt and other obligations ..	5,82,600	..	5,82,600	..	..	..	..
	Appropriation for reduction or avoidance of debt.	4,00,000	..	4,00,000	..	..	..	..
10	General Administration..	11,30,500	4,16,700	15,47,200	24,18,600	..	..	24,18,600
11	Administration of Justice ..	2,40,600	1,200	2,41,800	8,17,800	..	..	8,17,800
12	Jails and Convict Settlements ..	2,100	15,200	17,300	5,88,400	..	..	5,88,400
13	Police ..	3,02,600	68,700	3,71,300	32,15,000	..	..	32,15,000
14	Ports and Pilotage ..	..	..	..	2,000	..	..	2,000
15	Scientific Departments ..	..	..	..	5,900	..	..	5,900
16	Education (European) ..	900	3,700	4,600	77,600	..	..	77,600
17	Education (other than European)	10,400	1,60,200	1,70,600	43,90,500	..	..	43,90,500
18	Medical ..	1,10,800	2,26,200	3,37,000	12,20,100	..	..	12,20,100
19	Public Health ..	..	36,200	36,200	8,88,100	..	..	8,88,100
20	Agriculture ..	..	24,000	24,000	14,40,000	..	..	14,40,000
21	Veterinary ..	..	7,200	7,200	2,15,400	..	..	2,15,400
22	Co-operation ..	22,200	..	22,200	1,74,800	..	..	1,74,800
23	Industries ..	..	2,600	2,600	2,41,500	..	..	2,41,500
24	Miscellaneous Departments ..	3,400	100	3,500	1,00,300	..	..	1,00,300
25	Civil Works [excluding Tools and Plant and Establishment].	52,000	3,20,900	3,72,900	37,90,900	..	..	37,90,900

APPENDIX E—*concl'd.*

No. of grant	Description	Charged			Demand as presented to the Assembly (Voted)	Amount of cut made by the Assembly (Voted)	Amount in- cluded by Governor (Voted)	Authenti- cated amounts (Voted)
		Non-Exclud- ed areas	Excluded areas	Total authenti- cated amounts				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
26	Tools and Plant and Establishment charges	90,900	1,05,400	1,96,300	3,22,200	..	..	3,22,200
27	Famine Relief .. .. .	..	500	500	50,000	..	..	50,000
28	Superannuation Allowances and Pensions ..	8,59,600	..	8,59,600	17,93,400	..	..	17,93,400
29	Capital outlay on provincial schemes connected with war.	..	..	..	1	..	..	1
30	Stationery and Printing	1,300	4,000	5,200	3,77,000	..	..	3,77,000
31	Miscellaneous	15,88,000	1,41,600	17,29,600	3,44,000	..	..	3,44,000
32	Extraordinary charges .. .. .	..	..	..	17,88,500	..	..	17,88,500
33	Civil Defence	50,700	..	50,700	15,42,600	..	..	15,42,600
34	Loans and advances bearing and not bearing interest.	..	..	..	5,68,000	..	..	5,68,000
	Grand total.. .. .	57,20,500	17,38,500	74,59,000	3,05,13,201	..	..	3,05,13,201

A. G. CLOW,
Governor

The 24th March, 1943.

APPENDIX F

Authenticated schedule of supplementary statement of expenditure for the year 1942-43, laid before the Legislative Assembly in the March Session, 1943, under section 81 of the Government of India Act, 1935

Number of Grant	Heads	Supplementary amount laid before the Assembly in this Session				Amount of cut made by the Assembly		Amount included by Governor		Amount now authenticated				Remarks
		Charged			Total	Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Charged			Total		
		Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Non-excluded areas	Ex-cluded areas					Non-excluded areas	Ex-cluded areas	Non-excluded areas			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.		
1	7.—Land Revenue ..	26,700	..	..	..	..	..	26,700	..	..	..	..
8	8.—Provincial Excise..	..	..	2,75	2,075	..	..	..	..	2,075	..	2,075	
2	10.—Forests ..	7,99,272	..	..	..	..	..	7,99,272	..	..	..	..
3	11.—Registration ..	7,573	..	..	..	..	..	7,573	..	..	..	..
7	22.—Interest on Debt and other obligations	..	41,090	..	41,090	..	..	..	41,090	..	..	41,090	
13, 14 & 9	25.—General Administration ..	1,90,190	65,631	1,29,489	1,95,120	..	..	1,90,190	65,631	1,29,489	1,95,120	1,95,120	
16& 17	27.—Administration of Justice..	86,901	60,000	..	60,000	..	..	86,901	60,000	..	..	60,000	
4 & 5	28.—Jails and Convict Settlement ..	2,27,179	..	1,841	1,841	..	..	2,27,179	..	1,841	..	1,841	
10	29.—Police ..	3,88,168	..	..	..	..	..	3,88,168	..	..	..	..
14	36.—Scientific Departments ..	42	..	..	..	..	..	42	..	..	..	..
5	37.—Education other than European).	77,688	..	..	..	..	..	77,688	..	..	..	..
15	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
6	38.—Medical ..	29,485	..	..	..	..	..	29,485	..	..	..	29,485	

APPENDIX F—*concl'd.*

Number of grant	Heads	Supplementary amount laid before the Assembly in this Session				Amount of cut made by the Assembly	Amount included by Governor	Amount now authenticated				Remarks
		Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Charged			Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Charged			
			Non-excluded areas	Ex-cluded areas	Total				Non-excluded areas	Ex-cluded areas	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
7	39.—Public Health ..	1,53,506	..	..	..	..	..	1,53,506	..	5,026	5,026	5,026
11	40.—Agriculture ..	..	..	5,026	5,026	..	..	..	..	7,900	7,900	7,900
8 & 12	50.—Civil Works (excluding Tools and Plant and Establishment charges).	91,311	..	7,900	7,900	..	..	91,311	..	..	..	..
9, 3 & 13	50.—Civil Works (Tools and Plant and Establishment charges)	1	1	30,000	3,900	..	..	1	1	30,000	30,001	30,001
14	54-A.—Famine Relief. ..	..	..	145	145	..	..	..	..	145	145	145
4	55.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions	..	23,400	..	23,400	..	..	..	23,400	..	23,400	23,400
10	Capital outlay on Provincial schemes connected with the war outside revenue account.	46,22,379	..	..	..	..	..	46,22,379	..	..	..	..
11	56.—Stationery and Printing ..	35,000	..	..	..	..	..	35,000	..	..	..	..
12 & 5	63.—Extraordinary charges ..	43,062	4,000	..	4,000	..	..	43,062	4,000	..	..	4,000
17 & 6	64-B.—Civil Defence ..	87,224	3,360	..	3,360	..	..	87,224	3,360	..	..	3,360
	Total ..	68,65,681	1,97,482	1,76,476	3,73,958	..	..	68,65,681	1,97,482	1,76,476	3,73,958	3,73,958

The 24th March, 1943.

The 24th March, 1943.

A. G. CLOW,
Governor.

A. G. P. (L.A.) No. 8—112+2—19-5-1943.