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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 **Monday, the 15th March, 1943.**

PRESENT

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

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Function of the Marketing Officer (Hand-loom Industry), Assam

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked :

*20. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The function of the Marketing Officer (Hand-loom Industry), Assam ?
- (b) The minimum technical qualification required for the said post?
- (c) The technical qualification of the previous Marketing Officers ?
- (d) The qualification of the present incumbent ?
- (e) The names of other candidates with their respective qualifications at the time of appointment of the present incumbent ?
- (f) How this recruitment was made ?
- (g) Whether it was done by the Public Service Commission ?
- (h) If not, why not ?

*21. Will Government be pleased to state whether any attempt has been made by the present Marketing Officer for the supply of parachutes made of Assam Silk ?

*22. Will Government be pleased to state what arrangement has been made to sell and produce cloth in the Province through Co-operative basis like other provinces of India ?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA replied :

20. (a)—The main function of the Marketing Officer (Hand-loom Industry) is to develop the market for hand-loom products of the Province, especially by the introduction of improved types and designs of fabrics.
- (b)—A working knowledge of textile fabrics, patterns and designs, a sound general education, business experience and knowledge of accounts.

(c)—I. Sc. first division, passed from the Weaving Institute, Gauhati, then joined the Victoria Jubilee Technological Institute, Bombay; passed the final Examination with first class first diploma of L. T. M. and several scholarships.

(d)—B. Sc. with honours in mathematics (Calcutta). Secured R. K. Barat gold medal, experienced in Audit and Accountancy, has a knowledge of accountancy as certified by the Examiner of Local Accounts.

(e)—A list is placed on the Library table.

(f) & (g)—The recruitment was made through the Public Service Commission.

(h)—Does not arise.

21.—Yes, the Department received an order for a quantity of parachute cloth in the execution of which the Marketing Officer rendered help.

22.—Many Co-operative Weaving Societies have been organised by the Co-operative Weaving Inspectors entertained under the scheme for the development of the Hand-loom Weaving Industry in the Province. Their products are being sold through the Government Emporia at Gauhati and Karimganj. Their activities are gradually expanding.

****Maulavi MABARAK ALI:** As regards question 20(b) are we to take it that no technical qualification is required for that post?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: So far as the appointment of the present officer is concerned, as he was working as Manager of the Government Emporium at Gauhati for several years, he was considered to possess sufficient knowledge of the working of the Department.

****Maulavi MABARAK ALI:** Whether any technical qualification is required for that post?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: It has been already said that a working knowledge of textile fabrics, patterns and designs, a sound general education, etc., was considered sufficient.

****Maulavi MABARAK ALI:** May I take it that the present incumbent does not possess the minimum qualification?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister has stated that these constitute technical qualification.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

Supplementary questions to unstarred question No. 23†

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Yesterday my supplementary Question was : What is the reason—why not a single case has been disposed of in the Sunamganj Subdivision though as many as 1,447 cases were instituted in 1940?

****Speech not corrected by the Member.**

Number of cases in the Debt Conciliation Board of Sylhet and Cachar

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked:

†23. (a) Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a comparative statement showing separately the number of cases instituted in each of the Debt Conciliation Boards of Sylhet and Cachar districts in the years 1940, 1941 and 1942?

(b) What is the total number of cases disposed of under section 12 (1) of the Debt Conciliation Act in each of the Boards of the Surma Valley during the same period?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state the income of each of the said Boards from Court fees for the years 1940, 1941 and 1942?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: That Board began to function only from the 7th August of that year.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: But the Board was constituted earlier?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: That was a notification. The Board actually took work on the 7th August:

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: What is the justification for no cases being disposed of?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Perhaps it is known to the hon. Member that some preliminary work has to be gone through before a case is finally disposed of. In the first place people have to know that there is a Debt Conciliation Board and then they have to file petitions, and then notices have to be served. The hon. Member knows how long it takes for a notice to be served.

***Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:** That is for filing a petition. After petitions were received and such a long time passed, why not a single case has been disposed of? I hope the Hon'ble Minister will try not to evade the Question.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: There is no question of evading Questions.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: It seems that in 1940, as many as 1,447 cases were instituted; in 1941, 3,556 cases were instituted, out of which 218 cases were disposed of. So, out of a total of 5 thousand cases only 218 cases were disposed of. Do the Government consider this rate of disposal satisfactory?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: That was a very satisfactory result in the opinion of the Government, for a Board at its inception.

Defalcation in the Earle Law College

Srijut RABI CHANDRA KACHARI asked :

24.(a) Are Government aware that there was a defalcation of a sum of Rs.20,000 in the Earle Law College committed by the clerk-librarian Srijut Muktaadhar Sarma?

(b) Do Government propose to make an enquiry as to who were responsible for slack administration in this affair and from whom the sums embezzled were realised?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

24.(a)—Government are aware of defalcation of a sum of Rs.6,838-7-0 by the clerk-librarian.

(b)—Enquiry has already been made. The Principals were somewhat negligent but the present Principal detected the defalcation and by his prompt action the whole of the defalcated amount was realised from the clerk-librarian.

*Speech not corrected by the Member.

***Maulavi MABARAK ALI:** The Question was: "Do Government propose to make an enquiry as to who were responsible for slack administration in this affair and from whom the sums embezzled were realised"? Are we to take it that the Principal was not responsible for that defalcation?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: The answer is there. They were responsible to a certain extent.

***Maulavi MABARAK ALI:** Whether any step has been taken against them?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Two Principals were concerned in the matter—one is Mr. J. Barua. He has retired and no action could be taken against him. The present Principal is the first gentleman who detected the defalcation and he took prompt steps for the recovery of the defalcated amount from the clerk-librarian. No step, therefore, was taken against him.

Government Grant to former Derai Middle English School

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked:

25.(a) Is it a fact that a sum of Rs.35 has been sanctioned as Government grant for the former Derai Middle English School?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state why a recurring grant for a Science teacher has not been made for the aforesaid school?

(c) Do Government propose to increase the grant-in-aid of this school?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied:

25.(a)—Yes.

(b)—For want of funds.

(c)—Yes, when funds permit.

Complaint regarding inadequacy of time allotted for voting on Demands for Grants.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: It is a well known fact that only during the general discussion of the Budget and during discussion on Demands for Grants that the hon. Members get an opportunity of placing their views before the House. I am sorry to place before the Hon'ble Speaker that the time allotted for the general discussion of the Demands for Grants has been very short.

*Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We have got 40 minutes from the Question hour.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: The time allotted for this purpose is very short. If the whole Demand for Grants were placed in one day, as in Sind, things might have been easier. Hon. Members may place their views and criticise the principles of Government. Sir, the time is so short that we cannot get time to give vent to the feelings which we have got, before the House or before the Ministry.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of information, Sir. Is it not a fact that the Hon'ble Chair requested all the party Members to come and decide about the time?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order. I am sorry the hon. Member is a bit too late. The time table was prepared just on the very first day of the Session. I asked the hon. Members to intimate to me any objection if they had any, as to the allotment of time to the various Demands. As there was no objection, the time table was made final and according to the time table, one hour's time has been given to "General Administration". I, however, quite realise the insufficiency of the number of days that have been allotted to the Demands. Four days' time is certainly very inadequate for sufficient discussions of all the Demands.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I do not find fault with the Hon'ble Chair for allotting four days. Some of the Demands have been given only 15 minutes and some other, half an hour; so the period for the whole Grant is very short. That is my question.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The objection raised by the hon. Member to the allotment of time to each of the Demands seems to cast a reflection on the Chair's action.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: No, Sir.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, the notice which you circulated about the adequacy and inadequacy of time allotted for each Demand was handed over to me while I was busy in the Upper House; so I could not consult my party, nor I could consult my friend the Chief Whip of the party, that is why he has made this remark before the House. Then, Sir, as regards the suggestion that has been made about the fact that the time of four days is very short for the discussion of the Demands, I should like to say that in future this suggestion will be borne in mind.

(i) **Statement on the economic condition of the country.**

(ii) **Necessity for a speech at the time of moving a Demand.**

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir. Before the day's work begins, may I make two submissions to the Hon'ble Chair. During the last Budget Session the Hon'ble Premier was kind enough to make a statement of the political situation as well as economic condition of the country. Sir, we have found that, every day during the Question hour there have been several Questions relating to the difficulties of the supply of food-stuffs and other things, so it would be better if he kindly makes a statement about the political situation and economic condition of the Province especially with regard to the supply of food and other necessities of life.

My another submission is that, I requested the Hon'ble Premier the other day, while I was discussing the Budget that the Hon'ble Ministers who will move Demands for Grants should kindly deliver a short speech at the time of moving the Demands, so that we may have an idea about the policy of that particular Department.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will consider whether I should take some opportunity at a later stage of the Session to make a statement as regards the political situation and economic condition of the country.

As regards the suggestion just now made that the Hon'ble Ministers, at the time of introducing their Demands, should make a speech, I like to point out that we have heard the complaint just now that the time allotted for discussing the Demands has been very short, for example, I find, Sir, that only one hour has been allotted for the discussion of the "General Administration". This "General Administration" is such a vast subject that if I have to make a preliminary statement, I will take a long time and that will only encroach upon the time that is available for the hon. Members to move their Cut Motions. So, if my hon. Friend will excuse the Ministry from making preliminary speeches at the time of moving the Demands this Session, next Session I will see whether more time for Demands and time for making preliminary speeches as well, could be provided.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I also remember that, on previous occasions, I insisted that every Hon'ble Minister should make a speech at the time of moving a Demand. I have seen in other Legislatures that whenever a Demand is moved the Hon'ble Minister makes a speech explaining the general position of the Department to which the Demand relates and also explaining the reasons which necessitate some or other provisions made. So, I think, that procedure should also be followed in this House, and I am glad that the Hon'ble Premier has given an assurance that next time he will see whether more days can be allotted for discussion of Demands for Grants.

GRANT No. 10.

25.—GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I beg, Sir, to move that on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, a sum not exceeding Rs.24,18,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1944, for the administration of the head "25.—General Administration."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.24,18,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1944, for the administration of the head '25.—General Administration'."

There are as many as 23 Cut Motions. Now, Cut Motion No.1 stands in the name of Mr. Mookerjee. By this Cut Motion he wants to criticise the action of the Ministry in not properly handling the administration of the Province. Cut Motion No.2 also refers to the same point and also Cut Motion No.22 concerns the same subject. So, I think, Mr. Mookerjee may move it and the other hon. Members may take part in the discussions.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I think, Sir, it will be better if Mr. Mookerjee moves Cut Motion No.22.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Very well, the hon. Member may do it. I am fixing the time limit as before for speeches, 7 minutes for a Member to move a Cut Motion and each of the other hon. Members speaking on the Motion shall get five minutes. An Hon'ble Minister will get seven minutes for giving his reply. Of course, I reserve to myself the right to relax the time limit, whenever I think necessary.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.24,18,600 under Grant No.10, Major head—25.—General Administration, at page 61 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.201, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.24,18,600 do stand reduced by Rs.201.

Sir, I have moved this Motion to criticise Government with regard to their policy of General Administration. Sir, very often on the floor of this House, we heard that so far as appointments are concerned, 20 per cent. of the appointments will be reserved for merit and merit alone but what is our experience? Sir, sometimes we find notifications in the Gazette from the Public Service Commission that some officers will be taken in and the candidates are invited to submit applications but afterwards we find that many of them do not get even the opportunity of an interview and thereby they lose the fees that they pay to the Government.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Will it be in order, Sir, to criticise the conduct of a body like Public Service Commission? I think, it is not within the jurisdiction of this House to criticise the Public Service Commission.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, is it not a fact that the Public Service Commission is guided by the policy of the Government?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir, Government say that they require a certain number of officers and from some particular communities. The actual operation of selection is beyond the control of Government. How to advertise, whom to interview, whether any examination should be held, all these are the functions of the Public Service Commission pure and simple. My hon. Friend is quite entitled to criticise Government if effect has not been given to the principle of reservation of 20 per cent. of the appointments for meritorious candidates only. Beyond that, the details of advertisement, interview, etc., are the concern of the Public Service Commission.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May we know from the Hon'ble Premier what is the authority which induces him to say that the procedure followed by the Public Service Commission is beyond the right of discussion in this House?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I do not say that the procedure followed by the Public Service Commission is beyond the right of discussion in this House, I say the Ministry has no hand in it and the Commission is not under the control of the Ministry. We cannot dictate to them what procedure they should follow. So, it is no use criticising the Ministry for any alleged faulty procedure adopted by the Public Service Commission.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Without criticising the Ministry the hon. Member may draw the attention of the Ministry with regard to any faulty procedure followed by the Public Service Commission.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Exactly, Sir, that was my intention, but before I could finish my sentence, I was intervened.

Sir, my point is this: in spite of the fact that it is stated in the advertisement that preference would be given to candidates of a certain community, people apply on the basis of the statement made by Government that 20 per cent. of the appointments would be reserved for merit and merit alone. I would like to say that if they are not given any opportunity of interview their fees should be refunded. That is my point. Government may say that when the candidates found that preference would be given to such and such community why did they apply at all? But the reason, as I have just now stated, is that they think that a percentage has been fixed to be filled up by merit alone. Therefore, those who think themselves meritorious and capable of competing will apply. But, Sir, in some cases we have found that they do not get any opportunity of either appearing at an examination or having an interview.

Sir, as regards appointments in other services, from the Budget speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister, we found that men who never served any Government were employed on the plea that they were found to be experts in some departments. When we requested Government to inform the House about their experience the Government kept *chup*. Sir, I think we have got a right to know about the experience of some persons who have been employed by Government and are drawing very high salaries even more than that of the Prime Minister.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. May I reply to the point just now raised by Mr. Mookerjee?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister may speak after the hon. Member has finished.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Then, Sir, the reason for employment of officers from other Government services was given that because we had no such experienced officers at our disposal we were compelled to take the assistance of other Governments to help our Government. In this connection the employment of retired Government officers also comes in. Sir, the other day while replying to the general discussion of the Budget the Hon'ble Premier said that there were some difficulties so far as the listed officers were concerned. He said that the Additional District Magistrates' posts were listed and their quota was fixed, so that without the previous sanction of the Secretary of State, nobody could be promoted and be allowed to hold those posts.

Sir, in reply to a Question of mine during the November Session last, when I enquired of the Hon'ble Premier whether those posts could not be filled up by promotion the reply was "No". Then I put a supplementary Question "Was it due to non-experience or want of capability on the part of the officers that those posts could not be filled up by promotion?" The reply was "Yes, Sir". If I am challenged I can read the Questions and answers of the last Session which I have got with me. I hope the Hon'ble Premier remembers this.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It is better if the hon. Member reads them out, because the other hon. Members may know the Questions and answers.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: My Question was "Will the Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that many retired Extra Assistant Commissioners have been recalled to service?"

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Six have been so recalled.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Will the Government be pleased to state why no recruitment was made and retired officers were taken ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We wanted men to do magisterial work, and men with experience. New recruits would not have been able to discharge the duties which are being performed by retired but re-employed officers.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Are we to understand that there are no officers in the service who can be promoted to do the work ?

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

We were given to understand during the last November Session in one way, and now we are given to understand it a different way.

Sir, I do not say that retired Government officers should on no account be re-employed. My point is this: when we cannot fill up vacancies by promotion the services of the retired officers may be recalled; or retired officers may be taken in for personal assistance. I have got nothing to say about that. But while handling the administration of the Province, Government should consider the cases of those whose services are taken by the Government to the fullest extent for better administration of the country and for the sake of justice to those poor loyal officers, they should be promoted and taken in such cases.

As regards the question of food supply when the Hon'ble Premier has given us the assurance that he will take up the question separately on some particular day at the end of this session.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: For discussing this matter, have we got no separate Cut Motion? I think, we have.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I am afraid the question is so important and vital that by discussion through a Cut Motion the real position will not be clear.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: That will be coming up tomorrow.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: But the time is not more than half an hour, I think.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Very well, the Hon'ble Premier has given the assurance that he will fix a day for discussing this matter. We have got a separate Cut Motion today and in connection with which this matter can be discussed; but it is desirable that there should be a full dress discussion on such an important matter.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: My suggestion is that so far the Civil Service posts are concerned they should be filled by promotion. You will find, Sir, there are Resolutions and Cut Motions to the effect that all permanent and temporary posts should be filled up in the Assam Civil Service, Senior Cadre, from the Assam Civil Service, Junior Cadre. There may be some relaxation in some urgent cases, but that should be the guiding principle in my opinion. In a Committee appointed by this very House—the Retrenchment and Resources Committee, of which our present Premier was the Chairman, there was a recommendation to this effect also.

Coming to the Publicity Department, I think, this Department should be more vigilant. Sir, we heard on the last two occasions that Government have got no publicity organisation of their own—because so to say, of their own—not only of their own but also in the newspaper owned by private persons, the people really do not know what is happening in the Province. Sir, many times we hear rumours, some of them are very ugly too, sometimes we find that the rumours are true and sometimes we find that they are entirely false. I think, it is the duty of the Government

especially at such a critical and abnormal time to keep the people informed of the real situation of the country both political, economic and relating to war.

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

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Yes, I will finish in a minute or two.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : The hon. Member had already more than 15 minutes.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : But I was interrupted.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I am not grudging extension.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : As he is discussing an important matter he should be given some time.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Sir, there was an incident near Badarpur. We heard that the matter was very serious ; the soldiers went there and belaboured some villagers because one of the soldiers went to the village on the previous night with some bad motive and he was tied and kept there for the night. Next morning he was let off. And on the same evening a large number of soldiers went there and behaved most unmannerly and inhumanly with the villagers. After some inquiry, I came to learn that there was actually some such thing but not so serious. But the other people who also heard about this incident might not have taken the trouble of making any enquiry and are still under the wrong impression because they do not know the real situation. They simply heard that such an ugly thing occurred in such a place but for want of publicity they do not as yet know that it was not so serious a thing as was heard.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI : The matter has been settled by the Deputy Commissioner.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : I do not know whether it has been settled and how it has been settled, but I am giving only a hint to the Hon'ble Premier. If there is real publicity, many of the difficulties of the administration will disappear.

In my first Cut Motion I wanted to criticise the Government for not properly handling the administration of the Province. Sir, there may be some critics in this House who may criticise to the effect that the Government are not handling the administration at all, not to speak of proper handling.

Then, Sir, as regards food-stuffs we are experiencing the same kind of difficulty. Last time we brought this point to the notice of the Government, but, Sir, it seems to me that the position remains the same. During the time of Budget discussion I pointed out that the National War Front Department should not be allowed to meddle with the economic side of the Province. But without attaching any importance to my point I was criticised by the Hon'ble Premier. But I repeat it again, let the National War Front Department do their own work, they should not meddle with the economic side which should be left to those authorities who are at the helm of the district administration.

My next point is, if Government really want to do good and real service to the country, in that case they should try to keep those persons, I mean the officers who are at their back, satisfied and give them proper food. That kind of dearness allowance as has been allowed in the Province will not satisfy them, rather it will create dissatisfaction among these officers. Sir, it is a well known fact that empty stomach will not give real initiative to the officers to do their work properly.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved is:

"That the total provision of Rs. 24,18,600 under Grant No.10, Major head—25.—General Administration, at page 61 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 201, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 24,18,600 do stand reduced by Rs. 201".

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Mr. Moorjee has complained that when information was asked about qualifications of the particular holder of a post, the Minister kept silent. I think he was referring to the qualification of the Provincial Transport Officer, about which he sought information in course of his Budget speech. I did not reply on that occasion, as I was speaking against time. Now, I can say that Mr. Adamson is a graduate in Engineering and has had experience in transport work under the Burma Oil Company and the Assam Oil Company, where he served for a considerable period. He has also got business experience. So, the Government thought that he is eminently qualified for the post and that his appointment has been fully justified by his efficient administration of the Department.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at a time like the present when there is so much scope for what we in English commonly name graft, may I suggest to the Government that there is room for a general tightening up in the supervision of all branches of supply essential to the people whereby, it may be to some extent ensured that graft may be reduced to the minimum. I don't want to be very specific in this matter, because naturally it is a very touchy point. But it is well known to every body, as an example of what I mean, that one of the supply difficulties is obtaining transport. In the Province at the moment it is not so much the question of unavailability of railway wagons as the reluctance of station masters to make railway wagons available unless they receive a certain amount of reward for doing so. Now, Sir, I submit, this is one example of my point; it is a very well known case and should receive very urgent and immediate attention of Government. They should stop at least this one aspect, of what I referred to previously, as just graft.

***Srijiit ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think, I am one of those who feel that I should take part in this debate, because not to speak of proper handling an administration of the Province, the Ministry has practically left it untouched: It is the indifference and apathy of the Ministry to certain political matters which should be the subject of my discussion. Sir, when this Ministry was formed, no body welcomed it more than I myself. I think, I happened to be the only non-official member in that ceremony who were present to bless this Ministry. Sir, the country was tired of Reid-Clow Government. Everyone who is a Member of this House would shudder to think of what were done during that regime. I thought, the formation of the Ministry meant stopping some of the repressions which were launched in Reid-Clow Government. I thought that the Ministry would at least see that the evils are removed. But in spite of the great affection and love which I entertained for some Members of the Cabinet, I may say, I have been sadly disappointed. In the first instance, I refer to the case of security prisoners. Some of these gentlemen were arrested on their way home from attending the All-India Congress Committee meetings, others on the next day or the day following the close of the session of the All-India Congress Committee. As a matter of fact, no body knew what the Congress programme was. The first informant was Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State, who was followed by certain secret

circulars issued to the Provincial Governments in the country to put under arrest those members of the Congress and the Forward Bloc who do not believe in non-violent movement. Sir, I know some of the very sincere Congress workers and can say with confidence that sabotage and other violent activities were not the programme of the Congress at all, at any rate they were not the programme of the Congress in this province. The difficulty arose because the leaders of the Congress Working Committee were not allowed to say what they had to say in the matter.

Sir, my request to the Ministry still is, let the leaders of the Congress be released and let them have a chance at least for a period of a month or two to go round the country and tell the people what their programme is. If in spite of this action, there is sabotage movement in this country and they take up this movement and Government believe that the Congress leaders are in indirect way in the sabotage movement, let them be rearrested. I for myself can guarantee that I shall not utter a word of protest against it, rather I shall join with the Government in keeping them in jail. This appeal I make to the Government that after this session is over, let them be released, let Government watch the situation in the country and let the Congress leaders have a chance of going round the country and telling the people what they should do. If in spite of this, there is sabotage, then Government will be fully justified in keeping them in jail. I make this appeal to Government with all the emphasis that I can command.

In the Punjab, they set up a Committee who have recommended the release of the security prisoners. It will be seen from the newspaper of yesterday that as many as 50 security prisoners have been released on the belief that they were not responsible for the sabotage.

The Members of this Assembly, who are security prisoners, are definitely against fascism and there can be no doubt about their sincerity. Following the example of the Punjab Government, will our Government release at least these security prisoners forthwith? In the meantime, I appeal to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, as I do not agree with others about his hard-heartedness—I appeal to him again to consider the case of those security prisoners who are suffering from ill health and who have been suffering from bereavement. I particularly refer to the case of Srijut Gopinath Bardaloi, who has been suffering from blood pressure, and that of Srijut Mohi Chandra Bora, who is suffering from other troubles, and of Mrs. Puspallota Das, wife of Mr. Omco Kumar Das, who is suffering from some sort of lungs trouble, and in the case of bereavement, I particularly mention the name of Srijut Sarveswar Barua, who has lost his son, when in jail, and of Srijut Rajendra Nath Barua, who has lost his brother. Coming to the next, Sir, to the treatment of political prisoners, I have every reason to criticise the indifference shown by the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Jail. I am sure, he is aware that Mrs. Puspa Lata Das has been kept in a sort of isolation camp in Nowgong Jail. She is an M. A., B.L., in her qualification. But although there is room in the female ward of Gauhati Jail where there are other female prisoners, she has been kept in a particularly solitary room in Nowgong.

Then the most important thing, Sir, as regards the Jamiat-ulema prisoners. The number of them is about 30 or 35 but not one of them has been given "B" division. Although amongst them there are sons of zemindars and respectable *mirashdars*, not a single one has been classified as a "B" division prisoner. Everyone of them has been classified as "C" division, probably because Government does not like that any one of the Muslim community should join in the political movement. This vengeance cannot be justified at all, Sir.

Sir, I am sorry that I have to criticise the action and indifference of the Hon'ble Education Minister in the matter of release of educational buildings. When he first assumed office, he said, I understand, it would be his first action—that it will be his first duty to release these buildings.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Is it relevant?

***The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA:** Sir, does these things come under General Administration?

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Sir, Rs.1,25,000 are spent for salary of the Hon'ble Ministers and that is the policy of General Administration and therefore in criticising the policy of General Administration I can criticise this matter to show the indifference of the Ministry. I will give only the headline, that is to say, the educational buildings are still in the occupation of the military. There are some students who did not join the school in time and therefore certain date was fixed within which they were to join but as they failed to join on that date they have been debarred to join up till now. As many as 500 students from Nowgong alone have been debarred from appearing in their examination which means that they will lose another year.

Then as regards the incidence of Babu Susil Kumar Das. There is an application filed before the Ministry but up till now no action has been taken by the Government. Government is hesitating because both the persons complained against are their own men; they have also to pay for the defence cost—the accused happened to be Government servants. In these perplexities Government has not passed any order. But I can point out an easy solution, Sir. Mr. Lloyd Rees who was in Shillong may be retransferred to Shillong which he would like very much. Mr. Susil Kumar Das may very easily be transferred to Mr. Jobang Marak's district, *viz.*, to the salubrious climate of Tura. There will be no sabotage and there will be no necessity for resorting to fire and he may be recommended for a title which will satisfy him and no further action will be necessary. But what you are going to do with the Chairman of the Municipality who has made a row? The solution is to suspend the Tezpur Municipality just as the Gauhati Municipality. In this connection I may mention that the Gauhati Municipality has now gone to dogs under the able management of Government. Sir, what action has the Government taken about the streets—the big holes there? I have already said that nothing has been done by the Hon'ble Minister. The road is full of holes. If you run away to save yourself from the motor, military motor vehicles, you fall either to one of the holes or you fall to the ditch. There are big trenches. You fall either to the trenches or you fall to the ditch full of mud.....

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: On a point of information, Sir. May the hon. Mover be asked to stop this zoological discussion. Last year, he said Gauhati belonged to the frogs; this year it has gone to the dogs. I don't know where it will go next year. It will become purely a zoological problem.

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** It will go to the lion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I would request the hon. Member to proceed in a serious way.

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** It is very serious, Sir. (Laughter.)

I mentioned this fact last time but no action has been taken by the Hon'ble Minister. The only action taken by him is that he has passed

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

through Gauhati twice or thrice—all the time he put his big handkerchief on his noes just to avoid the smell and he took care not to walk through the roads. These are the two protections he has taken while going to Delhi and Lahore.

As regards the conservancy arrangements, Sir, all the sweepers have to go to the military camp. The military people have got their own sweepers but even then they are to go there. The executive officer has to dance attendance to the military camp and the result is that the latrines are not cleared even once in a week.

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

Those hon. Members who have tabled Cut Motions may take part in this debate.

Mr. R. A. PALMER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a Cut Motion under this head.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I need hardly remind this House that in spite of agitation over a very long period this Province is still without any statutory system of weights and measures. As long as this unsatisfactory condition continues, the general public is suffering from unscrupulous merchants and this becomes all the more serious in the present abnormal times. That the Government are aware of this situation is admitted. In a reply to a question by Mr. Dawson in the December Session 1941, the Government gave the assurance that they will bring in a Bill to put this matter right. The actual wording of the Minister's reply was that he would bring in a Bill "in the next Budget Session definitely." Now the next Budget Session was held last November. We all know what happened in the interim period between these two sessions and there might have been some excuse in not bringing in this Bill last Session, but there can be no possible excuse for not bringing in the measure this Session. This House has the right to know why this has not been done and we require an assurance that the Bill will be introduced without any further delay. I might also add that the failure of Government to implement assurances given on the floor of this House is not conducive to confidence and deserves the utmost condemnation.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: I want to make a few observations in this connection. The other day while discussing the Budget I pointed out that the Government could not properly supervise the works of the officers of the Government in the plains districts in which we find that they are working whimsically. Now leaving the question of the different districts and subdivisions I may point out to the hon. Members of the House some facts about Mr. Macdonald, the Deputy Commissioner of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. On some of his objectionable remarks I put a question in the November Session. Now I hear more allegations against him. It is alleged that he roughly handles public and his subordinates even. When fire broke out in Loreto Convent some members of the public went there with buckets and water. Mr. Macdonald roughly handled some of them. It seems that he supplies certain food-stuff generally to the Europeans and hill people, I mean *atta*. I may mention here that two hon. members of this House applied to him for the supply of *atta* which they are in the habit of taking but Mr. Macdonald refused to supply. There are some Chaprasis employed by Government who come from other provinces and they are in the habit of taking *atta* but Mr. Macdonald is not prepared to supply them with *atta*. This is the manner in which he is managing the Supply Department. So far as A. R. P. officers are concerned, it is alleged that he even roughly handled some. Due to his whims and caprices, many have left the Department and some have been suspended. Even he did not

act up to the orders of the Director of Civil Defence. Some of his employees hailing from the plains districts are leaving his Department. If a part of these allegations is found to be true, I would earnestly request the Government to remove him at once from Shillong and also to relieve him of the duties of the A. R. P. Controller of Shillong. Sir, another point I want to bring before the House is the appointment of Burma officers in the Province of Assam. There is no dearth of competent and brilliant officers but in spite of that, Government have employed some Burma officers and re-employed some retired officers who were worn out with years and were pensioned off. By so doing the Government have blocked the way of promotion of our brilliant and competent officers. The other day I heard Mr. Muzarof Ali Laskar saying that one Burma officer has been appointed as the Deputy Commissioner in Cachar. But that officer's dealing with the public is not proper. I am bringing all these facts before the House in order to draw the pointed attention of Government. I am not prepared to accept the policy of the Government in the re-employment of retired officers and employment of Burma officers. We always hear the cries of unemployment from the different corners of the Province. We cannot afford to provide our young men but when vacancies arise, without promoting our brilliant officers and making room for unemployed young men, Government import officers from Burma and drag out officers from their graves. I deplore this policy.

Only one word more and I have finished. Some years back the Council of Ministers gave us assurance that they would bring up a Self-Government Amending Bill but up till now I see no such Bill being introduced. Hon'ble Mr. Abdul Matin Chaudhuri, when in charge of Labour Department, made a statement in this House that the Government will introduce a Bill called the Shop Assistant's Relief Bill and on that assurance the non-official Bill was withdrawn. But up till now we have not found anything of such kind. I think, Sir, that Government will not take shelter under the argument that the time is abnormal and I would request Government that without any delay they will bring those two Bills and remove the difficulties of the shop assistants and the defects in the constitution of the Local Bodies. With these words, I beg to resume my seat.

***Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I consider that in certain matters the Ministry instead of handling the administration of the Province properly, are only mishandling the administration of the Province. This assertion of mine will be borne to-day even by the denunciation of those hon. Members sitting in the back of the Government Benches. The other day, when I referred to the case of security prisoners, the Hon'ble Premier was pleased to say that he had no responsibility in the matter of the arrest of the M. L. As. Surely we did not expect a reply of that sort from the Hon'ble Prime Minister who is in charge of this Province and in charge of law and order.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I never made that statement, Sir.

***Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** If he has not made such a statement then I stand corrected. I may say that he was not responsible for the arrest of the M. L. As.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, M.L.As. were arrested before I took charge.

*Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.

***Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** In spite of the reply just now given by the Hon'ble Premier I request him to look to the cases of these prisoners. I have no objection if these people are imprisoned or kept in detention only in cases where they have been found guilty under any law, of the land or lawless laws that have recently been passed by the Government of India. It is up to the Minister who is in charge of the Province to carefully examine all the cases individually on the principle of justice. But for the hundreds of guilty people who go unpunished, the innocent persons should not be punished. When this method is applied now-a-days in cases of all persons, is it not up to the Hon'ble Minister to look into the cases of all those imprisoned as security prisoners? Specifically I know of certain cases and some of the cases have already been referred to by my Friend, Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri. Let me take the case of Mr. A. K. Chanda who is well known in this House. He was not a member of the All-India Congress Committee. He went to Calcutta for treatment as he was ailing at that time. While returning from Calcutta he was arrested on his way. I know cases of certain other persons who were arrested for the offence that they were members of the All-India Congress Committee or they had some connection with that institution. I refer to another case, the case of Mr. Abala Kanta Gupta who was in Sylhet jail. We understood from a report that he was some time ago removed from the jail to hospital owing to his illness and the Civil Surgeon after examination opined that he required immediately a major operation. So I again request the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge to look into the cases of this sort also along with those of innocent persons against whom there are no offences and release them forthwith.

Next I come to other cases. I know, some people were arrested for no reason and detained in jail for 2 or 3 months. They were said to be arrested under some section of the Penal Code and when they came out—when nothing was found to prove their guilt, they were told that they were detained as security prisoners. In some cases when people were arrested they were charged under one section or other of the Penal Code until they were found guilty on minor grounds and in this way they were detained for a long time, say, three or four months. This process still continues.

Now I come to specific cases of mishandling regarding supply of food-stuffs which is a primary problem of the day. The people to-day are in want of their daily necessities of life. At least 12 annas of our necessities of life depend on the Government, and not to speak of kerosene oil, even for the supply of flour, sugar, etc., we are to depend entirely on Government. For these reasons if there be no good or organised system of giving supply to the people the people will naturally suffer. To purchase things from Government stores we find villagers coming from distant places have to wait very long and they are even then pushed back by some. Some have got to pay tips to those shopkeepers who are in charge of the Government stores and only in that case they get certain amount of such things. But even then after reaching back home they find that what they are given are much less in weight. Only some months ago there was a detection of a case of this sort in a Government store, and this is the experience of everybody. And one cannot get his daily necessities of life without going door to door and even after that some of them are disappointed. To make matters easy Government should create separate departments or agencies absolutely for the

*Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.

purpose of price control and supply, because the Deputy Commissioners and the Subdivisional Officers are so much absorbed with various other jobs that they cannot do full justice to these problems, and as a result the poor people suffer.

As regards small coins, it has been reported that Government of India and different Provincial Governments have made arrangements for issue of small coins to the people. Our people are still in want of them as before. When one goes to a post office to purchase a post-card he is refused for not bringing small coins with him. Similarly, if one goes to a motor or railway station to purchase ticket he is refused for not having with him loose coins. Unless Government come to the rescue of the people by creating agencies for giving small coins, people are helpless and they cannot manage to get their daily necessities of life. The Ministry has so far failed to tackle this problem successfully and our daily wants are increasing day by day.

In the market the prices of things are going high like anything. Every day there is a different price or, I should say exorbitant price, or alternatively there is total refusal saying that there is no article in the shop where purchasers go to purchase commodities.

Finally, I urge upon the Government to take measures to bring a solution of all these problems in the fair name of the Province, and to release all those persons against whom there is no evidence of offences, as my hon. Friend, Mr. Chaudhuri, has suggested, and also those persons who are ailing in the jail and who cannot do any harm to Government if and when released.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Sir, I take this opportunity of speaking a few words in connection with Government's indifference in taking steps about the vexed question of separation of judiciary and executive. The utility and urgency of this has long been admitted by the Government. It was more than a year ago that a special officer was appointed to draw up a scheme and we were also given an assurance by the Hon'ble Premier on the floor of this House that Government will consider the report of the special officer when the session would be over and accordingly we were expecting that steps would be taken for the separation of the judiciary and executive from the next year. But we have heard nothing about it. I think the chief difficulty for giving effect to this scheme was the question of finance. But now that the Government has at their disposal an additional revenue of about 30 lakhs of rupees on account of total withdrawal of land revenue remission I think they should not make further delay to take up that scheme.

Sir, the next thing I like to refer is the Government's policy regarding grant of dearness allowance. I do not know what criterion Government has followed in fixing the allowance. The index of the cost of living has been up by more than 200 per cent. everywhere. So I cannot understand what is the justification for giving an allowance of only 10 or 12 per cent. which give the poor employee no relief. I do not also understand why there is a differentiation between Shillong and plains districts in regard to the grant of dearness allowance. It is known to every hon. Member of this House that most of the essential food-stuffs are not available even in the plains districts except without taking recourse to the black market and I do not think that the plains districts are less costly than Shillong. Particularly when Government is granting such paltry amounts as dearness allowance I do not think that there is any justification for making a difference between the plains districts and Shillong. I would request the Government to consider the question of the adequacy of the dearness allowance as well as of the discrimination that has been made with regard to this matter.

between Shillong and other plains districts. I think that the dearness allowance should be considerably increased and that there should not be any such discrimination.

With regard to supplies, I do not like to say much. Though it is about a year that the food problem has become acute, no comprehensive scheme for the systematic and regular supply and distribution of essential food-stuff has as yet been prepared. Only the other day, we heard the Hon'ble Premier saying that Government were importing only sugar, *atta* and flour. But 99 per cent. of the poor people can do without any of these three articles. They are mostly concerned with rice, *dal*, mustard oil and kerosene oil and the like. These are sold by private dealers. So Government should either import all these things through their agency and distribute them in a systematic manner or control effectively the supply and distribution of these articles by the private dealers. At any rate there should be a well thought out scheme for regular and systematic supply of these articles to every part of the Province.

As regards standard cloth, we are given promise after promise. These promises are very aptly described by the Editor of *Statesman* as relating to a future that will never become present. We have been promised that we will get our supplies from the next April. I hope this time the promise will be fulfilled.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Cut Motion* No.20 is in my name. Although it is a most important subject, I propose to be very short. It is desirable when criticising to try to give examples; but unfortunately we have to criticise the lack of information about convictions for black market offences. In the last session Mr. Kamini Kumar Sen asked a question, and the Hon'ble Premier in reply said that there had been 96 convictions, but we do not know what the sentences were. We have received later information about another case in which a man was fined Rs.25 only for hoarding small coins and the coins were returned to him. Is this sort of sentence likely to deter other offenders? We submit, Sir, this is more likely to encourage them. We should therefore like Government's assurance that severe sentences will be given in any future convictions for black market offences, and what is important still that Government will see that very considerable publicity is given to such convictions. It is only by such publicity that public opinion can be educated and the public can be encouraged to give information which will lead to tracing such crimes.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also tabled a good number of Cut Motions with regard to the General Administration Grant; but as a general question has been raised with regard to administration and time at our disposal being very short, I take this early opportunity to state what I have got to state. I will urge upon the Government to see that the points which have been raised by the different speakers of this Hon. House may well be considered so that we may not repeat the same grievances in future. Sir, it will be presumed that the views which are expressed by this Hon. House are the views of the people of the Province. I do not find any reason for the Ministry not to accept the views which are expressed by the Members of the House. What criticisms were advanced during the last Budget Session have again been repeated here, and this clearly shows that

* That the provision of Rs.6,21,388 under Grant No.10, Major head—25.—General Administration; Minor head—District Administration—S.—General Establishment, Sub-head—1.—Pay of officers (total), at page 70 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.24,18,600, do stand reduced by Re.1.

(To criticise the inadequate fines which are being imposed for black market offences.)

the hon. Members were not satisfied or are not satisfied with the action which has hitherto been taken by the Government. My submission to our Government would be to see that they take such action which may go to rectify the defects which are now being suggested by the hon. Members of this House. Sir, the time through which we are passing being a very abnormal one, the Ministry should not try to justify their action on the plea that they are to pass through very abnormal times. I think the hon. Members of the House will not grudge the Ministry making expenditure on matters which are very judicious and justifiable ; but it seems to me that no body will encourage any injudicious expenditure on the plea of abnormal times.

One very important matter has very strongly been criticised both during the general discussion of the Budget and also in connection with Cut Motions. This is in connection with appointments in various cadres of services of Government. Many hon. Members have very strongly criticised the Government for their policy of re-employing retired officers. This was not only criticised during the general discussion of this year's Budget, but this view was strongly expressed in the last November Session. I again remind the Government what wisdom they find in making appointments by bringing these age-barred officers. I think our Hon'ble Minister will give an explanation to the House so that our Members can be satisfied.

Now, Sir, there is certain other point which also deserves very serious consideration. This is with regard to the administration of the Secretariat here. A very serious criticism was made by one hon. Member of this House during the general discussion of the Budget, but the reply which the Hon'ble Premier gave did not meet the criticism. Failing to get any reply from the Hon'ble Prime Minister, I had the necessity to table a Cut Motion and I was a bit harsh on the gentleman and said that the gentleman is not wanted. I don't want to be so much injudicious because I am not in possession of facts. The facts which were stated by the hon. Member the other day on the floor of this House, have not been replied by the Government. So I am not positive whether all these charges are genuine. If these charges are real then I must stick to my point that the Registrar must not be allowed to remain. I make an appeal to the Hon'ble Premier to enlighten the House whether these criticisms are really true or not.

Then, Sir, as regards the Publicity Department, from the number of Cut Motions tabled to-day, it will be seen that many of the hon. Members have not missed this point. This clearly goes to show that the works hitherto done by the Publicity Department are not at all satisfactory. This Department is not wanted by the people of this Province. This particular branch was opened for giving publicity of the works which are done by the Government. At present, the newspapers are also not giving publication of the facts which our people want due to the scarcity of paper and due to the reducing of the number of pages; so the people expect that through this Publicity Department they will get an opportunity to hear things but instead of publishing anything, I can dare say that this Department is doing nothing. For the last one year or so, we did not know whether this Department actually existed or not. For the maintenance of the Publicity Department actually Government has got to spend a lot of money but when even the Members of the Legislature are not getting any information of what is actually being done inside the Province, what is the necessity of maintaining such a costly Department?

There is another point which has been very strongly urged by some of the hon. Members regarding the appointment of certain Extra Assistant Commissioners on a salary of Rs.400 each per month. With regard to

these appointments there had been criticisms during the last November Session and also during the last Budget discussion, because nobody found wisdom in the appointment of these officers. I can say that some third-class B.L.s—some B.L.s., rotting in Bars—have been appointed on a pay of Rs.400 each per month. This point also requires, Sir, a very clear answer from the Government.

Then, Sir, I come to the question of supply. There is a distinct Cut Motion with regard to the supply policy of the Government but I am afraid, whether there will be any time available for the Members to discuss it.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member will get an opportunity to speak on that subject.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I will certainly, Sir, urge that an opportunity should be given because the future prospect of the country depends actually and entirely on the clear and reasonable supply problem. For this reason, I think, an opportunity should be given to all the Members to speak what they have got to say about the supply.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I shall call upon the Hon'ble Premier just at quarter to 1 and so before that the hon. Members should finish their speeches.

Dr. C. G. TERRELL: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I should just like to say a very few words in support of Mr. Lewis' Cut Motion to criticise the inadequate fines which are being imposed for the Black Market offences. There are certain items which are essential to life and certain which are only luxuries and for these, we have nothing to complain about prices being enhanced under the present conditions. Included in the essentials of life are articles of food and various drugs which are found to be absolutely essential for the treatment of certain diseases, and I should like to take this opportunity of drawing attention of the Members of this House to the fact that certain drugs are quite beyond the reach of most people in the ordinary course of events owing to the exorbitant prices that are being charged by retail dealers in the industrial towns throughout the Province—I refer particularly to the essential drug, quinine. Quinine is being sold not secretly but openly at prices which range from Rs.280 to Rs.320 per pound and this makes it quite impossible for the ordinary individual to purchase a sufficient supply for his own treatment in the event of his being attacked with malaria. This is a fact, for I myself have been offered quinine at this price. I have been connected for some considerable time with the care and welfare of large numbers of labourers, and it is extremely difficult to keep up supplies of these essential drugs which come in the case of the Organisation which I am connected with, from Government and other semi-official sources. At times, supplies become very low indeed and this almost always seems to synchronise with the offers of supply of essential drugs at most exorbitant prices. Quinine tablets were offered to me at the price of Rs.12 per hundred; its normal price being about Rs.18 per thousand. The current price of quinine sold by authentic quinine distributors under Government control is between Rs.40 to Rs.50 per pound. The Black Market price being Rs. 300.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I cannot emphasise sufficiently how strongly I feel the importance of this subject. I do think that we should urge upon Government in every possible way to take immediate and very serious steps to stop these malpractices in the sale of essential articles such as these drugs in the black market, and that Government should impose the strictest and severest penalties on those who take advantage of the abnormal times through which we are passing to enrich themselves at the expense of the unfortunate members of the general public.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir. A person who passes at present through the rural areas of the Province, specially of the district of Sylhet cannot but declare that people have been living under no administration — a state of chaos and anarchy prevails everywhere. During the period of acutest food crisis, Government's price control, Government orders prohibiting rice export and Government orders for establishing Defence Parties and Home Guards have been remaining only as paper orders. In many cases they are never carried out. Government agents who are expected to carry out orders regarding price control and export prohibition really have become the agents of the big shop-keepers and rice exporters. Some of them are even at regular pay of the big shop keepers. Black marketing has been continuing in every *hat* of the district of Sylhet, even in the remotest corner of the district.

Foodstuffs especially mustard oil is being sold at a very high price, much higher than the controlled rate. On the 27th of January I was in the Tahirpur Bazar; one gentleman came to me to complain that one Benode Behari Dey, a merchant, had a tin of mustard oil, but refused to sell oil to him because he told him that the tin was reserved for a *muhurir* of the *kachari*, named Bhagawan Chandra Das. I asked him to go to the nearby thana; he went there and returned with the news that there was no officer there, and that one constable told him that it would serve no purpose because that merchant was in good terms with the officers.

Sir, in many places during my tour in the rural areas people came to me in groups and told me that they were ready to loot the shops. I discouraged them because that would lead to chaos. Sir, there is no denying the fact that the Communist of the district of Sylhet are responsible for creating an anti-Japanese atmosphere in the rural areas of the district of Sylhet, but the bureaucratic Government have been extending their repressive policy towards these Communist workers. Some have been exterminated, some detained and some interned and cases against some have been hanging. All of them should be released at once to prepare the Province for national defence. The national defence cannot be organised until there is a real National Government, but to establish National Government, national unity must be achieved on the basis of Congress League Unity. And this cannot be brought about until Mahatma and other political leaders are released forthwith. My constructive suggestion therefore is that all the political leaders of the Province should be released at once.

Sir, to minimise the present food crisis I offer the following suggestions to Government. The price of foodstuffs should be fixed in such a way as to enable the poor peasants to buy them, Government shop should be started in every market and officers should be appointed to stop profiteering by the shop-keepers.

With these few words, I support the Motion.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the discussion on this Cut Motion has really taken the nature of a general discussion of the Budget. In the name of an omnibus Cut Motion various speakers have given their suggestions, sometimes criticising the Government and sometimes advising Government how they should administer the Province.

This debate has in the fitness of things been started by the *defacto* leader of the Opposition, whose absence from his seat now, I deplore. He started his criticism by saying that Government have not carried into effect their policy of filling up 20 per cent. of the appointments on merit and merit alone. His statement is much too general. I said on a previous occasion, and I repeat it to-day, that we have adopted this policy only in the case

of Provincial services ; we have not been able to bring this policy into operation for subordinate and ministerial services. My hon. Friend, also, said that candidates are charged fees at the time of filing their applications, but they are denied even the chance of being interviewed. I interjected at the moment, Sir, that this was done by the Public Service Commission over which Ministry have got no control, but I can say this much that whenever any fee is realised from the candidates an examination is held, and on the results of that examination, candidates are summoned for interview by the Public Service Commission.

Sir, various hon. Members have criticised that instead of employing children of the soil, Government have imported a large number of officers from outside the Province. The majority of such appointments were made during the 93 Administration ; only a very few such officers in the Police Department have been employed by the Ministry. This was necessitated by the fact that fresh recruitment of European personnel to the Indian Police Service had been stopped on account of war conditions. We were in dearth of senior officers to man certain very important and responsible posts. At the instance of the Central Government, various provinces were enquired of whether they could release any of their police officers. Excepting Madras no other Government were willing to offer their officers for employment in Assam. We have taken one, and are looking into the papers of another officer. From this it will appear that the practice of recruiting people from outside has really been stopped.

Government has been criticised for recalling retired officers from their oblivion into active service again. As regards the four Additional District Magistrates, I have already made the position of Government clear that the posts of Additional District Magistrates are to be filled up either by members of the Indian Civil Service or by promoted officers of the provincial service who are known as "listed". The number of such listed officers has been fixed by the Secretary of State, and as the normal quota is already filled up, we could not promote senior members of our existing Provincial Civil service to fill up these posts. We were therefore compelled to employ those whom Government have already taken into the "listed" service, but who have been recently pensioned off. My hon. Friend read out my reply in the November Session, and alleged that my standpoint was different now. He is under a wrong impression. My reply then related to superannuated Extra Assistant Commissioners who were re-employed ; it had no reference to the posts of the Additional District Magistrates. Those six officers had to be re-employed then to take up magisterial work where there was a deficiency of magistrates. I also said then that sub-deputy collectors, who are normally trained for revenue work, could not be very good magistrates without previous experience. In order to give promotion from the Junior Civil Service to the Senior Service, we invested certain Sub-Deputy Collectors with judicial powers, but they were rather low in the list. If they were promoted, there would have been discontent among the senior members. Therefore we had to take the line of action now criticised. In this connection my hon. Friend Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury as well as Maulavi Abdur Rahman have raised two very serious matters. Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury is always carried away by his emotion, and has seen or thought it fit to single out the special officers and make assertions against them. Well, he may be within his rights, but I doubt whether by taking advantage of the privilege he enjoys as a Member of this House, he should make these allegations which in the outside will make the hon. Member liable to prosecution and damages. Any way, I assure him that the statement he has made here

will be sent to the proper quarters for future guidance. Hon'ble Maulavi Abdur Rahman has fallen foul of me saying that I have not replied to the allegations made by Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury against the alleged misdoings of the Registrar of the Civil Secretariat. How Mr. Rahman could expect me to conduct an enquiry while I am pre-occupied with the sessions of both the Houses, I cannot understand. Very serious allegations have been made against the administration of the Civil Secretariat. The Registrar is not the head of the assistants. The Chief Secretary is in charge of the establishment and if any body is at fault it is the Chief Secretary. I have therefore to make a sifting and thorough enquiry into the allegations made by my hon. Friends. They cannot expect that without considering whether those statements are based on facts, I should give a prompt reply. That is not my policy. I shall keep in mind the context of the statements that have been made in this House and I will make an enquiry when I have time.

Most hon. Members have spoken and very rightly laid emphasis on the question of supply of essential foodstuffs. Government have been straining their every nerve in order to procure foodstuffs as well as medical stores but so far they have not been able to procure the essential medical drugs.

Taking the question of quinine, Dr. Tarrell was quite correct when he said that the proper price fixed by the Government of India on quinine is Rs.50 per pound as against the black market price of Rs.300 at Bombay. I assure the hon. Member that in Assam there is no big market for medical stores and therefore no black market here. If our traders have to charge Rs.12 for 100 quinine tablets they are not to blame, because they could not get these drugs at a cheaper rate from outside and the supply of Government quinine is very meagre compared with the requirement of the Province.

As I am going to make a statement later on the supply question, I refrain from speaking anything on that subject at the present moment. But I must clear one misconception of my hon. Friend Mr. Kamini Kumar Sen. He thought that Government are not bringing stuffs like *atta*, *dal* and mustard oil. As a matter of fact we are bringing *dal* for nearly a year and selling it to the people. I mentioned the other day that recently we have been allowed to import direct from Bihar one lakh maunds of *dal* of which we are taking advantage. I have also mentioned very recently that we bought 6,000 maunds of mustard oil through Shaw Wallace and Company and distributed to the different centres. So it is not a fact that the trade of these essential articles of food have been left with the local traders and dealers in order to charge any price they like.

Then some hon. Members have spoken about either the indifference or apathy shown by the Ministry or their mishandling of the political situation. As usual my quondam colleague Mr. Chaudhuri has spoken as regards the security prisoners. He was speaking at such a vein of levity that you, Sir, had to intervene.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Not as regards security prisoners. That was about the Gauhati Municipality. The picture that I gave was real but ludicrous and every one laughed at that.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The statement of my hon. Friend Mr. Chaudhuri that the Hon'ble Minister in-charge of Local Self-Government was passing through Gauhati sitting in his car with a beautiful handkerchief to his nose is, I must say, not a first hand testimony but drawn out of imagination. My hon. Friend Mr. Chaudhuri did not meet the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Local

Self-Government when he passed through Gauhati. Well, if a statement can be made on the floor of this House by no less a person than my hon. Friend Mr. Chaudhuri who adorned the Government Benches for the last 5 years, in, what I should say, such a ludicrous way, then I can take it that his other statements should also be taken with a grain of salt.

Then comes the question about the treatment of security prisoners. My hon. Friend has already mentioned that on a previous day. His recommendations are that those prisoners who are suffering from ill health should be released on that ground and all those security prisoners who have had recent bereavements should also be released. He also very kindly referred to my activities in the matter of release of some of the members when they suffered from some bereavements. As regards those who are supposed to be ill, I have started enquiries from the Superintendents of Jails who are also Civil Surgeons and asked them to report to me as regards their health. I got a communication from a high personage as regards my hon. Friend the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party Mr. Chanda. I hurried myself down to see him accompanied by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Medical Department at Sylhet. We found Mr. Chanda quite cheerful and improving in health under the medical ministrations of the Civil Surgeon. He made no complaints whatsoever, as a matter of fact when I went to see other political prisoners, the Hon'ble Medical Minister chatted with her for nearly 15 minutes and during all that time Mr. Chanda was in normal health. He has improved his health and does not suffer from insomnia, and swelling of limb and toxæmia has come down to a great extent. This does not show the action of the Ministry as indifferent or apathetic to the condition of the security prisoners. My hon. Friend has mentioned that we should follow the example of the Punjab Government. The conditions in the Punjab are different from those in Assam. I have informed every hon. Member of this House who are unfortunately behind the jail walls that if he says that he is against fascist powers and against the sabotage movement, he can come out of the jail. But excepting Srijut Sarveswar Barua, no body was willing to say that he is anti-fascist and against the sabotage movement.

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Does the Hon'ble Premier mean to say that they should seek their release by giving a guarantee?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Only recently I met at Tezpur Srijut Sarveswar Barua, M.L.A. and a few others. No one is willing to say that they are against the movement of burning and wrecking.

***Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** May I know what is happening to Srijut Sarveswar Barua?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: He is going to be released.

Then, Sir, as regards the criticisms regarding separation of the executive from the judiciary, dearness allowance and others, as the time is up, I cannot take them up now. I will refer only to the suggestions of Mr. Lewis and Mr. Moore that the offenders dealing in profiteering and black markets should be more severely punished. That is public opinion and my personal opinion too. But I am precluded from issuing any circular to the Magistrates that they should deal with such offences very severely. Cases of severe punishment in other parts of the country have been published in the press and our judiciary are supposed to know the gravity of the offence and should give suitable punishment to the offenders.

*Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.

As regards the delay in introducing the Standard Weights Bill, Mr. Palmer wants to condemn the Ministry because the promise already given was not carried out. Sir, it was the intention of the Ministry to introduce this Bill in this session and in the items of business, this Bill was included provisionally. But at the last moment it was pointed out that drafting was defective as the Bill referred only to dry measure. It is intended to cover liquid measure and so the Bill has been referred to the Legal Remembrancer. As soon as we get it from him, the Bill will be introduced.

As regards the Shop Assistants Bill, Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury wants to condemn the Ministry. The position is that we have obtained legislations passed in other provinces on the Motion of Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed and we are now examining the Bill in the light of those legislations. We have not yet come to a final decision. It depends on the opinion of the Legal Remembrancer as to whether the private Bill should be proceeded with or whether Government should bring in a suitable and comprehensive Bill. It is on account of that, no Government Bill has been introduced in this session.

Then, as regards the Assam Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill, it is a very contentious Bill. We are expecting that there will be some reconstitution after the war, and it will be of no use to amend the present Local Self-Government Acts, as there may be entirely different grounds for the constitution of local bodies. That is why we have not taken up that matter in hand this year.

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

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: No, Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw it.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The original Motion is: "That a sum not exceeding Rs.24,18,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1944, for the administration of the head "25.—General Administration".

The Motion was adopted.

Adjournment

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

After lunch

GRANT No.2

7—LAND REVENUE

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.17,89,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1944, for the administration of the head "7.—Land Revenue".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.17,89,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1944, for the administration of the head 7.—Land Revenue".

There are 11 cut Motions but I think a cut Motion under which the general policy can be discussed should be taken up and there is such a Motion, because when that Motion will be discussed all other points can be discussed. So I ask Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury to move his Motion No.11. That would be better I think.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.17,89,100 under Grant No.2, Major head—7.—Land Revenue, at page 30 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.101, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 17,89,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 101.

Sir, by this Motion I take the opportunity of drawing the attention of Government to the land policy they are following. Government has launched a propaganda known as the Grow More Food Campaign now but in some places I know that Government have enough land reserved under the Forest Department. If those lands could be released, the cultivators could extend their cultivation and the Grow More Food Campaign would become more successful. When the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Revenue went to Sunamganj, we, on behalf of some cultivators represented the matter to him and the other day my Friend Maulavi Muzarrof Ali also represented the views of the cultivators of Cachar. I hope, Sir, for the success of the Grow More Food Campaign Government will see their way to release more reserves for cultivation. I shall be very brief, Sir, and I only will touch one point with regard to the Court of Wards Department. Government, now, as we find, are taking indiscriminately the charge of private estates under the management of Court of Wards without having regard to the fact that the proprietors are not imbecile nor disqualified. During the last session I put some questions and from the replies I found that the estates the income of which was not more than Rs.2,000 were taken over by the Court of Wards. Now, I understand, there are more applications from the zeminders who are neither imbecile nor disqualified with the Hon'ble Minister. Those are under consideration. All these show that the zemindary system has failed but at the same time, I do not know why Government are taking the charge of the management of all such estates. Government take over charge for better management but in some places, I know personally, tenants are hard hit, *e. g.*, in certain localities a particular zeminder could not realise his rent through law court. He filed rent suit but withdrew because there was want of papers to establish the relationship of zemindars and tenants as there was no record of rights. But when the estate passed to the Court of Wards, the rent is being realised by the certificate procedure. What the zeminders could not achieve through law courts is now being achieved by the executive hands under the sharp knife of the certificate procedure. I would ask Government to change the policy of taking the private estates indiscriminately under the management of Court of Wards and refrain from giving sanction to certificate procedure with regard to realisation of rent. I have come to learn that tenants when they are served with notices under Court of Wards for the realisation of rent by the certificate officer they come to represent their cases before the certificate officer but they get very little benefit. In most of the cases their arguments are not heard because everything is decided summarily. I bring all these facts before this House

and the Government too, so that the Government will see their way to revise their policy of taking over estates under the management of Court of Wards and granting certificate power to those estates. I have been already accused of being led by emotion: that may be so, but it is emotion only that rouses the sleeping and suppressed reason. However, now I do hope that reason will play its full part and Government will act in such a manner that what the owners of the private estates could not achieve through law courts are not achieved by the machinery of the Government.

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

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with regard to this particular demand, I have also tabled a cut Motion, particularly to bring to the notice of the Government the mal-practices and corruption which are prevailing amongst certain sections of the estate establishment, *viz.*, Kanungos and their establishment. Sir, owing to the expansion of roads during the war time, the Government has got to acquire considerable portion of roadside land throughout the various parts of the Province, and in the nature of acquisition of land the Kanungos and their establishment have got to play the main part. It is to be lamented that these people never do the right thing unless they are paid some money and it is reported that they always profit in the shape of illegal gratification. The corrupt practices of this department were brought to the notice of the Government some time back but I don't think any action has been taken to remove those practices. I do not agree with the views of my Friend, the mover of this cut Motion regarding taking over of private estates under the management of the Government *i.e.*, under the Courts of Wards. I bring to the notice of Government that when owners of private estates find difficulty in the management of their own estates, if they come forward to the Government for certain help in the shape of delivering their estates to the hands of Government, I don't find any reason why Government should not extend their supporting hands to them. Sir, the Act which was enacted for the purpose of giving protection to those estates have amply provided that if any private owner of an estate comes to the Government then they should take over that estate for its proper management. I do maintain that Government should take as many number of estates as possible because they have to maintain some officers for this purpose and if by taking over a large number of estates they can do some good to a section of the people I do not find any reason why the Government should grudge. Sir, by taking over the management of those estates Government have got to pay very little. It is probably 5 per cent. of the total expenditure that is to be met from the Government fund and the remaining expenditure is being borne from the income of those estates. If that be the case, why Government should grudge to pay this small amount of money for the benefit of a section of the people who are in need of that benefit, I do not understand.

Sir, with regard to the point that the rents are realised by the certificate procedure, this procedure has got to be condemned. I advise our popular Government to see that this procedure can be revised so that our poor cultivators may not be harassed in any manner at the whims of even the peons of the Government. The Collectorate peons who go to the localities, unless they are paid something, they do not even spare the plough cattle of the cultivators. This procedure is not really a very sound one and requires immediate revision.

Then, with regard to certain other matter, Sir, I mean regarding the general policy of the land revenue of the Government, I find several Cut Motions have been tabled and those Motions themselves speak what the general views of the country are. Certain Motions have been tabled to raise a discussion about the urgency of complete overhauling the land revenue system prevailing in the Province. From this, it may clearly be understood that the present system of the Government regarding land revenue policy is not very much appreciated by the people of the Province. I would, therefore, urge upon the Hon'ble Minister in-charge, who is a veteran legislator, as old as the House is, to see that the revenue system of the Province is better managed in his hands.

With these words, I beg to resume my seat.

Srijut KARKA DALAY MIRI: মাননীয় Speaker মহোদয়, মওল, কাননগু আৰু Sub-Deputy Collectorৰ সন্মুখে মই কেই আগবঢ়াবলৈ কৰি থোজো। মই দেখিছো এই Land Revenue Department ৰ অনেক অফিচাৰে গভৰ্ণ-মেণ্টৰ যিবিলাক Order যায় সেই বিলাক কোনো প্ৰকাৰে carry out কৰিবলৈ ইচ্ছা নকৰে। বহুতে হয়তো এবছৰলৈকে পেলাই থৈ দিয়ে; আকৌ কিছুমানে হয়তো ৬ মাহ ৮ মাহ ৯ মাহ পৰ্য্যন্ত পেলাই থৈ দিয়ে। ইয়াৰ ফলত বায়তৰ অনেক কষ্ট হয়। আৰু কিছুমান আছে, তেওঁবিলাকে অলপো আপত্তি শুনিব নোখোজে আৰু তেওঁবিলাকৰ ওচৰত আপত্তি কৰিলে, নানাবকম বেয়া ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে। এই কাৰণে মানুহে উপায় নাপাই গভৰ্ণ-মেণ্টৰ ওচৰ চাপিলে তেওঁলোকে লোকৰ ওপৰত অনেক দোষাবোপ কৰি গভৰ্ণ-মেণ্টৰ Order ও মানিব নোখোজে। বিশেষকৈ উত্তৰ লক্ষীমপুৰত মই এনে-কুৱা বহুত কথা শুনিছো। মই শুনিবলৈ পাইছো যে আজি ৬৭ বছৰৰ আগতে উত্তৰ লক্ষীমপুৰ মহকুমাৰ নাওবৈচা নোজাৰ বঙ্গানদী লাটত emigrant ব্লক খুলিছিল। এই ব্লকটো মিৰি গাঁৱৰ নিচেই ওচৰত খুলিছিল। এই সন্মুখে মই মিৰি বায়তৰ পৰা আপত্তি পাই গৈ দেখিলো যে এই ব্লকটো মিৰি গাঁৱৰ নিচেই ওচৰত পোলা হৈছে প্ৰায় ১ কি ১১ ফাৰ্লং দূৰৈত, বেচি দূৰৈত নহয়। ইয়াকে দেখি মই Premier ৰ ওচৰত আপত্তি কৰিছিলো আৰু সেই আপত্তি মতে Premier এ যাতে মিৰি বায়তৰ স্বাৰ্থ-বজায় থাকে আৰু তেওঁবিলাকৰ কোনো অনিষ্ট নকৰে তেনে ধৰণৰ Order দিয়ে। Immigrant বিলাকক যাতে মিৰি গাঁৱৰ পৰা দূৰৈত থাকিবলৈ দিয়ে সেই হিচাপে Order দিছিল। অৰ্থাৎ এই ব্লকৰ ভিতৰত থকা গোওবা কটা জানৰপূৰে মিৰিবিলাক আৰু পশ্চিমে immigrant বিলাক বহিব পাৰিব। এই Order ১৯৪১ চনত দিছিল। কিন্তু Local Officer বিলাকে আজিলৈকে সেই Order মনা নাই আৰু সেই Order মতে কাম কৰা নাই। মই শ্বিলঙলৈ অহাৰ আগতে তালৈ গৈ দেখিবলৈ পালো যে তিনি বছৰৰ আগতে যি ৪১৫ ঘৰ মিৰি দেখিছিলো তেওঁ বিলাকক উঠাই immigrant ক বহুৱালে। তাৰ ফলত মিৰি আৰু immigrant ৰ ভিতৰত নানাবকম হাই কাজিয়া হব লাগিছে আৰু দিনে দিনে এই কাজিয়া বাঢ়ি আহিছে। এনেকি কাজিয়াৰ নিমিত্তে কচাৰি ঘৰ পৰ্য্যন্ত যাবলগীয়া হৈছে। সেই কাৰণে মই অনুৰোধ কৰিব খোজো যেন গভৰ্ণ-মেণ্টে যেনেকৈ Order দিয়ে তেওঁবিলাকৰ Officer বিলাকে যাতে অতি সোন কালে তেনেকৈ পালন কৰে তাৰ নিমিত্তে যেন গভৰ্ণ-মেণ্টে বিশেষ চেষ্টা কৰে।

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I rise to support the Motion moved by my hon. Friend Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. I shall touch only two or three points. Firstly about the vexed question of land revenue remission. Sir, in view of the present economic condition of the *raiya*s the land revenue should be realised at the rate at which it was realised last year and in the year before. It has been said on several occasions that the conditions of the *raiya*s have been improved. It may be so. By sale of paddy and rice the cultivators are deriving some benefit, but we should not forget that the price of other essential commodities and necessities of life have greatly increased. It is well known to all the hon. Members of this House and it has also been admitted by all sections in this House that the cost of living has greatly increased. Sir, this is not the opportune moment on the grounds of economy and other conditions to withdraw the facilities that were given to the poor *raiya*s. The realisation of agricultural and seed loans should be stopped in the Surma Valley for the time being.

Sir, the opening of new lands by deforestation is bringing more floods into the province. But the lands which are lying fallow in various parts of the country should be opened out for such purpose so that the crops may be saved both from want of and excess of water, *i.e.*, by constructing bunds and digging canals. Sir, if these lands are not improved and new lands are opened for this purpose it may so happen that the recurrence of floods might increase and the lands which are at present capable of producing some crop might also be destroyed. So, Sir, the real solution in my opinion is not by opening new forest areas but by improving the present fallow waste land.

So far as colonisation areas are concerned Government have failed to do all they should have done. People are dying due to want of good drinking water. There is no good communication and in some cases no improvement of communication has been made. We can all feel what communication is now-a-days. In some parts of the country there is sufficient food-stuffs, but for the want of communication, as is admitted by Government, it is difficult even for the Government agency to bring the foodstuffs to such other places where there is scarcity of such commodities.

As regards certificate procedure, Sir, I may say that the sole idea of helping the disqualified landlords by taking up all the estates under Court of Wards will be frustrated if this procedure is withdrawn. Of course it is the duty of Government to see that they are not misused. The Government must realise the rent. At the time of realisation of rent they should see to the capacity of the cultivators. But if it is found in many cases that the *raiya*s though they are capable of paying do not want to pay and take advantage of the situation, that should not be indulged. In real cases that the *raiya*s are not put into unnecessary troubles. But this should not be withdrawn altogether.

With these words, I support the Motion.

Srijiit DHIRSING DEURI: I beg to speak a few words regarding the realisation of land revenue through the Mauzadars. I wish only to show an example as to how the Mauzadars are oppressing the public at the time of realising revenue from the *raiya*s. Tikendra Ch. Mohanta is the Mauzadar of Roha Mauza in the district of Nowgong. At the time of the political movement his house was unfortunately burnt down—of course I do not know who has done it—whether by the public or by himself. When the public go to him for payment of land revenue he always demands revenue and local rates from the *raiya*s from the year 1349 *i.e.*, 1942 or

1943. He demands at the same time receipts of the previous years, and if the *raiya*s fail to furnish such receipts he compels them to pay revenue for those years. I have brought some receipts from the *raiya*s. One man named Paji Ram Jatha showed receipts for 1347 and 1348, but he could not show receipts for 1346. The mauzadar realised revenue for that year. One Fani showed receipts for 1346 and 1348 but not for 1347. He had to pay for 1347. There is another case of Tileswar. The Mauzadar realised revenue for 1347 and 1348. There is also another case and that is of Punadhar in connection with *Patta* No.166. The Mauzadar realised revenue twice for 1346, 1347 and 1348 in spite of showing the receipts for these three years. He also realised Re.1-5-0 for 1348 which was in addition to the realisation of revenue. I think this is not the policy of Government. I hope the Hon'ble Minister for Revenue will take action on these.

Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS : I should be failing in my duty if I do not speak something against the policy of Government regarding land revenue—I mean the policy adopted by Government to withdraw the remission of land revenue from the 31st of March 1943. For this, the Assamese *raiya*s who are very poor, will have to face difficulties due to the abnormality of times. It has been said the other day by the Hon'ble Finance Minister that the prices of produce of the soil are rising higher up, and the poor *raiya*s are getting higher prices for their produce. So, he presumed, they will be in a position to pay their land revenue. But one fact has been ignored by the Finance Minister that the prices of other essential commodities of life are also rising higher up. For purchasing these articles, people will have to pay much more money and thereby they will be much more poor and they will not be able to pay the enhanced land revenue. So this withdrawal of the concession will create much disturbance and much distress to the poor Assamese *raiya*s. So, Sir, this policy of the Government is not at all justified under these circumstances. With these few words I support the Motion.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, during the present acutest food crisis through which the province is passing, the poor tenants are the worst sufferers. The Government should take immediate steps for postponing realisation of arrear rent, staying the realisation of agricultural loans, for enacting debt moratorium, abolishing the certificate procedure and for postponing the rent decrees. If immediate enactment is not possible to give effect to the above suggestions, I would ask Government to promulgate ordinances as is done in the case of repressing political activities and the public Press.

The tenants should be effectively assisted by Government to grow more food by opening Government reserves, of course taking care that no pasture land is utilised, by asking landlords to give rent free jungles in large *haors* for cultivation. Every facility should be given to cultivators for cultivation by constructing *bunds* to save their crops from flood and to store water for the paddy fields, by digging canals to let out water for utilising the waterlogged lands for cultivation. If the above arrangements are not made, the Grow More Food Campaign will fail. With these words I support the Motion.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I acknowledge with thanks the very healthy criticisms that have been offered on this question. They will, in general, be helpful in administering the Department under my charge, for which I again thank the hon. Members for the assistance they have given. My hon. Friend, Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury, the mover of this Motion, has mentioned most of the

points and I will propose to reply to them one by one. At the same time, Sir, I must acknowledge with thanks the very great assistance he has been giving me in the matter of forests. The first point that he raised was throwing open of the two forests reserves in Sunamganj; at his invitation, Sir, I went to that Subdivision and in consultation with him and with the Officers of the Departments both Forest and Civil, I have already held that one of the the Forest Reserves in the Subdivision of Sunamganj be thrown open, and as regards the other, that is under my consideration.

The second point that he has mooted is in connection with the Court of Wards. He thinks that the charge of private estates is being taken *indiscriminately* by the Court of Wards. I must say, Sir, that in this connection, the hon. Member has been rather *uncharitable* in his use of the adjunct *uncharitable*. I wish he could also justify its use and not betook himself to mere generalisation! Government have to look at the interests both of the *rai-yats* and the landlords. There is the Court of Wards Act and it is their duty to carry out the provisions of that Act. I wish, Sir, he were more specific in his charges. He has taken the trouble to generalise and not to specify. I think, it will be no news to him that by assuming the charge of the estates under the Court of Wards, Government do not necessarily involve themselves in undue financial commitments. Five per cent. of the rents realised go towards the cost of administration and so far as the District of Sylhet is concerned, the annual income under that head is as much as about Rs. 12,000. He is apprehensive that more estates are being taken over by the Government. There are strict procedures and a very sifting examination is gone through before a charge is assumed. I can assure the hon. Mover that Government will take into serious consideration of all the factors that contribute towards assumption of charge. My hon. Friend has quarreled with the certificate procedure, but I am glad that there is at-least one other gentlemen in this House who has supported that the provision should be applied if and when that is found salutary. I can assure my hon. Friend that nothing will be done in contravention of the spirit of these provisions. If, and when, there is a justification for the certificate procedure, only then and then alone, that procedure will be had resort to and not otherwise.

Mr. hon. Friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman has also brought to our notice certain matters worthy of special consideration. He has pointed out about the continuance of the malpractices of the Kan ngoes. I can assure him that I will take immediate and effective steps whenever a specific instance will be brought to my notice. Again our hon. Friend Mr. Miri has complained against the delay and apathy that is shown by our Local Officers. I can assure him that I am one who hates delay and apathy and if my hon. Friend will bring to my notice any specific instance of delay and apathy, I will take prompt action. Then, Sir, as regards Naobisa Mauza in which he has mentioned of an immigration block, if he will post me with details about it, I will see what can be done about it.

Mr. Mookerjee has also touched on the fringe of the land-revenue realisation policy of the Government. Government do not see that the *rai-yats* are not hard-hit,—Government do not say that it is also a bad time for the tenants as well as for the other people of the province. What Government think and consider justified in thinking is this that the balances of economic advantages are on the side of the tenants. I wish the hon. Member could convince the House that the balance is on the opposite way. On this particular point, full-fledged debates have taken place on the floor of this House as well as on the floor of the Upper House. I think, Government have been able to show under the leadership of Hon'ble Sir Muhammad Saadulla that

the balance is on the other side of the tenants. They get advantage amongst many disadvantages—advantage of high price of labour purchased by the employers. Now-a-days on account of the war conditions, they gain also by the abnormal rise of prices of the food-crops. The same hon. Member has suggested that the realisation of agricultural loan should be stopped. Sir, I have passed order to that effect. I discussed with some hon. Members who took interest in the matter and wrote to me about it; I took their advice and in agreement with them I have already decided that orders should issue immediately to the Deputy Commissioner that no coercive measures whatsoever should be employed and that the loans should be realised by persuasion. During my tour in the district of Sylhet, there were some deputationists waiting upon me on this particular point and those deputationists told me that many debtors of agricultural loans were in a position to pay the loan and that they were very willing to pay. I thought that if we did not make a move in the matter for realisation we would be accused later on of not having asked them to pay. This is the procedure I have adopted in this respect, and orders have already been issued to the District Officers accordingly.

My hon. Friend Mr. Deuri has mentioned about certain mal-practices on the part of one of the Mouzadars, viz., the Mouzadar of the Roha Mouza in the district of Nowgong. If my hon. Friend who saw me while I had been to Nowgong during the first week of February last, told me all this at that time, I would have ordered steps being taken at once. I can assure him that if he would furnish me with adequate details I shall take immediate steps.

Sir, my hon. Friend, Mr. Ghanasyam Das, has drawn our attention to a certain matter about which I have already spoken in connection with answering the criticisms of other hon. Members who have taken part in the discussions.

Our hon. Friend Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy was very enthusiastic about asking Government even to have recourse to ordinances for the betterment of the *raiya*s' condition and has also made certain specific suggestions. All of them do not concern my Department, but I can assure him that all that is possible to be done will be done by my Hon'ble Colleagues in charge of respective Departments to which his criticisms apply.

Before I resume my seat I should congratulate the hon. Members for the healthy criticisms they have offered.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I ask the Hon'ble Minister to speak on the policy of land revenue remission?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: I have already replied to that matter, and I am sorry that my hon. Friend was absent at the time.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: From enquiries made I learn that the Hon'ble Minister did not make any specific statement about the land revenue remission policy. I was unfortunately absent, but there was no reference to that in Hon'ble Minister's reply.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: That was not raised at all, in any detail.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: It was raised both by Mr. Mookerjee, and Mr. Ghanasyam Das.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Mr. Ghanasyam Das only said that tenants had been hard-hit; Mr. Mookerjee also said that.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I said that the tenants were not only hard-hit, but time was not opportune to discontinue remission.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: I have replied to this by saying that the balance of advantage is on the side of the tenants. Therefore Government are justified in holding on to the policy they have already enunciated, to which they still adhere. I think this speaks volumes about it. I don't think I should speak more voluminously.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: In view of the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

(Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri having objected to grant leave the Motion was put by the Chair).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the total provision of Rs.17,89,100 under Grant No. 2, Major head 7.—Land Revenue, at page 30 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 101, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 17,89,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 101."

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: On a point of information, Sir. Can the Mover of this Motion vote against the Motion?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes. The hon. Mover wanted to withdraw the Motion.

The Assembly divided.

Ayes—13.

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

Noes—27.

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| 1. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla. | 12. Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahab Chaudhuri. |
| 2. The Hon'ble Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta. | 13. Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin. |
| 3. The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali. | 14. Maulavi Muhammad Amjad Ali. |
| 4. The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty. | 15. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhuri. |
| 5. The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhuri. | 16. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman. |
| 6. The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia. | 17. Maulavi Naziruddin Ahmed. |
| 7. The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. | 18. Maulavi Sheikh Osman Ali Sadagar. |
| 8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman. | 19. Shams-ul-Ulama Maulana Abu Nasr Md. Waheed. |
| 9. The Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn. | 20. Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett. |
| 10. The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma. | 21. Mr. N. Dawson. |
| 11. Maulavi Syed Abdul Rouf. | 22. Mr. D. B. H. Moore. |
| | 23. Mr. R. A. Palmer. |
| | 24. Srijut Bhairab Chandra Das. |
| | 25. Srijut Bideshi Pan Tanti. |
| | 26. Mr. Binode Kumar J. Sarwan. |
| | 27. Rev. L. Gatphoh. |

The question was negatived.

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 17,89,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1944, for the administration of the head 7.—Land Revenue".

The question was adopted.

GRANT No.33

64B.—Civil Defence

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI : On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.15,42,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1944, for the administration of the head "64B.—Civil Defence".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 15,42,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1944, for the administration of the head 64B.—Civil Defence".

There are as many as 7 cut Motions, but I think the cut Motion which wants to discuss about the general policy of the Government should be taken up. So cut Motion No.2 should be taken up. Is any of the hon. Members going to move ?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.45,000 under grant No. 33, Major head—64B.—Civil Defence, Minor head—A.—Expenditure on Air Raid Precautions, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total), at page 191 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.210, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.15,42,600 do stand reduced by Rs. 210".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I think, the cut Motion which stands in the name of Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury is the proper Motion, *i.e.*, No. 6.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Also No. 5.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Yes, also No.5, because in Maulavi Abdur Rahman's Motion the sum has been taken at Rs.45,000, whereas in Motions Nos.5 and 6 the entire grant has been taken. Then either Mr. Mookerjee or Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury should move.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs. 15,42,600 under Grant No.33, Major head—64B.—Civil Defence, at page 190 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.210, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.15,42,600 do stand reduced by Rs. 210.

Sir, I have tabled this Motion to criticise the Government with regard to their policy of Civil Defence. My cut Motion which stands first in the list was specifically meant to criticise Government for their policy of appointments in the Civil Defence Department. I shall begin with that.

Sir, many appointments have been made but so far we know the recruitment was made temporarily at the beginning and everybody expected that the appointments which begin with such a high salary—by the word "high" I mean, Sir, that the starting pay is so far my knowledge

goes the highest in the Assam Civil Service,—everybody expected that these should go through the Public Service Commission but ultimately we find that their terms are renewed and they are continuing. Sir, I think the proper procedure for the Government should be that all these posts should be filled up through the Public Service Commission. Sir, during the last Budget Session we heard that so far as the villagers were concerned Government could not do anything and so far as the town people were concerned they just began the work and that they were going to do the needful for both the urban and rural areas. But from the Budget Speech we could not get any such information by which we can really understand that the Government has done something for the people of the province. It was not found in the Budget Speech; in the Budget figure, Sir, only a lump sum has been shown and in the Budget Memorandum also there is very little from which we can understand the real situation.

While discussing the Budget I mentioned about the fire fighting parties. In the Budget Memorandum we can find that. But, Sir, when I wanted to know from the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Civil Defence if such a fire fighting party exists in the capital town of the province I did not get any answer. But I think, Sir, there must be one. Of course in the Budget Memorandum it has been stated that for fire due to enemy action a party has been started but the other day the Loreto Convent was gutted. Sir, I enquired whether because the fire was not due to any enemy action this party did not come to save the building, or there is no such party or the man who is at the helm of this fire fighting party is incompetent. What was the reason of the building which was imparting education to the girls being gutted in spite of its being situated in the heart of the capital town? Sir, from the Budget we can find that the main concern of the Civil Defence is A.R.P. The condition of slit trenches and other things in the town are just as they were 4 or 5 months back and we have not marked practically any improvement and that no information can be gathered from any source—either from the Government speeches or from the Budget Memorandum. What is their intention with regard to improvement of the situation so that the lives of the people of the town may be saved at the time of the enemy action. So far as the villagers are concerned, Sir, I think the answer will be that the National War Front is doing their work. Sir, it may be said that the National War Front has taken up the matter but still we want to know what has been done for these poor villagers? We hear about the Civic Guards. Their duties will be to some extent to protect the villagers but we have not heard anything about that organization also during the course of the debates in the last few days. Sir, may I enquire from the Hon'ble Minister what is the necessity of such high salaried staff? Is it only to look after the few trenches? It may be so Sir, that the Government have done something more for our safety; but we shall realise or we shall be able to understand only when they are brought to our notice. What they have done I have so long waited to hear but we heard nothing in particular. We are entitled to say that this Department is doing nothing except looking after a few trenches and a few baffle walls near some of the Government buildings in the towns.

And as regards propaganda work, Sir, I think, active propaganda is necessary. People must know that the Government is doing something for their protection. There are of course a few cars. I do not exactly know whether they are placed at the disposal of the National War Front or the Civil Defence Department. These few cars go at some distance from some big towns say 10 or 15 miles at some leisure period and the inmate whoever they are, deliver some lecture. But that won't solve the problem. Sir, we find in

this year's Budget that about Rs.6,81,000 will be received from the Central Government. Last time I requested and appealed to the Hon'ble Premier that because our lives were in the danger zone we must get more money from the Central Government. I do not know whether any step was taken to increase the amount, I mean the amount which will be received from the Central Government for our province.

Sir, as regards black-out we heard that the same law will be exercised for all but still we find the law is not the same. It is of one nature for the civil population and of another nature for the Military. Sir, it was said from experience that black-out is necessary but what we find from the enemy action in Calcutta that all their actions took place in night and in spite of black-out the damage was done. Even if the Government still want to stick to their point that black-out must continue, I hope, Sir, it is high time that it must be for all and not for civil population alone. Of course in the reply that I received from the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Civil Defence, I was told that the Provincial Government had no control over the Military. If anybody challenges me I have got the reply with me and I hope that the Hon'ble Premier did something according to the assurance that was given to us that he was moving in the matter but we do not know as yet what was the result. Sir, up till now what we have understood about this Department, is this, that this Department may reasonably be called Self-Defence Department. It is not for the civil population but it is for the defence of self. Sir, with civil defence, civil liberty is also essential as it was stated on the floor of this House on many occasions that only a few trenches and display of a few Civic Guards will not solve the problem. The real problem must be tackled in a different way. If we want to maintain the morale of the people, the people must be taken into confidence at least with whom the Hon'ble Ministers are working for the smooth running of the Constitution. Sir, with these words I commend my Motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. D. B. H. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words particularly about tea garden Civic Guards. It was at the last Session that we put forward a strong plea that tea garden Civic Guards should receive more attention than they were receiving. In particular we said that we were experiencing considerable difficulty in obtaining uniforms for them as well as steel helmets and bonuses which had been promised from the time when the scheme was first initiated. Some months have now elapsed and I am happy to be able to say that Government have been able to effect a considerable improvement. I can speak from my personal knowledge as I have in my own garden a unit of Civic Guards and I was finding it not merely difficult but in fact impossible to obtain any new uniforms for this particular unit. The position has now greatly improved and for this I should like to thank the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge, but I would, however, ask that a still further improvement be made as soon as possible. In my own case after a considerable delay and a number of applications I have received sufficient materials to provide uniforms for only half the strength of my particular unit and this holds, I know, for a number of other gardens. Many of the Civic Guards are now employed on war project and are doing a first class job of work. They are employed on aerodromes and they have been subjected to machine gunning and bombing and they have undertaken duties such as traffic control, first-aid work, fire fighting and in addition special security duties and I would like to take this opportunity of paying a high tribute to the fine manner in which these men

have carried out what undoubtedly was a difficult task, and I should like to say again from my personal experience that they have set a very fine example of courage, loyalty, and devotion to duty.

I would like finally to stress what in my view is a great need for these men to be adequately equipped with uniforms. These men have been trained for months, in my case for a year and a half, and they now take pride in their work and in my view it is unfair to ask these men to undertake duties, the importance of which is acknowledged by all authorities concerned, if they cannot be properly dressed and neatly turned out in decent uniforms. I would therefore request Government to take this up still further to ensure as far as possible that every tea garden Civic Guard, who is employed on war project work either on aerodromes or on any other project, be provided with sufficient materials as quickly as possible so that they may be decently and properly dressed.

As regards steel helmets, I understand certain issues have been made but again in my case these helmets have not come to hand. Government should expedite the issue of these and if done promptly, it will be very much appreciated.

Finally, the bonuses promised in the early stages, have not yet been received.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to protest against the policy of financing the Civil Defence Department from the Provincial Exchequer. When the Central Government is spending money by hundreds of crores for defence measures I don't find any reason why the Provincial Government should agree to share a major portion of Civil defence cost. During the last Session the Hon'ble Finance Minister said that the Provincial Government had come to an understanding with the Central Government to share a portion of the cost of the Civil Defence Department. For the current year and as provided for in the Budget for the next year, we shall have a deficit of 13 lakhs of rupees and as against that we are to spend Rs. 32 lakhs for the Civil Defence Department. Well, Sir, I don't exactly see the particular significance of prefixing the word 'Civil' before the word 'Defence'. Military preparations in the frontier are as much for protecting the civilian population as these slit trenches and other things. There is no reason why Central Government should not take up this work also. The Central Government is raising money by borrowing or by taxation, for conducting this war. They can as well finance this Department to the extent of Rs. 32 lakhs more, very easily, instead of thrusting this burden on the shoulders of the Provincial Exchequer. If we could get this 32 lakhs from the Centre we would not only have to face no deficit but we could as well have a sum of 19 or 20 lakhs for our National Building Departments. People are dying by hundreds from cholera, malaria, typhoid etc.. In fact the Hon'ble Prime Minister in a statement admitted of cholera in this province. I do not think that during the heaviest air raid of 88 days in England the figure of deaths from air attacks was as high as that and when we are unable to save the lives of our people from these preventable diseases we should have thought twice before we sanctioned this amount for Civil Defence Department, which task can very legitimately be taken over by the Central Government. In that view, I submit that the Ministry ought to urge upon the Central Government to bear the whole cost of this Department instead of agreeing to share a part of the cost from the Provincial Exchequer.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the last occasion when I spoke on this Motion I paid a compliment to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of this Department for his alertness and activities. I am glad to find that my good words have been amply justified by what has been said by my Friend Mr. Moore. But, Sir, I am sorry to find that in all specific points which were raised by my hon. Friend the Mover as well as myself regarding the question of blackout it has not yet been satisfactorily decided upon. The whole question is whether blackout is necessary or not. Of course this is probably left for the Military authorities to decide. But when we find that the Military authorities themselves do not observe this black-out we very much doubt the efficacy of this, and sooner this question is decided the better for all concerned, especially when black-out is not observed by drivers of Military vehicles. It is very dangerous when these drivers of Military vehicles drive with full glare of light and the ordinary driver has to drive with shades. Sir, when these questions were raised in the last session the Hon'ble Prime Minister himself admitted that he was also a witness of the rash driving generally resorted to by the Military drivers. But still I find that no effective action has been taken to check it. Sir, in the towns of Gauhati and Shillong, speaking from my personal experience, the way in which the Military cars are driven is a source of great menace. And I know of two accidents in Shillong—in one case an Assamese clerk of middle age met with an accident while coming to office and instantaneously died. He was knocked down by a Military lorry which was driven very rashly. The other instance is, while a young student was coming out after his classes in the St. Edmund's College of Shillong a Military lorry coming from behind struck him as a result of which he lost his consciousness and his brain was badly affected. Though he is improving now he has not fully regained his memory. The pity of all is that the Military drivers never pick up the injured persons and this I say from my own experience. The rashness of the Military people is well known to anyone travelling in the Shillong-Gauhati road, because many of their lorries are often found falling down the road. Even there are instances of such vehicles falling down from the bridge over the Bharalu river. In this sort of cases of course we may not be concerned, but as a result of rash drive the poor pedestrians suffer meeting with accidents losing their limbs or lives.

Mr. Moore has told us that in his area the Civic Gurads take part in first-aid work. So I suggest, Sir, that as the A. R. P. officers do not find much work to do in places where there is no air raid, they should be engaged also to regulate traffic and also in helping First Aid Parties in case of accidents from motor vehicles which are unhappily so numerous now-a-days. Otherwise they merely take their pay and sit idly at home without work. It is so in most of the towns.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I was one who took part in the last Budget Session in voicing the complaint of the civilian motor car owners against the Military, I think it is fair to state that there has been a very marked improvement in the standard of driving in Shillong. I think the improvement comes not so much from a change of personnel of the drivers but it is quite clear that some one in authority has issued orders about the speed at which these Military lorries should be driven. Undoubtedly since the last discussion in this Assembly these vehicles have been driven much more slowly and much more carefully. I think it is fair for us to refer to the Military authorities acknowledging this improvement.

The second point raised by my hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee is the application of the black-out restrictions. I think Mr. Mookerjee will also find that in most of the transport vehicles black-out shades have already been fitted, and the only exception that I am aware of in Shillong is the Red Cross Ambulance lorries, and these lorries are, I think, for obvious and humanitarian reasons, still driven without shades.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I intervene, Sir? We cannot take down the numbers—even now in Shillong and Gauhati.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Broadly speaking, Sir, I think it is true that lighting restrictions are observed by Military vehicles.

All or nearly all except the Red Cross vehicles are driving with black-out shades—Red Cross wagons do carry full head lights and we should concede that these vehicles are allowed to carry more light than the ordinary civilian or Military Lorries.

***Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY:** Sir, the officers of the National War Front are practically doing nothing in connection with the Civil Defence. It is expected that all these officers appointed for National War Front.....

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Notional War Front has nothing to do with the Civil Defence.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Then I will not speak on National War Front.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: During these times when we get the ruthless enemy at our gate, this Civil Defence Department is no doubt a very important one as it concerns the safety of life and property of every individual member of the province and in that view, I think, it would be our honest endeavour to carry the public with us in whatever we do to take precautions for the safety of their life and property. Our policy has been placed through the Budget before the House and we have welcomed criticisms and I am thankful to the hon. Members who have taken part in this debate for the criticisms they have offered and for the appreciation they have shown with regard to the working of this Department.

In offering criticisms Mr. Mookerjee has raised certain points that require explanation on the part of Government. He has first of all raised the point as to why the appointments in the A. R. P. Department should not be made through the Public Service Commission. But I think he is uninformed; had he had knowledge of this Department he would not have said like that. These recruitments are made under Air Raid Precaution Ordinance. So these are purely on a temporary basis. So when there is an Ordinance, appointments are made under the Ordinance and these cannot go to the Public Service Commission for their recommendation.

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** On a point of information, Sir. Is it provided also in the Ordinance that the recruitment should not be done by the Public Service Commission?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Appointments are made according to the Rules made under the Ordinance. These Rules do not provide that the appointments should be made on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission.

***Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN:** May I know under what rule recruitment is made?

* Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: I think it would be better to allow the Hon'ble Minister to finish his speech.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: Regarding fire service, the hon. Member does not know that we have got fire fighting parties and a fire brigade in our towns. Had he taken any care to know, he would have found that in almost each of our big towns we have provided for fire brigade. He has also complained that if there is a fire brigade at Shillong, the fire that broke out at the Loreto Convent could not be extinguished or dealt with. This also he has criticised because he had no information how the fire there did break out and how the fire brigade and our A. R. P. organisation tried to put out the fire. For the information of my hon. Friend I can say that on the 22nd of February last a fire broke out at Loreto Convent and it was most probably at 7 A. M. in the morning. But before 8 A. M. no information was sent either to the fire Brigade or to our A. R. P. centre. Till 8 A. M. the fire was allowed to smoulder. Then the fire brigade was informed. It is really gratifying to note that within seven minutes from the time they had received information, our fire brigade appeared on the scene.

***Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN:** May I know, whose duty it was to inform the fire brigade?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: It was the duty of the residents who were occupying the premises.

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** On a point of information, Sir. Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that there is an A. R. P. camp very near to the premises?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: No body gave information to the Department either by telephone or by messengers. When fire was seen by our A. R. P. officers they sent information to the fire brigade. They also came with their buckets and stirrup pumps. Unfortunately one of the machines broke down while the fire was smouldering, and it took half an hour to put the machinery in order. So when it was seen that the fire could not be controlled, it was decided to try to save the adjacent buildings. They could not save the building that caught fire but they were very successful in saving the adjacent buildings.

Then with regard to the Civic Guard, Mr. Moore has given a reply to the charges made against Government by my Friend. For his information I can say, Sir, that at Nowgong where the Civil Disobedience Movement was at its height, bridges were guarded by Civic Guards. They gave excellent service in many of our towns where some miscreants tried to cut down telegraph and telephone lines and at the same time damaged bridges.

***Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** Can the Hon'ble Minister cite a single instance?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: At Nowgong I have got a report that our Civic Guards had to guard several bridges for about a fortnight or more.

***Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** Any more instance?

*Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: At Sylhet some people cut telegraph lines. It was our Civic Guards who controlled these lines.

With regard to the lighting restrictions on Military cars, there has been great improvement. Though the ideal has not been reached as yet, yet the Military should be, I think, thanked for most probably according to their instructions rash driving in our towns has been slowed down now. It is seen, that during night they observe lighting restrictions while driving their cars.

Then, Sir, Mr. Mookerjee has said that during the last Budget Session, I said that Government had no control over the Military. I maintain, Sir, that what I said is correct. (Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee.—*Hear, hear*). The Provincial Government have got no control over the Military because they are under the Defence Department of the Government of India. What our Premier said is that he will bring these things to the notice of the Military authorities over here and there is no reason to think that they will not comply with the request of the Provincial Government and that they would see that lighting restrictions are put on the vehicles used by the Military.

Then Sir, Mr. Nirendra Nath Dev has raised another point that A. R. P. expenditure should not be met from the provincial revenues. The Centre should provide for all the money required for the purpose. If the proposals of Mr. Nirendra Nath Dev are accepted by the Central Government, then we would be too glad to be relieved of the burden but in our opinion, Sir, this Provincial Government cannot exonerate themselves that they have got no duty towards the citizens of this province.

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** On a point of information, Sir. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to move the Central Government to meet that expenditure?

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: I think I have already replied to that.

With regard to the point whether this Government have moved the Central Government for an increased contribution for our A. R. P. Department, it will be borne out by the fact that the Hon'ble Premier and myself went to Calcutta to see, Sir, Jawala Prasad Srivastava, the Civil Defence Member of the Government of India and we stressed upon the necessity of giving a help to this province of Assam as it is in the front line now. We also insisted that this province should be considered not as the province of Assam but as a part of India and that if it is attacked the whole of India will be affected. So we asked for a contribution on a liberal scale from the Government of India. So far as I know, during the last occasion when our Premier visited Delhi, there also he had discussion over that point and it is, I believe, under the consideration of the Government of India.

Then Sir, my hon. Friend Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri has suggested that our A. R. P. Officers should be utilised for regulating the traffic and giving first aid to those who meet with accidents. Sir, from his suggestion it also appears that he realises the need and utility of this Department.

***Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Instead of allowing them to sit idle, their services should be utilised.

The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: I admit, Sir, that this is a good suggestion and it can be taken into consideration when our Civic Guard Organisation is on a firmer basis.

**Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.*

Sir, I think, I have explained all the points that were raised by my hon. Friends and in view of what I have said, I think, my hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee will see his way to withdraw his Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the total provision of Rs. 15,42,600 under Grant No. 33, Major head—64B.—Civil Defence, at page 190 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 210, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 15,42,600 do stand reduced by Rs. 210."

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I am putting the main question now. The question is :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 15,42,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1944, for the administration of the head 64B.—Civil Defence".

The question was adopted.

To-morrow we shall take up many Demands for disposal and with regard to one Demand, I wish to say something so that the Hon'ble Premier may have all facts supplied to him for explaining the peculiar nature of that Demand. It is Demand No. 29 regarding Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with war. I find that it is a Demand for Re. 1 and looks like a token demand although it is really an original demand arising out of the financial statement for the next year. Why it has been framed in that way I wish to be enlightened and the House would also, I think, like to be enlightened, on this point. From a reference to the Budget Memorandum, I find that this is for a capital outlay and has been framed to comply with certain instructions from the Government of India. The House would certainly like to know what those instructions are.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 A. M., on Tuesday, the 16th March, 1943.

Shillong, the 21st April, 1943.

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

