

Proceedings of the Fourteenth 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 6th March, 1944.

PRESENT

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

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given)

Improvement of the Assam Trunk Road and Cachar Trunk Road

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*8. (a) Are Government aware that the Assam Trunk Road and the Cachar Trunk Road are in a most deplorable condition ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state what steps they have taken or intend to take to improve the condition of these roads ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

8. (a)—The Roads have been greatly improved and are carrying far more traffic than in the past.

(b)—Improvement is in progress.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Are Government aware that the road is in such a condition that a car cannot run at a speed more than 20 miles per hour ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Which road ?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : The Assam Trunk road.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : No, Sir. I have myself travelled on that road in the middle of the last month and I found that a greater portion of the road was under process of tarring and about one-third had already been tarmacadamed. Improvement of the road is in progress and in another two months it will be as good as the Shillong-Sylhet road.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member Srijut Ghanashyam Das in whose name Question No.9 stands is absent. But the Question should be replied.

Grant of family or personal allowances to security prisoners

Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS asked :

†*9. (a) Will Government be pleased to state the names of security prisoners in Assam who have been granted family or personal allowances with the date of sanction and the amount sanctioned in each case ?

(b) Is it a fact that many of the security prisoners and their families who have been informed of such sanction are not receiving the same as yet ?

(c) If so, why ?

† The Question was answered under Assembly rule 38 although the Questioner Srijut Ghanashyam Das was absent.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

9. (a)—Government are not prepared to publish the names of security prisoners, but will supply information in any particular case to any enquirer who has reasons for desiring it. 66 persons were sanctioned allowances (31 persons family allowances only, 17 persons family and personal allowances and 18 persons personal allowances only). The range of allowances sanctioned, is—

Family Rs.25 to Rs.60.

Personal Rs.5 to Rs.10.

(b)—Government have no reason to believe so. If any specific case is cited they will make an enquiry.

(c)—Does not arise.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Is it a fact that Srijut Mohi Kanta Das, a pleader of the Tezpur Bar of 10 years' standing and who is the sole earning member of the family, has not been given any allowance?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I want notice of that Question, Sir.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, I raised this Question in the last November Session also.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: In that case, perhaps the case has been looked into. However, we will call for papers. I note down the name.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I thank you, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH M. OKERJEE: May I know why some of the security prisoners have not been given family or personal allowance?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The cases of those who applied for either personal or family allowance were taken into consideration, but there are a certain number who have not applied for it. Enquiries were made about the cases of those who applied and it was found that in some case no family allowance was justified either on account of the fact that the family is in an affluent condition or that the security prisoner was not the earning member.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know on what basis the allowance is granted; I mean, on what basis the amount in the range of allowances, from Rs.25 to Rs.60 and from Rs.5 to Rs.10, is decided to be granted to the security prisoners?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The allowances are granted according to the needs of the family and also the earning capacity of the member confined?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know who makes the enquiry about the condition?

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

Restriction order on some security-prisoner M.L.A's.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked:

* 10. Do Government propose to withdraw the restriction orders served on Srijut Lakhesvar Borooah, M.L.A.?

* 11. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi and Mr. A. K. Chanda will be allowed to attend the next Session of the Assembly?

(b) If not, why not?

(c) Whether they propose to withdraw the restriction order on both of them?

(d) If not, why not?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

10.—The answer is in the negative, but he has been permitted to make the journey to Shillong in order to attend the Assembly Session.

11. (a)—No application has been received from the gentlemen named, no doubt because they have been required to reside in Calcutta for medical treatment.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—No.

(d)—The grounds of detention would have to be communicated to them had they not been released on a restriction order for medical treatment. Government are not prepared to give the grounds for restriction, since these gentlemen may become liable to detention again in future.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: May I know why the restriction referred to in question No.10 has not been withdrawn?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am not prepared to disclose the fact.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know when the order has been passed permitting him to attend the Assembly Session?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The hon. Member has been granted sufficient time to come to the Assembly Session.

Release of security prisoners detained under the Defence of India Act

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked :

* 12. Will Government be pleased to state whether they have considered the question of releasing or setting at liberty of persons, detained as security prisoners under the Defence of India Act?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

12.—Yes: So far, up to 15th February 1944, 239 persons were released against orders of detention passed on 429 persons since August 1942.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: What is about the other prisoners?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Their cases are occasionally reviewed.

Re Municipal Roads of Sylhet and Gauhati

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

* 13. (a) Are Government aware that the Municipal Roads of Sylhet and Gauhati are in a most deplorable condition?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state what steps they have taken or intend to take to improve the condition of these roads?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY replied :

13. (a)—Government are aware that Roads not only in Sylhet and Gauhati but in other towns of the Province also are badly damaged by heavy military traffic.

(b)—Government are collecting details with a view to approach the military authorities requesting them to make a substantial contribution towards the repairs of these roads.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know when did Government come to know about the deplorable condition of the roads?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: Government are aware of the fact that the roads have been badly damaged by heavy military traffic.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: How long ago?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I cannot give the exact date.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What action did Government take to bring the matter to the notice of the military authority?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I have stated that in my answer.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : I want to know since when Government have been collecting details to approach the military authorities ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY : I cannot give the exact date.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : How long will it take to collect the information ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY : I hope, it will not take long.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI : May I take it that the words "other towns" in the reply include Jorhat town also ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY : Certainly, so.

Maulavi GHYASUDDIN AHMED : Are Government aware that so far as Dhubri Municipality is concerned, the Deputy Commissioner made an enquiry last year and recommended to Government for a certain sum for repairing the roads which were damaged by military traffic ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY : We are considering the case of all the Municipalities together.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Sale of National Savings Certificates

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA asked :

5. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have issued any instructions to the District Subdivisional Executives to force the sale of National Savings Certificates to petty dealers and other license-holders and also through village Sarpanches ?

(b) Are Government aware of the complaints made by people against such sale of National Savings Certificates ?

(c) Are Government aware of its reaction on the price level of licensed articles ?

(d) Are Government aware that the petty dealers holding National Savings Certificates are realising amounts in their turn from their customers ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI replied :

5. (a)—At the request of the Government of India, Government have launched a small Savings Scheme whereby National Savings Certificates are sold by authorised agents to the public, who are thereby saved the trouble of going to the Post Offices to fill up forms and the agents receive a commission of four annas for each Rs.10 certificate sold. The choice of agents is left to District Officers to whom Government have issued instructions against any form of compulsion in selling these certificates.

(b), (c) & (d)—Government have no information. This, however, being an anti-inflationary measure, is more likely to lower than to raise the level of prices of other articles.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS : May I know, Sir, whether the public may be saved from the trouble of going to the Post Offices each time a purchase is made for filling up the forms which are so complicated ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI : This probably refers to National Savings Certificates.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS : I could not follow.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI : It refers to National Savings Certificates and I think the agents give receipts when they sell the certificates.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS : Will Government consider, in view of the desire to sell the certificates, to make the certificates somewhat easier to buy ?

In United Kingdom it is only necessary to fill up forms for the first purchase. For subsequent purchases the buyer hands over his money and gets a certificate added to his book, somewhat on the lines of the Post Office Savings account.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Sir, the forms, as far as I am aware, have been made as simple as possible. Simplification is one of the aims of this National Savings Certificates Campaign, so that the villagers without going through any complicated formalities can purchase these certificates.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it compulsory or voluntary?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: It is voluntary.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Are Government aware that certain District Magistrates have asked their subordinates to realise money by compulsion?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Government are not aware of it.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Will Government make an enquiry to find out whether some members of the public were asked to appear before the Magistrates and were harassed in many ways for not buying these certificates and some persons have been threatened with cancellation of their gun licenses and other such things?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Government do not want that any compulsion should be used in selling out these certificates. If any specific instance is brought to the notice, it will certainly be enquired into.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Have Government published any such instructions in the Gazette or by posters?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: It has already been done that there should be no compulsion in selling these certificates.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: There is a keen competition amongst the officers as to who can take the lead by subscribing the highest amount to Government. Is it for the benefit of the public?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: If there has been any competition amongst officers, it is welcome. It benefits the public.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order.

Presentation of certain Amendments to the Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I beg to present, Sir, certain amendments* to the Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940 under section 133(3) of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939. Hon'ble Members may remember that these amendments have to be laid before the Legislature for not less than fourteen days before the amendments are taken into consideration.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, may I know from the Chair whether the procedure adopted during the last occasion will be adopted in this case also?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: On the last occasion we had an entire body of the Rules framed under the Motor Vehicles Act; but this time we are concerned only with a few amendments to some of those Rules. Of course, the law is that there should be concurrence of both the Houses in regard to all rules that are framed by Government under the Act. In order to secure the concurrence of both the Houses we had on the last occasion a conference of Members of both the Houses. I do not know what the idea of the Hon'ble Premier is this time with regard to the amendments that are given notice of to-day for getting the concurrence of both the Houses in order to have them validly passed.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: My idea is that if this House adopts the amendments as suggested by Government or adopts certain other amendments proposed by the hon. Members of the House and those amendments are passed by 25th, I can place those before the Council when its adjourned Session will sit from the 27th March and I hope I will be able to convince the Upper House to accept the amendments.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: In case the amendments are not accepted what will be the position?

*See Appendix A.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The law is, the amendments should be disposed of either by the Legislative Assembly or by the Council in the same Session.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What procedure will be adopted?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The House will be prorogued on the 25th of this month. If there be any disagreement between the two Houses in regard to the amendments, the position would be that they will not come into force.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I will take the risk and I have every confidence that any amendments passed by this House will be accepted by the Upper House.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What is the harm in adjourning the House and not proroguing it in case there be any difficulty due to disagreement. This may be done in the proper form.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Premier takes the risk—the amendments will not come into force. How this House is affected I do not know. These rules will come up for discussion on the 25th and the hon. Members are quite at liberty to table their amendments in proper time.

General discussion of the Budget and discussion on Charged Expenditure

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now, I should tell the hon. Members that today I am going to fix a time limit for each speech. I did not fix any time limit the other day as there were very few Members to take part in the discussion. I find today that there is a large number of Members anxious to speak. I am compelled therefore to fix a time limit. I do not know how long the Hon'ble Finance Minister will take for his reply.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: About half an hour, Sir.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: One word, Sir. My Hon'ble Colleague the Finance Minister has requested me to reply to those portions of criticism referring to Supply Department of which he is not fully aware of all the facts. I have been requested also to reply in the Upper House to the discussion of the Budget and if I can go there now while the hon. Members are delivering speeches I hope to be able to come in time to enable me to reply here.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: How long will the Hon'ble Premier take?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I will not take more than thirty minutes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: All right. I will fix 15 minutes time for each private Member speaking to the Budget.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel an urge in my mind to speak a few words about the Budget for the year 1944-45. I have gone through the Budget with eagerness to find what provision has been made for the economic and educational upliftment of a considerable section of the population of this Province, I mean the Scheduled Caste community. But to my utter surprise I found that some special provision has been made for the education of the Tribal and the Muslims and nothing has been done for the Scheduled Caste community. I simply wonder why this invidious distinction has been made in respect of the Scheduled Caste community.

Sir, I still remember the statement made by Mahatma Gandhi in the year 1939 to the effect that amongst all the minority communities of India, Scheduled Caste population needs special protection and care of every Provincial Government. The Scheduled Caste people better known as the Depressed Classes of India is the most backward community educationally, economically and nay, socially. The Assam Government called a Scheduled Caste Conference in the year 1934 and the representatives therein made special recommendations to Government for special scholarships and free-studentships and one Special Officer to look after the education of the Scheduled Caste people. Since then and after the inauguration of Provincial Autonomy the Scheduled Caste representatives

of the Legislature have been persistently demanding these special privileges for the education of their children. The Congress Coalition Ministry while paving its way to give effect to those recommendations resigned. The present Ministry stepped into the floor and has been persistently and consistently neglecting the cause of the Scheduled Caste communities with revenge and vengeance. Sir, when I think of the Harijan Hostel at Sylhet where there is no provision for supply of water, no substantial recurring or non-recurring grant made for the maintenance of the Hostel, am I not entitled to hold this Government criminally liable for neglecting the cause of an important minority community? The Muslims of this Province are now-a-days equally advanced in education with the caste Hindus, yet there is special provision for their education. Can there be anything more communal and scandalous than this? The more I speak for the Scheduled Caste people the more injury is likely to be done to them by this Government. Let console myself with the hope that the education and welfare of this community are matters for post-war reconstruction.

Now I shall speak a few words about the Land Settlement Policy of the present Government. This land settlement is a matter of public criticism for the last few years. Before settling land with the outsiders, the Government should make a survey of the landless indigenous population of this Province. I know the fishing communities of this Province as well as of Bengal are more or less landless. I would request the Government to compel these fishing communities to take to cultivation. Give them land, warn them that in Bengal the fishing communities are the worst sufferers of famine and at least more than half of the population of fishermen communities died of starvation. Because these communities depended on fishing and have had practically no land to cultivate. A time came when there were very few persons who could afford to purchase fish and moreover there was no transport facility to send fish to other distant places and the result was disastrous for those landless poor people. My above statement will be borne out by the fact that almost all the destitutes who have come to my Subdivision belong to these unfortunate neglected communities. Let our Government take lesson from Bengal and save the people of the fishermen communities of the Province from meeting with the same fate. Here in our Province as well, in these days of food crisis, the fishermen communities are the worst sufferers as very few have got the capacity of purchasing fish which is considered an item of luxury and that nowadays, the majority of the people will thank their stars, if they can procure two square meals a day consisting of "Dal and Bhat" only. The other day, I was pleased to hear our Hon'ble Premier to say that meat, fish and vegetables are considered at present things of luxury. If Government really intend to save these communities from starvation, I would urge upon the Government to take up the matter in right earnest and do all they can to settle lands with these landless fishermen communities who rightly deserve the first priority consideration. Our Hon'ble Finance Minister has congratulated himself for the introduction of *Chuktibhagi* system on the reserved land. I say it is the worst type of settlement. The position of *Chuktibhagi* raiyat is worse than that of rental raiyat under the permanently-settled estates. This system is not at all beneficial to the raiyat and it should be discontinued. From this *Chuktibhagi* paddy I shall come to the actual (1) *Bhagolu* problem in the Surma Valley; (2) Standard Cloths; (3) High prices of daily necessities of life and (4) paddy and rice dealing affairs of the Government. Sir, I now like to speak a few words on the food procurement policy of the Government of Assam. Some of the hon. Members have already referred to it. This vitally affects the masses and as such should engage the serious consideration of the Members.

We are told that this policy has been adopted on the recommendations of the Gregory Committee and under the directions of the Government of India. Well and good. But what is the procurement policy of this blessed Government? Who are the agents through whom the Government are purchasing enormous quantities of paddy and rice? How were they appointed? Was any tender invited for the same? No.

Sir, during the last November Session of the Assembly, some of the prominent Members of the Government party were very loud in their condemnation of the activities and policy of the Government. The stability of the Ministry was threatened. As a result, the Ministry became nervous and to save their own skin they stuffed the mouth of these hon. Members with paddy and rice cakes. The whole thing was stage-managed and scandalously done. We cannot but condemn the action of the Government.

During the last few Sessions of the Assembly, we have heard a good deal about the Steel Brothers, Limited. This firm was condemned by the Members sitting behind the Government Benches. It is an irony of fate that the same Members would form themselves into another Steel Brothers for stealing the money of the people whom they claim to represent.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Is the word "steal" parliamentary, Sir?

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: The word "stealing" is not parliamentary, but the word "robbing" is parliamentary.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: Very well, Sir.

And what is their performance during the last two months? They were unscrupulous and did not hesitate to adopt objectionable means to earn a very big profit.

Sir, this is not an ordinary contract. They are Government agents and are to get remuneration from the Government. As a result, it is surely an office of profit. I want a ruling from the Advocate General of Assam, whether the Members of this House can be Government agents for profit without militating against the Government of India Act, 1935?

Now, I will come to the actual operations of the Government agents in the Surma Valley. We heard that Government gave monopoly agency so that there might not be any competition to excite the market. But what did we find? Hundreds of persons were found to have been appointed by these agents without any check or control. These sub-agents had their own sub-agents and all of them were ransacking the villages without considering whether there was surplus or not. They were allowed to purchase at any price. And as there was no other purchaser in the field they could dictate their own price. There was no check over these persons under the Food Grains Control Order and they could easily stock for export. Why did not Government fix in time the minimum price of rice so that the cultivators could not be cheated like this?

Sir, next I come to the price of rice and paddy prevailing in the Surma Valley during the last three months. From the first of December to the first of February the price of rice ranged per maund from Rs. 12 Rs. 15 only and that also in the towns alone. In the villages the price was much less. At Pagla, Sibganj, Rasulganj and Tahirpur where the sub-agents of my Friend hon. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury operated, the price never went beyond Rs. 13. Similar was the price prevailing at the mufasil centres of Maulvibazar and Habiganj where our other hon. Friends were working. But we are staggered to hear that the agents were paid, I understand, at the rate of Rs. 19 and later on at Rs. 17-8-0 and it seems that the agency was submitting false reports. Thus the agents—the so-called representatives of the people—were allowed to profit at Rs. 5 per maund of rice, i.e., they were earning Rs. 5,000 per each thousand maund of rice and that at the expense of the poor cultivators. We are told that the agents were allowed only a commission of annas six and annas three in the maund. But agents themselves were allowing their sub-agents up to Rs. 2 per maund. Thus the poor raiyats have been cheated by thousands of rupees. I boldly say that the Government is criminally guilty in allowing these agents to carry on their criminal intentions at the expense of the people of the country. I make these statements with full responsibility and I challenge the Government to hold an open enquiry into the matter.

These agents were given virtual monopoly in the purchase of paddy and rice. The Supply Secretary has asked the Subdivisional Officers not to issue any fresh

license. I understand that the number of existing licenses has been curtailed for the benefit of the agents. Thus the growers are being compelled to sell to the agents at any price.

There are other tactics adopted by these agents in their purchase. Generally, they purchase the worst quality of rice to have a good margin. Then, again water is said to be mixed with rice to increase in weight. There are also allegations that less than 40 seers per maund is being given in the bags. Have Government enough courage to hold an enquiry into these allegations against Messrs. Abdur Rahman Maqbul Hussain Naziruddin and Company—who are supposed to be the main pillars of the present Ministry?

It is strongly rumoured that one or two Hon'ble Ministers are directly and indirectly interested in this rice and paddy agency. It is a shame. It shows to what moral degradation we have fallen! This is how we are working the Constitution in Assam. It is a fit case for His Excellency the Governor of Assam to exercise his special powers and to demand the resignation of this Cabinet.

With these few words I resume my seat.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the annual Budgets that are presented before this House are milestones, and it is natural for us to pause on our journey at this milestone and survey the wide field around us to find out where we are.

Sir, we, in this Province, find ourselves between two fires in—front of us the Japs and in our rear the Bengal famine. Allied strategists have made no secret of the fury and might of Nipponese menace, and some one has fixed 1949 as the date for the liquidation of that menace. It is a date, of course, expected to come several years after the complete defeat of Hitler. Such are the Japs that we face in our door. As for the Bengal famine, according to unofficial reports, 50 lakhs of people died there during the past several months which is about half the total population of this Province.

Finding as we do in such a position with dangerous possibilities and potentialities, the question that naturally arises in our minds on such an occasion is that—are we going to be assured in the trials of to-day the comforts of tomorrow?

So many of our great men and loved patriots, including some hon. Members of this House, are behind the prison bars. We may not agree with their methods, or we may even actively oppose them, but we cannot tolerate their continued incarceration in jails without trial and therefore without justification. (*Hear, hear.*) Is our outcry for a National Coalition Government of India for the duration of the War to die down or evaporate away or is it to remain in the cold storage until we win the war? Are we being prepared in this way to share in the freedom and democracy for which this war is being fought and we were made involuntary belligerents on the side of the Allies? In spite of all peril, in spite of the long and hard the road to victory likely to be, it is extremely unfortunate that an atmosphere of mistrust and ill-will prevails in India in which the very survival of all that she has stood for, the survival for the urge and impulse that Indians shall move forward towards the goal of complete independence has become difficult, if not impossible. It is, therefore, no wonder that at a juncture like this willing aid of large and considerable sections of the population of this country has not been available into the united strength of the United Nations.

I must confess, it is this atmosphere, I may almost say, atmosphere of frustration, that is responsible for the growth of certain irresponsible rumours current among the people of this Province and which are bound to move simple people. Under some Lease and Lend arrangement we are to pass into the hands of the Americans! Is it as an earnest of this that the Bengal and Assam Railway has just been made over to them? I find that even an attempt to discuss this matter in the Central Assembly the other day was turned down. Or are we bartering away this section of the Bengal and Assam Railway in lieu of some United States bulls which are reported by Reuters to be *en route* to India to help to improve the milk-giving qualities of the Indian cows? The House will perhaps laugh these things away. In any case I must tell the House that

on an occasion like this at least the economic consequences, if not political, of this taking over of the Bengal and Assam Railway section from Katihar through the Assam Valley to Ledo and Dibrugarh are well-worth pondering over. This Government is primarily responsible to maintain the economic life of this Province. May I ask the Government whether they have realised the implications of this transfer of control to American hands in the matter of getting transport which this Government is primarily responsible to maintain for the economic life of this Province? May I ask the Government whether they have realised the implications of this transfer of control to American hands in the matter of getting transport which they so badly need to obtain their imported food-stuffs and other things into Assam? I know Railways are a Central subject and a subject over which even the Central Assembly has its powers considerably reduced and restricted. But in our case the very life and existence of the people are dependent on this vital means of communication—the Railways, and we cannot be expected to be dazzled and silenced by the glamour of the United States Army preparations in our midst.

Sir, on the occasion of this Budget discussion there are certain matters to which I feel entitled to make brief references. Members of this Assembly who are in jail are not supplied with the copies of the Budget and other papers of this Assembly. The talking we do here are not to go beyond the walls of this House. Proceedings of this House which are separately printed as a part of the official Gazette and used to be sold to the public in the past are now, I understand, not available to the public by sale, except in individual cases under the orders of the Chief Secretary to the Government. Is not this an impossible situation? Is it not encroaching on the rights and privileges of this House and our constituents who are certainly entitled to know what their representatives are doing here? The Government certainly owe to the House an explanation for this unwarranted affront to this Hon'ble House by their Chief Secretary.

Sir, in considering this Budget we have asked ourselves the question—does it help to mitigate the wartime rigour of our people? Is it a measure of which this House may be proud so that this may sustain us in public regard? I must confess we cannot find any satisfaction in the answers to those questions. For, while the Hon'ble Finance Minister deserves our congratulations on his effort to present a full and complete picture of the financial position, it cannot be said to be in any sense a thoroughly satisfactory state of things. It may be urged that it is as much as Assam can afford, but I should hesitate to agree with such an opinion.

Let me next come to the question of land policy of this Government. I would appeal for sweet reasonableness from all sections of the House in dealing with this subject. In spite of care and caution I may be treading on the tender corns of some Members of the Government and also some of their honourable supporters. I do not intend to give offence to any one but I have to do my duty. I want to discuss the Land Settlement Policy of the Government as adumbrated in their Resolution of the 25th August and pursued during the past several months. I need not repeat in this connection what I said during the debate on Food question during the November Session; nor should I traverse the ground covered on the question by hon. Members who had already taken part in this debate.

The House will remember that the Resolution deals with increased settlement in five districts of Assam Valley, *viz.*, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Darrang, Nowgong and Kamrup. So far as the first two upper districts are concerned, lands are to be settled with the indigenous population. So far as the three other districts are concerned, the lands are to be given to both the indigenous and the immigrant population. It is this decision to give lands to immigrant population that has generated so much heat in the Province, particularly in the Assam Valley. In this question of giving more lands to the immigrants we in our Group hold very definite views. We are not out to deprive our immigrant brethren who have long made Assam their home from a share of Government lands opened for settlement. If the Resolution would have gone so far and no further, we should have no quarrel whatsoever with it. The Hon'ble Finance Minister has said in his Budget speech that the object which the

Government set out to achieve by this Resolution is to intensify the efforts for growing more food and providing land for the increased number of landless in the Province. I would like the House to underline the words 'in the Province.' But the whole policy of this Government has worked out in practice for providing land for the landless outside the Province, that is, in Eastern Bengal.....

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Is it a crime ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order.

Srijut SURENDRA NATH BURAGOHAIN: It may not be a crime but I am only trying to lay emphasis to the interest of the people of the Province which is uppermost in our minds and uppermost in the minds of the hon. Members of this House.

Sir, as a result, hundreds of thousands of such people are invited here to the great detriment of the indigenous people and the immigrant population who have made this Province their home and jeopardising the food position of this front line Province. I, therefore, appeal to the Government to modify, and not abrogate *in toto*, their Resolution with a view to discourage further settlement of people from outside the Province.

There is a political side of this question to which I feel justified in making a reference. The fact is that by this policy of land settlement Government has virtually let in mass immigration of one community into the home of another. I do not want to associate myself with either the Hindu or the Muslim extremists in this matter. But so long as the communal basis of the Indian Constitution is going to continue, so long as the demand for the right of self-determination for different areas persist, in fairness to all, nothing whatsoever be allowed to be done by Government which may result in virtually disturbing the existing proportion of the communities in the different areas of India. In the United States of America, the quotas of immigration of different nationalities are fixed under the Constitution. So, no one nationality, be it English or French or German, can have increased immigration to the corresponding prejudice of the other nationalities and thereby disturbing the relative position of the different nationalities. Coming over to India, will my Muslim friends tolerate the 45 million Hindus of the United Provinces to swamp into the midst of only 16 million Muslims in the Punjab and thereby reducing their majority position in that Province? Or to take another case, there are six times as many Hindus in Bombay as there are Muslim in Sind. If part of this 17 million Hindus migrate into the midst of only 3 million Muslims in that Muslim majority Province where will be the chance of realising the dream of North-Western Zone of Pakistan? In the interest of Pakistan itself I would request our Muslim friends not to persist in creating a precedent of a mass immigration with a view to reduce the position of the Hindus of this Province. (*A voice:—This is not the platform*). I hope Government will see their way to revise their policy with a view to discourage any further settlement of outsiders.

Coming to the question of food, Sir, this is undoubtedly the greatest problem of the day and I would deplore any spirit of complacency in this matter on the part of Government. Sufficient food for the civilian population is one of the greatest aids to war effort. It will be news to the House to know that the British Government was doing its best during the past $3\frac{1}{2}$ years out of the $4\frac{1}{2}$ years of war to build up reserves of food all over the world so that there will always be held out before the eyes of the enslaved peoples of Europe that invasion by the Allies would mean both food and freedom for them. The Japanese controlled radios are taking this cue out of the British and are holding out promises of plenty of food to the famine-stricken people of Bengal. I know at this season of the year and for some months to come there is the least chance of scarcity as the harvest has just been gathered in. Though a poor Province, Assam produces sufficient rice for her people, the only agency which can create famine in any part of Assam during the coming autumn will be Military and Central Government exactions or this Government's failure to distribute the supplies they command. It is in this view that I regret the decision of this Government to part with 27 lakh maunds of rice for Military and export purposes and I would urge them to get themselves released from this obligation. If there is to arise any critical situation of scarcity in this front line Province of ours, the party to gain by such a situation will be Japan. Re-occupation of Burma will be delayed, war effort will be impaired. So, is it not worth erring on the side of caution in such a situation?

With regard to other food-stuffs, those imported on Government's account, and also Standard cloth, I must say that there has been a partial breakdown of the official machinery of distribution.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member is exceeding the time-limit.

Srijut SURENDRA NATH BURAGOHAIN : I will finish within two minutes, Sir. Sir, black-market and mal-distribution continue to be the order of the day both in towns as well as in rural areas. One of the principal reasons for such a state of things is the reluctance of the Government officials in charge of these measures to associate non-official opinion in those matters. The officers are not at all responsive to public opinion. Instead of considering themselves as servants of the public they want only to arrogate to themselves the position of masters of the public. My hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee rightly referred to the non-functioning of the Food Committees set up by Government. In my own place Jorhat, no meeting of this Committee is known to have been held so far though in the Committee are included two valiant hon. Members from either side of this House—Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali and Srijut Ram Nath Das. During the last November Session, I understood the Hon'ble Prime Minister to tell the House that through these Committees the hon. Members would be able to render valuable assistance to the official machinery in their own places.

My hon. Friend Khan Bahadur Mahmud Ali pertinently complained of the corruption that is rampant among the public servants entrusted with the duties of the supply and other very essential duties.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I want the hon. Member to finish now.

Srijut SURENDRA NATH BURAGOHAIN : Very well, Sir, with these words I beg to resume my seat.

Srijut RABI CHANDRA KACHARI : মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয়, এই বাজেট সম্বন্ধে দু'আঘাৰ মান কৰ খোজোঁ। বৰ্ত্তমান বাজেট খন যে মনোমত হোৱা নাই সেইটো বিশেষকৈ বহলাই নকলেও হব। কিন্তু এই বাজেটৰ বিশেষ discussion নকৰি আমাৰ অতি দুখৰ কিছুমান অভাব অভিযোগ আছে, সেই বিষয়েহে কবলৈ আগ বাঢ়িছোঁ। আমি ভাবিছিলো যে Provincial Autonomy বা প্ৰাদেশিক স্বায়ত্ত-শাসনৰ দিনত আমি Tribal জাতি বিলাকে বহুত সুযোগ আৰু সুবিধা পাম, কিন্তু আমি যিমান আকাঙা কৰিছিলো আজিলৈকে তাৰ দহভাগৰ এভাগো পোৱা নাপায়।

বিশেষতঃ মই পোন প্ৰথমে এই গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ Land Settlement Policy অৰ্থাৎ ভূমি দিয়া নীতিটো সমৰ্থন যে কৰিব নোৱাৰোৱেই বৰঞ্চ এই কাৰ্য্যবাবে মই তেওঁলোকক গৰিহণা দিবলৈ বাধ্য হম। বৰ্ত্তমান গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ যিটো proposal বাহিৰ হৈছে, সেইমতে মই দেখিছোঁ যে গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে Tribal বিলাকক কিছুমান বিশেষ সুযোগ আৰু সুবিধা দিব লাগে। কিন্তু কাৰ্য্যক্ষেত্ৰত দেখিছোঁ যে গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ যিবোৰ Executive Officers আছে, সেইবোৰে আমাৰ কৰুণ ক্ৰন্দন পৰ্য্যন্তও অনেক সময়ত নুশুনো। উদাহৰণ স্বৰূপে মই দুটামান কথাৰ উল্লেখ কৰিম। মঙ্গলদৈ চৰাডিভিজনৰ চামাবাৰি মৌজাৰ বেগাকাম, পশ্চিম পদুঘাত, বৰখাত আৰু অকিণ্ডৰি এই চাৰিখন গাঁৱত গৱৰ্ণমেণ্ট waste land অৰ্থাৎ চৰকাৰী পতিত মাটিত বহুত কচাৰী মানুহে বসতি কৰি আছিল। কিন্তু তাত আজি কালি গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে যি নীতি কৰিছে সেই নীতি অনুযায়ী হাজাৰ হাজাৰ মৈমনসিংহীয়া মানুহ আহি আমাৰ মানুহে খেতি কৰি থকা ঠাইৰ পৰা আমাৰ মানুহবিলাকক খেদাই তাত ঘৰবাৰী কৰিছে আৰু বহুত অত্যাচাৰ কৰিছে। তাতোকৈ দুখৰ কথা এই যে তাত বৰদিনৰ বন্ধত গোটখাই খাবলৈ বন্ধা ভোজকে সিহঁতৰ ৫০০ মান মানুহ আহি নষ্ট কৰি গুচি যায়হি। এই বিষয়ে থানাত এজাহাৰ দিয়াতো আৰু Subdivisional Officer আৰু Sub-Deputy Collector ক কোৱাতো তাৰ প্ৰতিকাৰ আজিলৈকে কৰা নায়। আমি ভাবিছিলো যে বৰ্ত্তমান আসাম গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ দিনত এনেকুৱা নিষ্ঠুৰ কাম কৰিব নোৱাৰিব। কিন্তু নতুন কিছুমান মৈমনসিংহীয়া মানুহ আহি কিমান ঠাইত যে অত্যাচাৰ কৰিব লাগিছে তাক কৈ এই সভাৰ বহুমূলীয়া সময় নষ্ট কৰিব নোখোজোঁ। উত্তৰ গুৱাহাটীৰ ওচৰত বৰ বংশৰ মৌজাত এখন বিজাৰি আছিল। তাৰ চাৰিওফালে আমাৰ বহুত কচাৰী মানুহ আৰু স্থানীয় অসমীয়া মুছলমান মানুহ আছিল। তাত অলপতে অহা নতুন ১০০ ঘৰবোৰ ওপৰ মৈমনসিংহীয়া মানুহ বহিছে। এই বিষয়ে ডিপুটী কমিচনাৰ দৃষ্টি আকৰ্ষণ কৰা হৈছিল কিন্তু তথাপিও তাৰ কোনো প্ৰতিকাৰ কৰা নায়। ইয়াৰ বাহিৰেও আপোনালোকে জানে বৰপেটা চৰাডিভিজনত কি ঘটনা হৈছিল। আমাৰ বন্ধুবৰ-

Medical ৰ বিষয়েও একাধাৰ কওঁ। আমাৰ Medical মিনিষ্টাৰে অকলৈ tour নকৰি আমাৰ Premier ৰ লগে লগে যায়। তেখেতে টাউনলৈ যাই কাৰণ তাত Circuit House ত থাকিব পাৰে কিন্তু গাৱঁৰ ফাললৈ নাযায়। মজলদৈৰ বৰনদীৰ পৰা মাজ বাটলৈকে আৰু কলাইগাৱঁৰ পৰা ভূটীয়া পাহাৰলৈকে এই খণ্ডত কোনো হাস্পতাল নাই, যদিও এই ঠাইত মেলেৰীয়া, কলাজ্বৰ আৰু কুষ্ঠ-ৰোগেৰে পৰিপূৰ্ণ হৈ বিনা চিকিৎসাই মানুহ মৰিব লাগিছে। সেই খণ্ডত এখন লোকেলবোৰ্ডৰ Dispensary আছিল আৰু সেই Dispensary ৰ ডাক্তৰ জনে গৰ্ভৱশেষৰ পৰা দৰমহা পাইছিল। কিন্তু টকাৰ অভাৱত লোকেলবোৰ্ডে তাত medicine দিব পৰা নাই। তাতে গৰ্ভৱশেষে ডাক্তাৰ জন লৈ যোৱাত ডাক্তাৰ খান্নাখন বন্ধ হৈ আছে। তেনেকুৱা অৱস্থাত কষ্টকৰি Medical মিনিষ্টাৰে তালৈ কেনেকৈ যাব

কাৰণ তালৈ যাবলৈ তো train নাই। Hon'ble Judicial মিনিষ্টাৰ অলপতে তালৈ গৈছিল কিন্তু medical মিনিষ্টাৰৰ তেনেকুৱা ভিতৰুৱা ঠাইত গৰীৰ পুজাৰ কেনেকুৱা কষ্ট হৈছে তাক চাব তেখেতৰ সময় নাই।

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member has only five minutes more.

Srijut RABI CHANDRA KACHARI : All right Sir, মোৰ অন্তৰৰ ভূষণ না কৰিবলৈ দিয়ক।

Supply Department আৰু Defence Department ৰ বিষয়ে অলপ কবলগীয়া আছে। গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে অলপতে license issue কৰিছে গোটেই মফলন্দৰ ভিতৰত ২৫০ খন কিন্তু Tribal মানুহৰ ভাগত পৰিছে এখন; স্থানীয় মানুহে পাইছে ১৫ খন আৰু বাকী সকলো বিলাক বিদেশী মানুহে পাইছে।

চেনি এনেকৈ দিছে যে চহৰৰ বাহিৰে চেনি পাবলৈ সূচল নাই। নিমখৰ নিমিত্তে হাহাকাৰ তৈ গৈছে। আমাৰ গাঁৱৰ মানুহবিলাকে কেবাচিন তেল মাহেকত ২২ পোৱাকৈ পাই, কিন্তু চহৰৰ মানুহবিলাকে ৬ সেৰ কৈ পায়। আমাৰ গাঁৱৰ মানুহবিলাক backward আৰু চহৰৰ বিলাক forward, অৰ্থাৎ গাঁৱত থকাৰোৰ পিঠিৰ আৰু চহৰত থকা বিলাক বুকুৰ। আৰু গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে কৈছে যে এনেকুৱা দুদিনত তেওঁবিলাকে সকলো বস্তু control কৰিছে। গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে Standard cloth হেনো দিছে, কিন্তু দুৰ্ভাগ্যৰ বিষয় মই আজিলৈকে Standard cloth দেখা নাই আৰু আমাৰ গোটেই কলাইগাওঁ চাকেলৰ ভিতৰত এটুকুৰাও Standard cloth বিক্ৰি হোৱা নাই এইটো আমাৰ চৰাভিভিজনৰ M.L.A. সকলে জানে। কিন্তু অন্যান্য বিদেশী বস্তুৰ দাম বাঢ়ি গৈছে। গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে কৰিছে কি? তেওঁবিলাকে কৈছে যে চাউলৰ দাম কমাব লাগে, ধানৰ দাম কমাব লাগে; কিন্তু অইন বস্তুৰ দাম কমাব নালাগেনে? অইন বস্তুৰ দাম নকমালে খেতিয়ক সকলে খাব কেনেকৈ? আমাৰ ধান চাউলৰ দাম কমিলে কোনো আপত্তি নাই। গাঁৱৰ শতকৰা ৯৯ জন খেতিয়ক। তেওঁলোকে ধান চাউল বেচিহে অইন লাগতিয়াল বস্তু কিনিব পাৰে। অকল ধান চাউলৰ দাম কমোৱা পক্ষপাতি কোনোমতেই হ'ব নোৱাৰে।

সেই কাৰণে আশাকৰো মই যি বোৰ কথা কলো, গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে সেইবোৰ অতি গভীৰ ভাবে বিবেচনা কৰি আমাৰ গৰীৰ Tribal বিলাকক সহায় কৰিব। আৰু বেচি কথাটো এই House ৰ বহুত লীয়া সময় নষ্ট কৰিব নোখোজে।

Srijut DHIRSING DEURI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the very outset I cannot but offer my hearty thanks and congratulations to the Hon'ble Education Minister and along with him to my friend the Hon'ble Rupnath Brahma, the Tribal representative in the Cabinet. For the uplift of the Plains Tribal much improvement appears in the Education Budget of the year 1944-45. But still there remain many more things to be done for the rural educational uplift of these people and I hope the Government will not fail to do something more in this respect. The Government is very kind enough Sir, to make a provision for 50 per cent. of free-studentship for the Tribal boys reading in the Government High Schools. But the number of Tribal students in the Government High Schools is very small, but in the Aided High Schools the number is much larger. So, our boys will be very much benefited if the percentage of free-studentship is raised in the aided schools as well. Therefore, I request Government to see while preparing the next Budget, that at least 25 per cent. of the Tribal students in the aided schools get free-studentship.

The Mikir Hills area is a very big area and so it is not possible for the one Sub-Inspector of Schools to visit and inspect all the schools in this area. Therefore, I request here also that this Sub-Inspector of Schools may be substituted by two Assistant Sub-Inspectors of Schools for the Mikir Hills and further I request Government to make provision in the next year's Budget for the construction of hostel buildings for the Tribal students reading both in the High Schools as well as in the Aided Middle English Schools. Sir, there is a High School at Jagi which needs a new school building. The Managing Committee of the School has been trying its utmost for the completion of the new building, but for want of sufficient money it could not be done so. I therefore, request for this purpose also to sanction a non-recurring grant-in-aid of Rs.2,000 for the construction of the new building which has not yet been completed for want of funds.

Sir, as regards settlement of land with the Tribal people, I beg to state some facts which have been brought to my notice during my tour in my constituency. They are as follows:—At the foot of the Mikir Hills there is an area known as Pamila Ati in the Jarabari mauza. About 95 to 100 Plains and Hill Tribal people had been occupying and cultivating the lands for more than two years. The area was not included in the Development scheme proposed by Government Resolution dated the 8th July 1941. The immigrants went to these lands, cleared and cultivated by our people and they approached the authority and had that area included in the Colonisation area. The Deputy Commissioner with an armed force broke the houses of the Tribal people (*hear, hear*) and evicted them and put the immigrants in occupation of those lands. Our people fell at the feet of the Deputy Commissioner and prayed for Justice. But the Deputy Commissioner did not do anything for the Tribal people as the area was included in the Colonisation area.

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: Will the hon. Member name the area?

Srijut DHIRSINGH DEURI: It is Pamila Ati.

Sir, I have had another experience. It is about 22 Kachari families in the Bokoni mauza where they had been living for more than two years. Formerly they lived at Mairamari Village which was eroded by the Brahmaputra. They became absolutely landless and shifted to Gerua Ati. The lands occupied by them were given to some influential men of the caste Hindu. The crops were forcibly taken away from them and they are now practically starving. Another instance, Sir, of Lahorighat area. This area was a closed area and reserved for the Tribal people. The Tribal people had been living there from time immemorial. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman, the then Revenue Minister, and the Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma visited that area and advised the Deputy Commissioner to keep it as a closed area and not to settle it with immigrants. But certain land speculators managed to get the periodic patta and in the last harvest time forcibly took paddy from their fields and *bhandars*. They were also selling lands to the immigrants. In Khutradalhaba there is a Tribal village where lands have been encroached upon by the immigrants and Government issued a notice in April 1943 to vacate the lands but the immigrants are still in possession of them. They have not yet been evicted. There are many instances, Sir, in which the Government Resolution on land settlement, subject to the requirements of the Tribal people, has been violated and set at naught. There is a strong rumour in Nowgong that some Plains portion of the Mikir Hills is going to be opened for settlement to the immigrants. The Mikirs are now coming down to that portion for cultivation and even to build their homes there. If that portion is given to other people, then the Mikirs will be put to great difficulties and they will be dying of starvation. With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

—Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, প্রবল প্রতাপশালী মাননীয় অর্থসচিব মহোদয় আমাদের সন্মুখে জনসাধারণের সংগ্রহশূন্য যে বাজেট পেশ করেছেন, তত্ত্বজন্য আমি তাঁকে আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ জানাইতেছি।

গত কয়েক বৎসরের মধ্যে বিভিন্ন নামধারী অর্থসচিবগণ বিভিন্ন ভাবে আমাদের কাছে যে সমস্ত বাজেট পেশ করেছেন, তাহার ফলাফল আমরা ভাল ভাবেই ভোগ করেছি। আমার মতে যতদিন আমরা ভারতের পূর্ণ স্বাধীনতা লাভ না করব, ততদিন পর্যন্ত গভর্নরের advisers অর্থাৎ সেক্রেটারিদের প্রস্তুত বাজেট অনুযায়ী আমাদের মিনিষ্টারেরা যত দিন কাজ করবেন ততদিন আমাদের দুঃখদুর্দশা মোচন হইবার কোন প্রকার সম্ভাবনা নাই। তাই আমি আশা করি আমাদের হিন্দু ভ্রাতাগণ, সদস্য ভ্রাতাগণ এবং অন্যান্য ধর্মাবলম্বী যে সমস্ত সদস্য এই House এ আছেন, আপনারা ভারতের ১০ কোটি মুসলমানের ন্যায়সঙ্গত দাবী—পাকিস্তানের দাবী, মেনে নিয়ে ব্রিটিশ গভর্নমেন্টের গোলামী হতে অব্যাহতি লাভ করুন। দীর্ঘকাল যাবৎ উভয় জাতির মিলনের জন্য নানাদিকে উপায় উদ্ভাবনের চেষ্টা করা হয়েছে, কিন্তু যে কোন কারণেই হউক পরস্পরের প্রতি পরস্পরের বিশ্বাস না থাকায় আমরা স্বাধীনতা অর্জন করতে সক্ষম হইনাই। এখন আমাদের সন্মুখে একমাত্র solution—এই পাকিস্তানের দাবী মেনে নেওয়া। ব্রিটিশ গভর্ন মেন্ট ও তাদের প্রতিশ্রুতিতে বলেছেন—তোমরা

উভয় জাতি যখন পরস্পর মিলিত হয়ে স্বাধীনতার দাবী করবে, তখনই আমরা এখান থেকে অবসর গ্রহণ করব। ব্রিটিশ গভর্নমেন্টের উক্তি সত্য কিনা তাহা পরীক্ষা করবার সময় এসেছে। আমরা গতাই যদি মিলিত হয়ে আজ গভর্নমেন্টকে জানিয়ে দিতে পারি যে আমরা ভারতের হিন্দু মুসলমান একত্র হয়ে পূর্ণ স্বাধীনতার দাবী পেশ করছি, আশাকরি তোমরা এখন আমাদের দেশ থেকে অবসর গ্রহণ কর—তাদের উক্তির সত্যতার প্রমাণ হয়ে যাবে। দীর্ঘকাল তোমাদের শাসনদণ্ডের নীচে প্রজা হিসাবে বাস করে বুঝতে পেরেছি যে আর কিছুকাল যদি ব্রিটিশ গভর্নমেন্টের অধীনে আমরা বাস করি তাহলে মনুষ্যত্ব হারিয়ে জানোয়ারে পরিণত হব। শিক্ষার দিক দিয়ে, মনুষ্যত্বের দিক দিয়ে যে কোন আমাদের বেদনা আছে, তাহা দূর করবার জন্য আর কাল বিলম্ব না করে সম্মত মিলন স্থাপন করা একান্ত দরকার বলে মনে করি।

তৎপর আসামের ঘণিত Line প্রথার প্রতি আমি এই House এর দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি। পরস্পরের ভিতর বিরোধ ঘাটে নাকরে নিরপেক্ষভাবে পুনরায় হিন্দু মুসলমান, ট্রাইবেল সকল class এর লোক নিয়ে তদন্ত করে ভূমিহীন দিগকে জমিদান করুন। গত সাত বৎসরকাল প্রবল প্রতাপশালী “বর্জয়া” মন্ত্রীদেব নিকট আমরা যথেষ্ট আবেদন জানাইয়াছি। Line প্রথার জন্য বাহিরের এবং ৮ লক্ষ Landless লোক যাহাদের পরণের কাপড়ের অভাব, রোগে ঔষধের অভাবে অকালে মৃত্যু বরণ করেছে। এখন হিন্দু, মুসলমান, বাঙ্গালী, আসামী এরকম কোন প্রশ্ন হতে পারেনা। আমি আশাকরি ভূমিহীন লোকদের প্রতি সদয় হয়ে আপনারা আপনাদের প্রতিজ্ঞা রক্ষা করবার জন্য ব্যবস্থা করুন। আসামের আর্থিক অবস্থা উন্নত এবং আসামের অভাব অভিযোগের প্রতিকার করতে হলে, জমি এরকম জঙ্গল ভাবে না রেখে জঙ্গলভূমি চাষ করবার ব্যবস্থা করুন। আসামের Landless tribal জাতি এবং হিন্দু জাতির দাবী সর্বপ্রথমে পূর্ণ করুন। তার পরে যদি জমি থাকে, তাহলে সেই জমি আমাদের দিবার ব্যবস্থা করুন। এবিধে মারামারি করার কোন প্রয়োজন নাই। মাননীয় শ্রীযুত রবি কাচারী বলেছেন যে তিনি সংগ্রাম করতে চান। আমরা সংগ্রাম করবার জন্য, মারামারি করবার জন্য, এখানে আসিনা। মারামারির যদি স্পৃহা হয়ে থাকে তাহলে ব্রিটিশ গভর্নমেন্টের সামনে যান—তাদের সাথে সংগ্রাম করে ভারতের স্বাধীনতা অর্জন করুন। আমার মতে মূখ্য অনু-বস্ত্র হীন immigrant দেব সঙ্গে লড়াই করবার কোন কারণ আছে বলে মনে করিনা (Hear, hear) ! আসাম ভেলীতে আপনারা নিরপেক্ষ ভাবে তদন্ত করিলে বুঝিবেন সেখানে কাননগু আসামী, Sub Deputy Collector আসামী, Deputy Commissioner, আসামী, Clerk আসামী, সব-রেজিষ্ট্রার আসামী—তাহারা সর্বদাই আসামীদের জন্য চেষ্টা করেন। আজপর্যন্ত immigrant দেব মধ্যে ক’জন Sub-Deputy Collector হয়েছেন এবং ক’জন Officer হয়েছেন যে তারা তাদের ভাইদেরের জমি দিয়েছে। এসমস্ত নিয়ে কারও বিরুদ্ধে কোনও comment করতে চাইনা। যখন সমস্ত বাধা বিঘ্ন অতিক্রম করে আমরা আসামের বুকে ভারতবাসী বলে পরিচিত হব, তখন আমরা আমাদের দাবী কড়ায় গণ্ডায় বুঝিয়ে দিতে বাধ্য হইব। আমরা আসামের হিন্দু মুসলমানের দুর্গাম করতে আসিনি। কারণ, আমরা বুঝতে পেরেছি যে ব্রিটিশ পলিসির জন্যই আজ আমরা ভূমিহীন হয়েছি, কাঙ্গাল হয়েছি, স্বাধীনতা হারিয়েছি, আমরা পরস্পর বিভক্ত হয়ে পরস্পরের দুর্গাম রটিয়ে পরস্পরকে দোষী সাব্যস্ত করিতেছি। আমাদের মধ্যে line system করে আমাদের দিগকে বিভক্ত করা হয়েছে। মানুষ হিসাবে মানুষ কাছাকাছে বাস করতে পারবেনা এমন জঘন্য আইন পৃথিবীতে নাই। আপনারা ধর্মের দিক দিয়ে লক্ষ করুন আজ আমাদের বিপদগস্ত ৯ লক্ষ ভূমিহীন লোক দিনের পর দিন অখাদ্য খেয়ে, অনাহারে থেকে কঙ্কাল সার চেহারা হয়েছে। তাদের পরনে কাপড় নাই, চট পরিধান করে তারা আসামে বাস করেছে। একবার দেখুন, শিশু মায়ের মুখের দিকে চেয়ে আছে, মায়ের পেটে অনু নাই, তাই তাদের দুধ নাই, শিশু না খেতে পেয়ে চিৎকার করেছে। হায় অদৃষ্ট ! বহু আশা করে আসামে এসেছিলাম আসামের হিন্দু মুসলমানকে আমাদের ভাই বলে গ্রহণ করে আসামের বন জঙ্গলে থাকবার জায়গা করব—কৃষির উন্নতি বৃদ্ধি করবার সুযোগ পাব—কিন্তু হায়-অদৃষ্ট ! কেউ আমাদের দিকে দেখেনা। যদি জমি থাকত—যদি চাষ করবার কোন জমি থাকত, মাতৃভূমি পরিত্যাগ করে আসামে আসতামনা। মাতৃভূমি পরিত্যাগ করে আসামের বন জঙ্গলে কত লোক ধ্বংস করেছে। এক বরপেটা সাবডিভিসনে বাঘে হাজার লোক খাইয়াছে। জঙ্গলে ১৫০০০ মুসলমান ম্যালেরিয়ায় আক্রান্ত হয়ে জীবন শেষ করেছে। মরণের সময় দুই টাকার কাফনের কাপড় নিয়েও মরতে পারে নাই—এমন কি আত্মীয় স্বজনকেও দেখা করতে পারে নাই। আজ পর্যন্ত ১২ লক্ষ লোকের ভিতর ১২ জন গাজুয়েটও হয় নাই। কিন্তু তারা কি মানুষ হতে চায়না, লেখাপড়া শিখতে চায়না ? নিশ্চয় চায়—কিন্তু পেটে

অনু নাই, পরিধানের বস্ত্র নাই, রোগে ঔষধ নাই, স্কুল কলেজে ছেলে পাঠাবে কি করে? আমাদের বিরুদ্ধে আপনারা হিংসাত্মক পোষণ করবেননা। যদি কেউ Tribal এর উপর অত্যাচার করে থাকে—যদি মেয়েদের উপর অত্যাচার করে থাকে তাহলে তাদের শাস্তি দিন, তাতে আমাদের আপত্তি নাই, গভর্ণমেন্টের বিধান অনুযায়ী যে কোনও শাস্তি দিন তাতে কোনও বাধা নাই। কিন্তু এই যে ৯ লক্ষ ভূমিহীন লোক আসানে আছে, তারা সোনার সংসার সৃষ্টি করবে। তারা পুতি বিধা জমিতে ৬৮ মণ গম, যব, পাট প্রভৃতি জন্মাবার চেষ্টা করেছে। আমরা চাই শুধু জমি। আমাদের মত এরকম দুর্বলের সঙ্গে আপনারা লড়াই করবেন কেন? লড়াই করার যদি ইচ্ছা হয়ে থাকে তাহলে আমরা পরাধীন হয়েছি যাদের জন্য, পথের ভিখারী হয়েছি যাদের জন্য, দাসের দাস কৃতদাস হয়েছি যাদের জন্য, লাভহীন হারিয়েছি যাদের জন্য, আমাদের মধ্যে হিংসা, ঘেম আদি যাবতীয় ব্যাধির সৃষ্টি হয়েছে যাদের জন্য, তাদের সঙ্গে লড়াই করুন। আমাদের সঙ্গে লড়াই করবেন কেন? (A voice—শেষ পর্যন্ত সাহস থাকবেত?) নিশ্চয়, নিশ্চয়, আমরা মুসলমান পরাধীন নই, মুসলমান ধর্ম পরাধীনতা নাই, মুসলমান কখনও পরাধীন নয়। মুসলমান কাউকে পরোয়া করেনা সে বৃটিশই হউক, জার্মানিই হউক, জাপানীই হউক, বা যে কোনও জাতি হউক, কাহারও দাগ মুসলমান স্বীকার করতে পারেনা। মুসলমান মরতে জানে, সড়িত হতে জানে, নিজের জীবন পর্যন্ত বিসর্জন দিতে জানে, যে কোনও মুহর্ত্তে যে কোনও কার্য করতে জানে, কিন্তু মুসলমান দাগ স্বীকার করতে পারেনা।

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : আশা করি মোলানা যাহেন শেষ করবেন।

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN : Line প্রথা যে বে-আইনী সে সম্বন্ধে রাজস্ব ও প্রধান মন্ত্রী জানেন। বাংলা দেশের সমস্ত রাজস্ব ছেলে নামটা আমি ভুলে গেছি, যার বিজয় প্রসাদ এবং ভূতপূর্ব মন্ত্রী মিঃ আব্দুল হামিদ, খান বাহাদুর আব্দুল মমিন মহোদয়গণ Line প্রথা যে বে-আইনী এবং রহিত করা উচিত এসম্বন্ধে এক deputation ইণ্ডিয়া গভর্ণমেন্টের মেম্বর শ্রীবাস্তব সাহেবের নিকট উপস্থিত করিয়াছিলেন। এই Line প্রথা রহিত করার জন্য মাননীয় বাবু করুণা সিন্ধু রায় একটি প্রস্তাব আনিয়াছেন। দুঃখের বিষয়, আমাদের প্রধান মন্ত্রী মুসলমান, রেভিনিউ মন্ত্রী মুসলমান, কিন্তু তারা আজ পর্যন্ত Line প্রথা রহিত করার কোনও চেষ্টা করেন নাই; এমন কি একটি বিবৃতি দিয়েও একথা প্রকাশ করেন নাই। অল-ইণ্ডিয়া মুসলীম লীগ এই Line প্রথার বিরুদ্ধে তীব্র আন্দোলন করেছেন এবং আসাম ও বেঙ্গল প্রভিন্সিয়েল মুসলীম লীগও করেছেন, কিন্তু আজ পর্যন্ত রাজস্ব মন্ত্রী কি প্রধান মন্ত্রী একটি বিবৃতি ও এসম্বন্ধে দিলেননা। আসামের প্রধান lawyer রায় বাহাদুর পি, সি, দত্ত হিন্দু হয়েও সত্যের খাতিরে Line প্রথা বেআইনী বলে ঘোষণা করেছেন। কিন্তু মুসলমান নাম ধারী যারা মিনিট্রি না করলে মুসলমান ধর্ম চলে যায় বলে মনে করে, তারা আজ পর্যন্ত একটি বিবৃতিও দিলেননা যে এই Line প্রথা হওয়া উচিত কিনা।

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : আপনার সময় হয়ে গেছে।

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN : পাঁচ মিনিট পরেই আমি শেষ করব।

মাননীয় মেডিকেল মন্ত্রীকে জানাইতে চাই যে ম্যালেরিয়া, কলেরা হয়ে শত শত লোক মারা গিয়েছে। প্রধান মন্ত্রীর সহযোগিনী হয়ে সমস্ত প্রভিন্স ঘুরে বেড়াচ্ছেন, কিন্তু তিনি দেখতে পাচ্ছেন না যে এদেশে ঔষধের গাছ গাছড়া আছে এবং আয়ুর্বেদ মতে সেই গাছ গাছড়া হতে ঔষধ তৈরী করতে পারে.....

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : On a point of information Sir, has the hon. Member withdrawn that word 'সহযোগিনী'?

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN : সহযোগিনী বলেছি, যদি ভুল হয়ে থাকে তাহলে withdraw করব। (voices—It means colleague—it is quite correct—ঠিকই হয়েছে)

আর একটা কথা বলেই আমি শেষ করব। যদি তিনি এই দায়িত্বপূর্ণ ভার বহন করতে চান, তবে সম্ভবই আয়ুর্বেদ মতে এবং হেকিমি মতে ঔষধ করার চেষ্টা করুন।

যখন Supply Department এর কার্য দৃষ্টি পাত করি তখন আমার মনে হয় যে আমাদের দেশে গভর্ণমেন্ট বলে একটা জিনিস নাই। Supply Department এর কর্মচারীরা ভীষণ ভাবে ঘুষ খাওয়া আরম্ভ করেছে (Hear, hear)। আমি অনুরোধ করি প্রধান মন্ত্রী অতি সম্মত বেসরকারী সদস্য এবং বিশ্বস্ত কর্মচারী নিয়ে একটা তদন্ত কমিটি স্থাপন করুন এবং তদন্ত করে কর্তার শাস্তি দিবার ব্যবস্থা করুন। না হলে বুঝিব যে আমাদের গভর্ণমেন্টের কোন অস্তিত্বই নাই এবং এরকম গভর্ণমেন্টের কোন দরকার নাই।

Maulavi Syed ABDUR ROUF: Mr. Speaker, Sir, taking my seat behind the Treasury Bench I think it is my duty to support the Budget which has been presented before the House by our Government. I would be failing in my unpleasant duty if I do not congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister for the kind of Budget which he has presented. If he has not done anything appreciable he has at least been successful in creating some new heads and, Sir, in these days of democracy it is the head which counts—no matter whether there is any substance in it or not—(hear, hear). As a matter of fact the different heads of our Budget are deficit not in anything else but in brain substance. But please don't misunderstand me, allow me, Sir, to cry aloud—Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri, Finance Minister Zindabad and Zindabad Sir Muhammad's Government. The Government has proposed to spend the bulk of our revenue in governing us well so well that out of love for us they are going to spend money even for digging our graves. They, however, assure us that those are not graves but slit trenches (laughter). They have shown examples of sacrifice by not digging their own graves and yet the Opposition is not prepared to give them credit—sheer injustice. It will be doing injustice to Government if I do not appreciate the big new schemes of the Government. Two thatched houses in the Province are standing in dilapidated condition—one the kutchra plinth Muslim Boarding house of the Barpeta Government High English School and the other the Police building of Rajnagar. The one requires some Rs.2,400 to make it habitable and the other requires Rs.24,000 to make it comfortable. The Government in its wisdom has sanctioned a big zero for the educational institution but has undertaken to spend some Rs.24,000 for the Police building. Zindabad our Government (hear, hear). When thousands of immigrants have been dying for want of medicine and dispensaries, veterinary hospitals are going to be opened for them. No wonder! Thanks to the Hon'ble Education Minister. He has undertaken the task of giving physical training to the members of the opposite sex. Money is going to be spent for prevention of cruelty towards animals in Shillong, but where is the provision for preventing cruelty of the Government towards the immigrants?

I do not like to discuss the pitiable plight of the public which has arisen as a result of maldistribution of the controlled commodities. Government has simply done justice to its officers of the Supply and other allied departments by giving them an opportunity of making fortunes in a way which was so long known only to the officers of the Police and Land Revenue Departments (loud laughter and hear, hear). The public has been kept practically deprived of salt, sugar and kerosene and other necessities of life for months together; officers are becoming fatter and fatter from day to day. Black market is the only market of the Province, privation, starvation and death are the order of the day and yet the Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla—the greatest of administrators, Assam has ever produced—is at the helm of affairs—a sight really worth seeing.

More than 15 lacs of rupees is going to be spent for Civil Defence. When the Allied forces in our frontier stand a guarantee for our safety, I do not find any utility in spending this huge sum. Past experience has shown that the enemies have not been able to do us any considerable harm. By this time the defence position must have become much stronger. Why then this huge expenditure for A. R. P., and Fire services? I like to request the Provincial Leader of the National War Front to advise our Hon'ble Premier not to become panicky. Had I been in charge of affairs, I would not have spent a single cowrie on this head. I would have simply broadcasted a message to Mr. Tojo telling him that the Line System of Assam does exist still and his people being foreigners cannot have the right of settlement in this Province (hear hear).

Sir, I would like to say a word or two about the Land Revenue Policy of the Government. The Government certainly hope that at least this year the *charna* members will express their gratefulness to the Government for their Land Revenue Policy. I do not like to disappoint them. But I like to make it perfectly clear that the policy is the outcome of the pressure put by the Central Government and our Government cannot claim any credit on that score. Moreover we still believe that this policy is meant only for chloroforming the immigrants. We have seen different annual policies of our

Government and the present one like its predecessors is also a mere eye-wash. As a result of the august policy of the Government we have as yet got not an inch of land. Zindabad—Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali for his "বাহু বহুত কৃত্তি।"

During the general discussion of the Budget Members enjoy a considerable amount of freedom to discuss local problems and needs. I do not however like to detain the House with the harrowing tales of my locality. I will simply speak a word or two on problems which are more or less of general character. It is no use pressing the need of an Arabic teacher for the Barpeta Government High English School because most of the 120 Muslim boys are children of immigrants. Boys coming from as many as 5 Junior Madrassas have got to take up either Persian or Sanskrit—Arabic the language of the Quoran being a forbidden fruit to them. There might be some justification in keeping the Hamidabad educational institutions insufficiently aided because Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan is not an out and out supporter of our Ministry; but what justification can there be in keeping the immigrant educational institutions of Barpeta so insufficiently aided. The Tirabar and Majgaon Middle English Schools are going half-starved. The Kujarpith and Bagudi Middle English Schools and the Howly High English Schools are on the very verge of death due to starvation. The Barpeta Tarabari Public Works Department Road has taken recourse to hunger strike in sympathy with the above mentioned immigrant institutions.

Sir, I would simply request this Government to appoint a committee not to do justice to the immigrants, but simply to compile a list of injustices that are being done to immigrants. I do not want any redress, but simply I want compilation of a list. A time is sure to come when this list will be necessary. We will wait for that time.

I do not want to take any more time, and with these words, I resume my seat.

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, though it is not the Finance Minister's own making or that of the present Cabinet, the Government should be congratulated for being able to present a somewhat balanced Budget. It is amusing however that there is always a beauty in the presentation of Assam Budgets from year to year. As soon as the Budget comes out of the legendary bag, it works like a magic wand. By one stroke of the wand it becomes a surplus Budget, and by another stroke the same Budget at once becomes a deficit one. So our Budget is very flexible and elastic—so elastic that it can stand the hardest knocks of any kind of a critic. Therefore, a few remarks from a person like me may make no impression on such an elastic rubber-like Budget. I began by saying that it is not the making of the Minister in-charge that has produced this balanced Budget. There have been very many outside agencies at work, not within his control, which have contributed to the bringing in of money into the hands of the Exchequer. The main agency at work is no doubt the war dragon.

There is lot of truth in what Mr. Marak said the other day that the war has been a blessing to Assam. He has no doubt given some material examples to prove his assertion. But all the material benefits arising out of war and translated into and valued at rupees, annas and pies are but saying the half truth. There are gains and benefits to Assam, India, Europe and the world as a whole which far surpass our imagination. There are blessings of a much higher level and of a more sublime nature than what we all are apt to put a high value on. There are moral and spiritual values of an eternal character that have a direct bearing and give direction and guidance to the ultimate destinies of nations and mankind. True politicians and statesmen only ignore them at the risk of losing their own reputation.

When we dwell on the blessings of this war we cannot be oblivious of the fact that the war has its attendant evils. Evils so serious and exacting that men lose their mental balance and know not whom to curse, man or God.

Therefore, whatever the war brings, blessings or misfortunes the irresistible conclusion to be drawn is the fulfilment of the eternal purpose of the Almighty. His defeats, united resolve, steady progress and coming glorious victory of the United Nations are to be discerned by the whole human race. The practical bearing of this is that

we, who are in the midst of this war realising that we are on the side of those who are fighting for the emancipation of the world, take heart and do the best of what we have at our disposal.

As it is impolitic, foolish and barren to stick to the slogan of "Quit India" and non-co-operation in war efforts which is only helping to give a longer lease of life to Japan's continuous aggressive attitude towards India, so it is unstatesmanlike, effeminate and unmanly on the part of the Government to take shelter behind the handy excuse, *viz.*, "War conditions". May I know if really the whole host of the Cabinet Ministers and the long chain of the administrative officers from top to bottom are so over worked and exhausted that they cannot do more than what they are doing to lift the burden off the shoulders of the toiling masses, whom we can see through our mind's eye swarming below from these charming hill-tops?

I do not like to cite examples to criticise them but request them to ponder, think and ask themselves.

It takes a little pain for the Medical Minister to 'phone to the Civil Surgeon in Shillong to promptly attend to a sick Member of this House or the Supply Minister to sanction enough ration of sugar and salt for the hon. Members who have come to Shillong. But have we all thought what privations and hardships our fellow men, nay, our countrymen are undergoing in the battle front? How many gaping wounds of our gallant soldiers remain unbandaged, which would have been attended to by A. R. P. if they were seen in Shillong or at Gauhati; how many stranded and exhausted soldiers wander about in the thick jungles of Burma who are at the point of death unless a morsel of bread or a cup of water does not reach in time? Are we undergoing such hardships as they are? Our Home Front should be as much exacting as it is exacting on the soldiers in the battle-front. Then only can we say that we are co-operating in war effort. The whole administrative machinery to show an example should work in two shifts. One shift working from morn till eve while the other rests and the other shift works from eve till morning while the other sleeps. So that work will go on in both fronts night and day and that is the only way for quick victory.

It is not enough to make provision in the Budget for this project and that money has no hands and feet of its own to work. It is brain and will and hands of men going hand in hand with money that can do marvels. Assam needs officers who will use money. Assam needs no man who will be used by money.

Sir, I am dealing with the general discussion of the Budget leaving the details to be dealt with in the Cut Motions. By example, I shall deal with two topics and that also in a general way.

I am always saying that cultivators form the bulk of our population and they are the worst victims when calamities come. Our cultivators depend wholly on paddy and rice. They live on this paddy and help others to live by releasing part of their paddy. The whole machinery of Government should not be utilised to compel the cultivators to release this paddy unless by what they release they get adequate return in the shape of supply of all bare necessities of life. The Government need not be satisfied in controlling and constantly lowering the price of paddy. Government has no right to lower the price of paddy if at the same time they cannot put all the necessities of life within easy reach of simple cultivators and in sufficient quantity. They are made to sell their paddy at a low rate and at the same time the only recourse they have is to get a scanty supply of other articles in the black market and that at an exorbitant price. Price of paddy may rise to 100 per cent. more than the normal but despite control over necessary articles, they have to buy them at 500 per cent. more than the former prices. How many of our Legislators representing these unfortunate raiyots speak out on their behalf? Let them not think only of the middle class consumers, most of whom are extracting a very high rate of wages or profit from all kinds of Military work.

Another item I mention is the bad prospect of cultivation next year. The cultivators need plough and draught cattle. The price of bullocks has risen beyond imagination. Government may lower the price of paddy, but if no provision is made to supply

cattle at reasonable rate, how will paddy be produced this coming year? Bullocks to be had at Rs.80 or Rs.100 a pair are difficult to be had in the Assam Valley at less than six to seven hundred rupees, and a pair of good draught bullock in the great livestock market in the Sibsagar District is selling at Rs.1,200 to Rs.1,400. In view of this how can we ask the rice grower to lower the price of paddy? Has Government made any provision for supply of good bullocks and to lower the price of plough-cattle? This is not a theoretical grievance but a very practical one.

Lastly, a few words regarding Post-War Reconstruction. We all agree with Mr. Whittaker when he says we should not think in terms of lakhs but in terms of crores. As I said before for any constructive work, crores will be needed. But have we thought carefully what this implies? 'Post-War' means after war. But do we know when that comes? I sometimes seemed to conclude that Germany is so strangled that she would surrender soon, but Hitler, it looks, will never admit defeat. So the conclusion of European war which seems so near is ever far. No man on earth can predict with any approximation the date of armistice. It may be next month, it may be five years hence, for we have to remember that the tough fighter Japan is still to be dealt with.

Now, what the Government is planning,—laying by money which will be utilised perhaps after five or six years from hence and that from the present revenues of the Province? It is something like telling boarding boys in school "you eat less during these months for at the end of the school year just before you go home you will have a grand feast." Is it prudent to keep the boys half-starved in anticipation of that far-off one day feast? If our Government can assure us that we have plenty to eat and drink and spare now then it is well and good to lay by against that evil day, otherwise not. Some will say how foolish not to be prepared for those hard days. In answer to that may I suggest this? If India is a unity and if Assam is an important member of that united body, then will it not be the duty of the Centre to come to the aid of that wounded, scarred and ravaged member of that body, namely, the Province of Assam in the Post-War days? In a united body if one member suffers all members suffer. Has Assam Government no courage to howl and say that we are the worst sufferers amongst all the provinces of India. Assam has been feeding lakhs over and above its own growing population; it is being pierced through and through; its forests, coal and oil have been exploited to its utmost capacity, and have absorbed, are absorbing and will absorb the shock of panser attacks of Japan, and even after all this when she emerges after war she is afraid to face the future with confidence! Can anyone believe that England, America and the Centre will only be too ready to give a decent burial to Assam and efface the map of Assam from the future geography of the world? I for one am very optimistic and not worried so much of the future as for the present and now.

Moreover we do not know the line of reconstruction that will have to be taken up. What issues will emerge out of war no prophet present here can predict. Present boundaries may change as much as present systems of Government may be completely over-hauled. Why build castles in the air when the very foundation of our building is being rocked?

With these few words, Sir, I would ask our Government to use their thought and imagination in handling the Budgetary provisions.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Budget of a progressive country can never satisfy its people and the Budget estimates of Assam for the year 1944-45 is also not upto our expectation. Our problems are great and our needs and requirements are innumerable. So Rs.4½ crores, budgeted for Assam is a negligible amount specially at a time when whining of bullets are heard near our borders, and aeroplanes are booming over the heads of our people.

Thanks to Providence that Assam did not experience any distressing food scarcity as that of Bengal. Assam forms the eastern front of the Allied belligerent countries and she has to feed lacs of outsiders who are already in her soil. As a result price of commodities went high and the cost of living was increased by leaps and bounds.

Government strived hard to bring down the prices to a considerable extent—they have been successful. In spite of all sorts of difficulties Assam extended her helping hands towards Bengal and fed a large number of refugees that came to Assam in time of distress.

Of all the problems of the Province, food problem is the greatest problem. Assam is mainly an agricultural Province. She has got rice enough but for other imported commodities she is to depend on other provinces. Assam being a terminal Province at the end of congested lines of communication, the supply of goods for daily consumption is smaller per unit of population than elsewhere. Urban areas are getting supplies somehow through the efforts of officers but in rural areas people are experiencing great difficulties. We have heard from some hon. Members that in some areas salt is not available ; in some areas sugar is not available. Difficulties about kerosene is almost in every area and because the distribution system of Government is found defective ; black-marketing is going on freely. Government is prosecuting the culprits, but a few prosecution will not remove the difficulties of the cultivators. Government will be well-advised to formulate a scheme for distribution of kerosene with the representatives of the people.

Through the persistent efforts of Government prices of rice and paddy have gone down but at the same time Government failed to bring down the prices of other commodities in the same proportion. The result is that the cultivators are selling their only commodity at a lower price and are purchasing other necessities of life at higher prices and are getting impoverished daily. During the last rainy season when there was free trade between the provinces, some of the cultivators sold their paddy and rice at a considerable higher price. Government seized the paddy of other cultivators at a price lower than half the price they were getting. They imposed control on export and the cultivators who had surplus paddy in their stores could not sell that paddy. This policy of Government greatly effected the cultivators. Subsequently Government adopted the policy of purchasing rice and paddy themselves in order to give relief to the cultivators. But for the present they have excluded boro paddy and rice from their purchasing scheme. By this policy Government have thrown the boro cultivators to a great deal of difficulties. The cultivators who could not sell their paddy during last rainy season due to the embargo on export, cannot clear their old stock now and prepare for the next crop. They are running short of funds and cannot meet the daily needs of money. Government should take timely note of the situation and make such arrangements so as to remove the difficulties of the boro cultivators.

I mostly represent the boro growing area of the Sunamganj Subdivision and I want to bring out one fact to the notice of Government for taking timely action. The 'bhagaloos' experienced great difficulties last year due to the mismanagement on the part of Government. Many of them, it is alleged, were insulted, harassed and molested by the members of the checking staff. This is why adequate number of 'bhagaloos' did not come from Bengal to this Province at the time of 'Aman' harvest and due to this cultivators had to undergo a loss upto 25 per cent. of their crops. I brought the matter to the notice of the Hon'ble Premier and I am glad that he took prompt action. In the Subdivision of Sunamganj something like 13 annas of paddy cultivation is boro cultivation. If the labourers do not come from Bengal, whole of the crops will remain unharvested and will go under water in the month of April with the fast rising of the rivers causing disaster to the people of the Subdivision. I would request Government most earnestly to take timely action and pass such order as to enable to 'bhagaloos' to enter this Province without any difficulty and to go away with their wages in kind without unnecessary harassments.

Amongst imported goods, cloths, shoes, umbrellas, cooking utensils, drugs and patent medicines, corrugated iron sheets, writing materials, etc., are not available upto the needs of the people. With the measure taken by Government already cloths have almost disappeared from markets. The price of an ordinary piece of cloth is so high that a cultivator cannot purchase a piece of cloth with the price of a maund of paddy that has been fixed by Government. This deserves the serious consideration of Government.

As regards the invective hurled against me and some of my Friends by my Friend Mr. Akshay Kumar Das, I want to speak a few words. Mr. Das judges the world by his own character. What he stated is not correct. The fact is that he wanted to do some business but the agency appointed by Government refused him the middleman's profit.....

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: All false.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Yes, Sir, 'false' and 'stealing' are the patent words with him and I cannot follow my Friend's ideal.

Sir, I want to say a few words about the Education Department. As a result of the last Muslim Education Conference, Government has adopted a policy of introducing female education amongst Muslims and as a preliminary step they have decided to open some girls' school in localities inhabited by Muslims. I welcome this and urge upon Government to spend as much as they can for the cause of the Muslim female education. It is our experience, Sir, that Muslim girls cannot be educated in Government Girls' High Schools as the atmosphere is not congenial to them. I can cite an instance. In the Sylhet Government Girls' High School there are 18 Muslim girls but in a newly started school, I will inform the House, that the enrolment has gone over 50.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member has got five minutes more.

Adjournment

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

After lunch

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Sir, about the appointment of the Principal of the Government Madrassa, I have got a few words to say. For this post Government always selected wrong men. I think the time has come when they should revise their policy. This institution is the only institution of its kind in the Province and so Government should seriously consider my suggestion when they appoint the next Principal. We found that no serious attempt on the part of Government was made so far to improve the educational methods in the Madrassa in the modern light and spirit. I like to request Government to consider this matter also at the time of appointment of the next Principal. About the appointment of Director of Public Instruction I want to speak a few words. The system that is followed by Government is not conducive to the present method of education. Now Government is appointing from the officers of Provincial Educational Service the Director of Public Instruction who after a few months' service as such have to retire, and as a result no such Director of Public Instruction can take up any scheme to work out, because after being appointed they only count the days for their retirement. I would, therefore, ask Government to appoint such an officer as Director of Public Instruction who can at least occupy the position for some years and who can take up the educational matters seriously and work out the plans in the spirit of modern time. Khan Saheb Al-Haj Dewan Ahab Chaudhury the other day pressed for the appointment of a Muslim Director of Public Instruction. I fully support him in this matter. But in appointing a Muslim Director of Public Instruction we should not press for a Muslim alone but a competent Muslim and Government would see whether any competent person is available within the Province or not. If a competent one is not available they may make this post open to Junior officers. Of course, I have got no prejudice against any officer.

A few words, Sir, about Mr. Mookerjee. Yesterday Mr. Mookerjee made some observation about Steel Brothers.....

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: It is a false statement, Sir. I did not make any such statement.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: I mean the day before yesterday. Mr. Mookerjee perhaps knows it full well that the Steel Brothers in miniature as mentioned by him are the agents appointed by Government for purchase of rice and paddy for Government. They might not have

any sympathy for any homeless outsiders, who have come to this Province for seeking fortune. They might not have any sympathy for any vagabond parasite or any refugees or evacuees, but they have given a chance to the cultivators to earn money. Mr. Mookerjee found fault with the actions taken by Government for the people of Baniyachong. All Members of this House have full sympathy with the people of Baniyachong. But Mr. Mookerjee's idea is that Government should take over charge of all household affairs of the people of this village. So far we know, Sir, that Mr. Mookerjee takes pride in this House by speaking for those people, but we find that he does not speak a word about those who sucked the lifeblood of the people of Baniyachong and who virtually rendered them landless and who are mainly responsible for their sad plight. Mr. Mookerjee will be well advised to ask those people to atone for the sins they committed.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I take the first opportunity to request my hon. Friend not to be blood sucker and to give up the business.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. Hon. Mr. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury stated that I wanted to join in his ugly business. I say it is altogether a false statement. I challenge that statement. I do not like to take advantage of the position of an hon. Member of this House. I do say again let Mr. Chaudhury substantiate his statement either to-day or during the current session.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEB: Mr. Speaker, Sir. My hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker wants to find in the Budget a picture of Assam Unlimited. He thinks instead of confining itself to a *post-mortem* examination of years going out the Budget should allow our imagination to look into some years ahead. And from that point of view Mr. Whittaker feels rather pessimistic about the future of this Province's finances. Sir, not only do I fully and whole-heartedly agree with all that my hon. Friend has said about the financial future of this Province, I would like to go a step further and say that in discussing our Budgets, economic considerations are not the only things to be discussed. We want to have from the Budget some idea about how the people are progressing morally and intellectually also. For, Sir, a State's function is not simply to collect as much money from as many sources as it can and then disburse the same over certain stereotyped heads. The State is not a money-making and money-spending machine. Any State worth its name functions only to create and maintain conditions under which its people can develop spiritually, morally and intellectually. And from that point of view, Sir, I confess, I feel extremely disheartened about the future of this Province. Sir, looking into the Revenue receipts as budgeted for the coming year I find next to land revenue and Taxes on Income, our third largest revenue is derived from Excise which is expected to go up to more than 40 lakhs of rupees next year. Our income on this head is going to be increased by 10 lakhs of rupees in comparison with what we are getting for the current year—an increase of more than 33 per cent. in a single year. Sir, in judging an individual's character we not only enquire as to how he spends his earnings, the sources of his income have also got to be scrutinised and, I submit, Sir, the same principle is in no way less applicable in the case of a State as well. If we have a right to condemn an individual for his ill-got money, we have an equal right to condemn a State as well for thriving on revenues derived by debasing its people. An honest and devout Moslem as he is, I know, Sir, our Hon'ble Finance Minister Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri would detest the idea of augmenting his personal income by trading on liquors or intoxicating drugs. But it is strange, Sir, the same gentleman thinks that it is not improper to get money for the State from such a trade. Our Hon'ble Finance Minister is an ardent advocate of Pakistan. I am anxious to know, Sir, how far Islamic laws allow revenues from such sources for State purposes.

Sir, it was after a long and strenuous fight that public opinion in Assam could make the Government agree to the principle of total prohibition so far as opium was concerned, even though that entailed a huge reduction of Provincial revenues. But it appears, things are taking a very serious turn again in this Province.

We are going to get a revenue of 13 lakhs of rupees next year from the sale of hemp and other drugs, which is 6 or 7 lakhs more than what it was 2 or 3 years back, and it is stated in the Budget Memorandum, Sir, that people are taking *ganja* and *charas* in larger quantities. I consulted some eminent authorities on the effect of *ganja* and *charas* on their consumers. Captain F. N. Windsor of the Indian Medical Service in his book "Indian Toxicology" says that majority of lunacy in India is believed to be due to over-indulgence in this drug. I quote a line from an English Medical Journal "After long usage of these drugs a dull state supervenes in which the victim is for all practical purposes an addict and in which ethical and intellectual deterioration and apathy are the outstanding factors."

In Lyon's Medical Jurisprudence for India it is remarked—"it is a matter of popular notoriety, both in Bengal and the North-West Provinces that persons intoxicated with *ganja* and *charas* are liable to commit acts of homicidal violence". Another authority on poisons, Frank Bramford says—"After deeper indulgence of these drugs there is acute mental and physical debility". Then, Sir, Dr. Majumdar of the Campbell Medical School, Calcutta, in his Modern Pharmacology and Therapeutic Guide says—"Frequent habitual indulgences lead to muscular weakness, deterioration of mental capacity and finally insanity."

From all these expert opinions and also from what even laymen know on the matter, I submit, Sir, this hemp is the most mischievous drug with disastrous effect on its consumers. It is very much regrettable, Sir, that when the State's only duty should have been to suppress this evil, it appears, our administrators seem to be rather happy on finding such a fruitful source of revenue.

The Government is going to supply for the benefit of the people of this Province 30 thousand gallons of country spirit monthly in place of the present quota of 15 thousand gallons per month and our revenue on this head is also expected to be increased by several lakhs.

I submit, Sir, moral considerations are of far more consequence in human affairs than they are generally supposed to be. And when the State is after getting money in this way, it is no wonder that people of the country should also be running mad after getting money from any source they can and the total result of all this is that the whole atmosphere is vitiated to-day beyond all imagination. My esteemed Colleague hon. Mr. B. N. Mookerjee referred to ugly rumours about National War Front money. We wonder, Sir, if there is any sphere of activity left to-day which is not already corrupted. People wonder how things could go to such a pass in so short a period. And, Sir, I do ascribe all this to the deviation of the State from moral and Divine laws. I submit the State in Assam to-day is running on a very heavy deficit so far as the moral balance sheet is concerned.

And then, coming to the intellectual assets of the Province, I submit, Sir, we are faring no better. In his Budget Speech the Hon'ble Finance Minister has had to confess as many as on six occasions that administration is suffering in various departments for lack of experienced man power. In the Forest Department, General Administration, Medical Department, Agricultural Department, Transport affairs and, lastly, in the Supply Department, everywhere work is handicapped for want of suitable hands. Sir, the Hon'ble Finance Minister seems to think that inefficiency is to be found in the lower ranks only. Sir, I again refer to Mr. B. N. Mookerjee who was wondering if the Agricultural Department was not being staffed with under-qualified personnel when there was no dearth of suitable candidates only because the Head of that Department did not himself possess the requisite qualification. And Mr. Mookerjee has very rightly pleaded for more brains for that Department. Sir, a very funny incident occurred recently, which has to our astonishment revealed what highly efficient personnel we are indenting from England on fabulous salaries for the benefit of our country. I crave your indulgence, Sir, to read out the relevant portions from the Press Report. This is *Sylhet Chronicle* dated 15th February, 1944. In the Editorial under the heading "Heroes, Neroes, Zeroes" it is stated:—"One Mr. McAlpine, British Specialist Instructor of an Engineering College near Calcutta, and now a member of the Trade Testing Panel, came on a visit to the Surma Valley Technical School on

the 4th of February. The school has its own British Specialist Instructor in one Mr. Mclean Smith. These two British Specialists together set a sum to the trainees as follows:— $14+4\times 2\div 4$. The poor Indian boys naturally made out the result to be 16. But our British Experts flared up. "Look at this bloody answer," said one of them; "This is your Indian way of doing things"; then he showed the boys and the Instructors present there his British and "expert" method of doing sums. " $14+4$ is 18, is not it? Then, 18×2 is 36, isn't it? Then $36\div 4$ is 9. The result is very plain and the method simple. You must begin from the left and go right on. This is how it is taught in Britain and this is our British method." As everybody was looking aghast at these British Experts and wondering at their British method, one poor Instructor, Bidhu Bhusan Sen Gupta had the hardihood to protest against what he thought to be making Arithmetic a war-casualty rather unnecessarily. Down came the British Experts on the poor 'native'; "You twenty-five rupees Instructor, what do you know of Arithmetic and of our British method? Dare you protest against what we Experts say? It is not for nothing that you bloody people are kept in your laces". The Instructor again had the audacity to make some reply and he was at once turned out of the room with many expletives of blood and bloom."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member has only five minutes more.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEB: Then again on the 22nd February the same paper published a letter from a guardian. 'I have gone through your article "Heroes, Neroes and Zeroes" in your last issue with much surprise and astonishment. Naturally enough, as a guardian. I felt curious about further developments in the matter and made enquiries about them. My enquiries, however, reveal more startling things: Messrs. McAlpine and Smith—our redoubtable Experts,—were so sure of their much vaunted British method that none in the Technical School, even by an unerring proof, could convince them of the incorrectness of their method, as well as of their solution. The matter was referred amongst others, to Mr. W. Allsup, Chief Electrical Adviser to Assam Government, who also happens to be the Regional Inspector of Technical Education in Assam. But the knowledge displayed by the gentleman in simple School Arithmetic seems to have some comical elements in it. In reply to the reference, Mr. Allsup is reported to have found the question to be ambiguous. Here is the allegedly relevant portion of his letter:—

$$(14+4)\times 2 \quad 18\times 2$$

$$\quad \quad \quad \frac{\quad}{4} \quad \quad \quad \frac{\quad}{4} = 9.$$

"Obviously $14+4\times 2\div 4$ is to be taken as ————— = 9. But the setting out as quoted and copied by me in the first line above is ambiguous as it might be taken to mean—

$$14+(4\times 2) = \frac{14+8}{4} = \frac{22}{4} = 5\frac{1}{2}$$

Some might even argue it meant

$$14 + \frac{4\times 2}{4} = 14 + \frac{8}{4} = 14+2 = 16.$$

But I consider that far-fetched".

Now Mr. Editor, I have long forgotten my school Arithmetic. I put the sum to some boys of my household reading in the Lower Primary School. They found nothing ambiguous about the sum and without even calling to pen and paper mentally made out the result to be 16. Will you, Mr. Editor, or some one of your numerous readers let me know who is correct—Mr. Allsup or the tiny children of my household? Sir, I bow down to the Britishism of all these gentlemen, but even that should not be stretched to a ludicrous extent. We had it from eminent Scientists so long that while religions could not unite people and when nations had miserably failed to come to any agreement politically or economically there was Science at least which gave a platform for all mankind to unite in complete fellowship. But it appears, Sir, at the hands of these British stalwarts even Science is going to have denominational groupings amongst its votaries. Apart from that, Sir, what we are more vitally

concerned with is that we are spending very very large sums of money for all these gentlemen indented from England. I understand, Sir, Mr. Allsup, our Chief Electrical Adviser, sits with the Public Service Commission to select candidates for his Department. After a display of such an extraordinary knowledge in elementary mathematics by him, will the Government please consider if we should not have this gentleman sent back to his University to have his memory refreshed in these elementary things. Sir, as I was trying to impress upon the hon'ble House, the Province's intellectual stock seems to be very much deteriorating and the prospects are definitely gloomy in this respect also. Sir, the Hon'ble Finance Minister regrets about the deficiencies of the present expenditure in our nation-building departments and hopes to make up for the same in the post-war period. A reserve fund is also being created for that purpose. Sir, nobody knows when the war is going to end or if it is ever going to end at all. And if in the meantime things drift on like this any longer, I am definite, Sir, we shall be heading towards a total collapse sooner than we can imagine. And so, Sir, my most humble submission to the Hon'ble Ministers as also to the hon. Members of this House is—if we are not determined to die an ignominious death let us cry out "Reconstruction now". No use shelving the task till the end of the war for who knows we may be too late by that time. If we are to have any slogan at all let our slogan be "Build now—Reconstruction now". Economically and politically, morally and intellectually we are already more than destitutes. Can we waste a day more? My Friend Mr. Whittaker has thoroughly dealt with the financial aspect of the Budget and I can only add one or two points more. As soon as the war ends, if it ever ends at all, money will be deflated perhaps far more quickly than the way in which it has inflated and with consequent fall of prices of commodities our land revenue realisations will drop down very considerably. Our agricultural income-tax will not yield as much as it is giving now. There are signs of deterioration on this head even now and our income-tax share from the Centre is also bound to go back to the pre-war level. And all these totalled with the 70 lacs as calculated by Mr. Whittaker may mount even up to a crore of rupees though our expenditure may not diminish even by half that amount.

This is a very gloomy picture indeed and I whole-heartedly join with Mr. Whittaker in his request to the Government to approach the Central Authority for increasing the subvention. I do not think, Sir, it would be advisable to impose any sales-tax when the people are already being over-taxed by all the taxing authorities, who, it seems, are in a competition as to who can tax more. We shall have every right to claim, as suggested by Mr. Whittaker, a good percentage of the Excise duty on tea proposed to be levied by the Central Government and realised from this Province. Our finances are already too meagre and miserable as they are bound to be with the cessation of the war; it is high time that the Central Authorities should be moved more vigorously to come to our rescue. Assam's case has for too long gone by default. I expect our Finance Minister to show a little more courage this time. The Central Authorities are budgeting a crore of rupees for industrial research. Will our Minister of Industries see if he could not yet do something in the line with help from the Centre? With these words, I resume my seat.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon'ble Finance Minister deserves commendation for bringing food situation in the political forefront. It is quite true that distressing famine in Bengal had its repercussions on conditions in our Province but by citing instance of Baniyachong I can see that devastation and desolation did not spare our Province too. But is it true that the situation has been successfully tackled? If elaborate preventive measures are not taken up, simply supply of beds in the hospital will not save Baniyachong in the next rainy season. He has boasted that winter crops have yielded a rich harvest and prices of paddy and rice have gone down. But what about the prices of other necessary foodstuffs which the cultivators, the real producers of rice, always require to purchase? Have their prices gone down? The schemes for price control, procurement, supply of free ration, supply of foodstuffs at controlled price, modified rationing and distribution of standard cloth have remained only paper schemes. The control of prices of cloth,

mustard oil and Gur, is a myth. The orders of Government in this respect are never carried out by officers. The cultivators have been buying these articles at the highest rates. They do not require to buy Atta, sugar, Arhar, and Masur dals, the articles which are supplied by Government in low rates. In rural areas they do not get these articles also. In towns attempts have been made for introducing rationing but complete rationing could not be introduced in any of the towns. Black marketing is being continued everywhere.

The procurement scheme is not without its defect. The prices of paddy and rice which went down have begun to rise. The price has become now higher than what it was last year. The Government purchasing agents have been purchasing rice at the rate of Rs.13 or Rs.14 per maund and selling to the Government at the rate of Rs.19 or Rs.20. Is not this a dangerous profiteering at the expense of both the producers and consumers? The cultivators get less and the town purchasers have to purchase at a very high rate through Government rationing and it is also heard some of the agents have been hoarding stocks. They are purchasing paddy and rice from the poor villagers who are compelled to sell, for buying their necessities of life, at the lowest rate. They supply a part to their main agents; a major portion go to hoarding for creating future black market. If such things continue, food crisis will re-appear in full vigour, a distressing famine will visit Assam also. In bordering districts of Bengal, the price, of rice and paddy have risen abnormally even now. Now to avert famine what is to be done? I do not grudge anybody becoming millionaire but that at the expense of the poor cultivators and other consumers, it is simply horrible. Government should fix both the maximum and minimum rates. The purchasing agents should keep regular accounts stating the names of sellers, purchasing sub-agents, quantities purchased and should submit weekly reports to Government. Government has been crying hoarse for making the Grow More Food Scheme a success. Government has been keeping no information about the plight of the Boro cultivators this year. Many Boro lands have remained uncultivated this year owing to non-subsidence of water from Sanir Haor, Halir Haor and Matiani Haor in the Sunamganj Subdivision. It is apprehended that Boro paddy will remain unrecaped this year for shortage of labour. The Bengal Bhagalpur may not come this year for the following reasons:—

- (1) Disease in their districts.
- (2) Many labourers have been engaged in Military projects.
- (3) They were oppressed last year in Shaubari and Kaudebpur ghaties in Sunamganj Subdivision.

Some of them have written that they shall not come if they do not receive any guarantee that they would not be harassed this year also.

I therefore request the Government to try to bring harvesting labourer to the Boro fields this year. A Resolution for the implementation of land settlement has been adopted. From the Budget Speech we find that dereservation has been ordered for, we have not yet known how far Government has proceeded practically. It is to my knowledge that petitions after petitions have been made to Government for bringing under cultivation, some fallow lands but absolutely to no purpose. People of Bhanabil of South Sylhet Subdivision have applied for opening Keorkola Reserve for cultivation. People of Deola village under Police Station Dharampasha have applied for bringing Jogarband Haor under cultivation. I can cite many such instances where Government has failed to supply land to the people. The Embankment and Drainage Department is getting on very slowly. I myself have given lists for many projects. Only two have been taken up. We have got in the Budget Speech that they will be taken up and will be finished before next rainy season. But I know several works have not been taken up even now. As for instance the sluice gate on Khrishnakhal in Halir Haor can never be finished before the rains.

The most unfortunate factor in the matter of Defence is the high-handed action of certain Government officials in attempting to harass persons who have been sincerely working for the real defence of the country through the Grow More Food Scheme and bringing people in the forefront in the matter of Defence. Ridiculous and scandalous attempts have been made to frustrate the real efforts for Defence purposes

at Patharkandi, Dibrugarh and other places. At a meeting convened by the Public Liaison Officer one gentleman addressed the meeting and subsequently his house was subjected to a search. Two other arrests have been made in connection with a party letter received from the Central Committee of the Communist party of India. Refusal of permissions for Kisan meetings and conferences has been coming in an epidemic form. I myself handed over 4 applications to the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet for permission of Kisan meetings to materialise the Grow More Food Scheme, on the 15th February, 1944. No reply was given in time.

Such repressive policy can never be expected from a popular Government specially a Muslim League Government. The present policy of the Muslim League is being focussed by the action of its present influential Members in the Central Assembly. The speeches of Nababzada Liqaul Ali Khan in the adjournment Motion regarding the gag on Sarojini Naidu and the refusal of Railway tickets to Kisan Sabha delegates, have clearly expressed the political conviction of the Muslim League Party. In both occasions Muslim Leaguers voted with the Congress and Progressive Members. So, I appeal to this Muslim League Government to be more prompt in checking high-handedness of officials. The atrocious deeds of some of the officials have been making people out and out anti-Government; the rear of which Mr. Whittaker spoke is cracking. 'Oneness' he spoke in his speech "cannot be affected if certain Government officials who are over zealous to continue their repressive policy towards persons who are really the benefactors of the people of the country, are not definitely checked".

The Police officials are found in several cases to be influenced by Tea garden and Factory Managers. They do unwarranted things to satisfy these influential persons. I can cite instances of Longai Valley Manager and the Manager of the Fenchuganj Steamer Company workshop. In Longai Valley, in Patharkandi, scandalous affairs have taken place. Hon'ble Sir Saadulla the other day spoke about a *kirtan* affair. The story was an invented one. The real meeting took place in the house of one Sukhchand who was arrested and not in the house where according to the Premier, the *kirtan* took place. The Sub-Inspector—I don't know why—was transferred. Mr. Kid the Manager and other interested persons attempted to cancel the transfer. All these show how Police officers worked in conjunction with Tea Garden Manager to harass political workers. The Factory Managers specially the Tea Garden Managers are very vigorous in their attempts to break worker's unions. The Budget has provided for an Assistant Commissioner of Labour. If the owners of the Tea gardens are apathetic to the workings of the union, we cannot understand how the services of the Labour Commissioner would be utilised.

Government has boasted for being economical in so far as the Police Budget is concerned. It is specially the Police officials who have been responsible for failure of Government policy regarding Price control and supply. Government has done well for not arranging to spend much money for the Police Department.

The Co-operative Stores are essentially wanted in rural areas. But the Department is moving very slowly. Petitions after petitions cannot move them. I can cite instances of Kalaya in Sunamganj Subdivision and Chalibunder area of Sylhet town. The supply to the Co-operative Stores are very scanty. Share holders in many places are handicapped as they are to bear heavy transit expenses. Government should either open supply centre in each of the thana areas or bear transit expenses. In the Budget Speech the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Finance deplors the insufficiency of medical officers. But absolutely no plan has been devised for increasing physicians. The present syllabus in the Medical School is hopeless; there should exist specialised department of teaching with shortest course of training. In other provinces definite move have been taken up in this direction but here nothing has yet been done; no attempt has been made to bring more students to school.

Education Budget is hopeless; nothing has been done for bringing more students to schools and colleges by encouraging them with stipends and free studentships. No arrangements have been made for the students getting paper in cheap rates and getting kerosene. There are no arrangements for food rationing in hostels and messes of students.

The Hon'ble Finance Minister has spoken of booming and zooming in the frontier and the Military operations in the front. But it must be admitted the rear is most unguarded. The machinery in charge of Defence do not trust the people, the people do not trust the machinery. It is hopeless. If such things continue and are not mended Burma may be repeated in India. The people's Government cannot put trust on people. The Government clamours that there is shortage of officers in the Supply Department and in the Co-operative Department. What is the utility of spending money on officers. The All Parties Food Committees, if recognised by Government, may take up the work in right earnest. But Government is not moving in that line. Under the present circumstances they cannot move in that direction. If there be a national Government the problem can eventually be solved. The national dead lock may be ended. Until and unless Congress-League unity is forged national Government cannot be achieved. I therefore appeal to all Members of this House to get united.

The Hon'ble Finance Minister has declared about a Post-War Reconstruction Fund. But what is the Post-War Reconstruction Scheme and how the plan can be worked out, he is silent about that. The industrial magnates of India have formulated a post-war industrial plan. They have elaborately chalked out a fifteen years plan for the development of heavy industries. Their attempt is laudable no doubt but they have deferred the important aspect of raising the standard of living of the people. Unless distribution is planned, there will be growing accumulation of wealth at one end and poverty at the other. Another vital principle of planning has been deferred—State ownership (in a free India) and State control of industries. If the above suggestions are taken up by the Assam Post-War Reconstruction Committee the standard of living of people will be perfect.

The Hon'ble Finance Minister has made a glaring announcement regarding allowances to security prisoners. But I can apprise the House that things are not all well in this direction also. There are many who have not been allowed any allowances and amongst those who have been granted allowances there are many who are getting irregular remittances. I can cite two instances.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order order.

Mr. BINODE KUMAR J. SARWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not much satisfied with the Budget as has been presented before us. As a labour representative it is my duty to look to the interests of the poor labourers inside and outside the Tea garden areas. The condition of these poor labourers still remains to be improved. They are still remaining in their ignorance and vice, and there are a very few people who think about them to improve their condition. Thanks to the Indian Tea Association that they have planter masters who look to the welfare of the labourers living inside the Tea garden areas. But the labourers who have left the Tea gardens and settled down in the villages of Assam as cultivators have very few to look after them or to improve their condition morally, physically and economically. They are educationally terribly backward. I pray that the Government would see that they get proper education. The Education Department should also bear in mind that these people need their attention most.

There are more than half a million of people who have settled down permanently in the villages of Assam and made Assam their home. Many of these people have no sufficient land for their cultivation and they cultivate on hire other people's land.

Some of these poor cultivators had also to give up their cultivable lands when these were requisitioned for Military purposes. I hope the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Revenue and Forests will kindly help these poor landless people whenever they apply for some waste lands or reserved forest lands for their cultivation.

In the interior rural areas the rural uplift work should be carried on as much as possible. The villages in the interior need more schools, roads, wells and hospitals. By providing these things, Sir, the condition of these poor people will be greatly improved.

As regards the food situation, the scarcity of food supply is still felt in Darrang District from where I come. When the Hon'ble Premier who is also the Supply Minister addressed this House in last November, and when I heard his speech, I anticipated that the poor people will be relieved from paying high price for paddy and rice when

the harvest is in. But I am sorry to find that in Darrang District rice is selling at Rs.20 per maund or two seers a rupee just like Shillong, and mustard oil at Re.1-12-0 or Rs.2 per seer, and so also the prices of other things are still high.

The prices of food-stuffs and other materials are so high that even the Hon'ble Ministers must be feeling the pinch of them not to speak of the poor hon. Members of this House. We find great difficulty to manage with Rs.100 per month, as we do not get even the rice concession as the Government servants are getting. I would request the Government to take immediate steps to increase the salaries of the Members in this abnormal time.

Before closing my short speech, I thank the Hon'ble Finance Minister for his Budget he has prepared for us in this war time. I also thank the Labour Minister for all what he has been doing for the poor labourers.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I attended the House while the general discussion of the Budget was going on. At the very outset, I should thank the Hon'ble Finance Minister for his frankness in making admissions in his introductory Budget Speech the defects of his Government. I have carefully gone through his Speech and I have found that here and there he did not try to conceal certain facts which vitally affects our people. Now, if I am to accept the Budget as prepared and presented before the House, I must not do it without any criticism. There are occasions where the Hon'ble Finance Minister could not impress the hon. Members of the Legislature by the policy he or his Government has tried to adopt. I take first the food stuff scheme. This also seriously involves the financial question of the Province. Sir, from the criticisms which up till now have been made by different Members of the House, it will be seen that the policy and the works of the Government could not fully satisfy the people of the soil. The food policy which this Government has taken up, I understand, is in pursuance of the policy of the Central Government. Whenever we raise an objection with regard to the food question, we hear that this is absolutely regulated and controlled by the Central Government. But here I would urge upon the Government that instead of being a tool in the hands of the Central Government they should exert themselves a bit and look to the interests of the people of the soil and if necessary they should raise protests.

Now as regards the other aspects, I find the Hon'ble Minister has been frank enough to admit that various Departments of Government are now handicapped for want of trained and suitable men. This has very badly been criticised by our Friend Babu Nirendra Nath Dev. When he admits that their administration is not quite upto the mark for want of suitable men, why does he not see to the comfort and crying needs of the officers who are now already in Government employ and who are not properly paid? I hear hoarse cry from the ill-paid and low-paid officers that they cannot make their two ends meet. If that is the case, if Government are conscious that poorly paid officers are not in a position during these abnormal days to make their two ends meet, how can they expect better and efficient work from them? I hear complaints from many quarters about corruption prevailing amongst Government officers. A funny instance I may cite here. A police constable was telling me that they have been and are being forced to take recourse to illegal means for their livelihood as the small pay they get is too inadequate to meet the needs of their families. He urged how Government can expect efficient and honest work from officers when they know that the pay of a constable is not quite enough for his own maintenance, not to speak of one's family members. In this connection I would urge upon Government that in order to get a better, efficient and honest work from their employees they may see that their ill-paid officers may get better salaries.

Now the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has spoken a great deal about the Medical Department. He has said that the Medical and Public Health Departments are in dearth of qualified men and due to this reason some of the diseases broken out in different parts of the Province could not be controlled. It is a matter which requires serious consideration of the House. The affairs of Baniachong alone has been agitating the minds of the hon. Members of this House for some time past. In connection with the Baniachong affair, may I point out to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of

Medical whether for the control of the disease, which is a devastating one in nature, Government has thought it wise to investigate into the root of the disease, which is sweeping away the people of Baniachong? I find in paper, in the *Jugantar* and in the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* where a vivid picture has been given regarding the solution of disease at Baniachong. One doctor who serves under the Sunamganj Local Board, named Maulavi Abul Hussain, has been trying to diagnose the disease. He took out a slide, sent it to Dacca Mitford Medical School and also to Dr. Sundari Mohan Das at Calcutta. After examination it was found that this is not ordinary malaria. They call it as Celibrosplinal malaria.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member has got only 5 minutes.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : Very well, Sir. This doctor also referred the matter to Government to be taken up immediately by experts for solution but it is not known to us whether up till now anything has been done by Government towards the solution of curing this fell disease. I would particularly ask the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Medical to take proper measure for diagnosing and controlling the disease.

Then let me come to some other question of the day that is regarding supply and controlled goods of the Province. Certain essential commodities have been controlled by Government and the moment it was published that the prices of these articles had been controlled, they disappeared from the market. My point is that before Government is assured about their position with regard to the procurement of the goods, is it wise on their part to control the prices of the articles? Very recently they had tried to control the price of cloth and since then cloths have disappeared from the market; and when people are in dire need of buying cloth they are unable to find it. They are to go to black market and obtain it at higher price. Before controlling the price of a particular commodity the Government must be sure about the availability of that commodity.

As regards Agricultural Department, while criticising it, I may say that in one place I find that the Hon'ble Finance Minister said that they have adopted a scheme under the Grow More Food Campaign whereby settling formerly reserved lands under the system called "Chuktibhagi system" in Sylhet. May I enquire, Sir, when he speaks of Sylhet does he include Habiganj? If so, I may tell him that not even an acre of land has been taken under that scheme there.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member has exceeded his time limit.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : Only one sentence more, Sir, and I will finish.

In the name of defence many villages in the District of Sylhet have been requisitioned or acquired. In some parts lands have been acquired, in some parts, I hear, lands have been requisitioned. In both these cases people naturally expected that they would be paid adequately of the loss they have sustained but it is a very pitiable matter that no action has yet been taken. Even within 24 hours some of the villages had to be vacated which were required for landing ground. But up till now neither the people have been paid for removal of their houses, which they will have to re-construct at a very enormous cost nor even for the total damage of their property. In spite of repeated prayer to the Government nothing has been done to them. In this connection I put several Questions as to whether people should not be paid adequately for their loss at an early time. I find that those Questions have been replied.

As regards the Government policy of procurement of paddy and rice, I heard several criticisms have been hurled at those who have been appointed as agents. It is in the minds of some of the hon. Members that those who have been appointed as agents.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member has spoken many more sentences than one, he proposed to speak a few minutes ago (laughter).

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : I am finishing, Sir. In the minds of some of my Friends particularly Mr. Das, I find, that there is an apprehension. They think that those who were loud in their voice in criticising the Government once, have now been

given a chance to bargain. I can tell my Friend in his face that those persons who were once loud in their voice in criticising some actions of the Government will remain ever so..... It is no price for them..... Mr. Das is a disgruntled person and every thing is possible on his part to utter either sense or nonsense. He approached me for a share in the Agency which I refused. His statement clearly shows the stuff which he comes of.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Order, order. Hon. Member should resume his seat.

Maulavi JAHANUDDIN AHMED : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the income side I like to mention about the share of the Assam Government on jute duties. For two years, i.e., for 1940-41 and 1941-42 we were getting increased amounts of our share of taxes on jute but there was sharp decrease of our income in 1942-43 from 12½ lakhs to 9 lakhs. Again it came up to normal, i.e., to 12 lakhs 30 thousand. There is every possibility of its very sharp decrease this year if the Government do not take proper steps for it. I like to mention the fact that very large quantities of jute are being exported to Bengal at Sharshabari from the neighbouring Districts of Assam by boats for having better price by the traders. The Sharshabari jute is considered by the traders to be the best quality of jute.

Though these large quantities of jute are the actual yield of Assam, the benefit of its income goes to Bengal as these jutes are entered in the account of Bengal. I mentioned about this fact long ago in my Budget speech but to no effect. I don't think that in the coming year the cultivation of jute will be much due to Grow More Food Campaign and the yield of jute will be certainly less. Over and above this fact, due to shortage of booking space in Railway and Steamer, almost all the jute from the Assam Valley is going to be sent by the traders by boats and it will be very easy for them to dispose of the jute as Bengal's Sharshabari jute and this Government is going to lose the income out of it as jute duty and I apprehend that our income as jute duty may go down from 12½ lakhs to half of that amount. So I like to suggest that the Government should be careful to have a check on export of jute by boat from the Assam Valley. The Government need not incur extra expenditure for it. The paddy preventive staff at Dhubri will be able to check it and have an account of the quantities of jute thus exported from the Assam Valley. I hope the Government will take immediate steps in the matter so that our income on jute duty may not suffer.

I like to mention here of another forest produce of Assam which is not being taken care of. This is the Nageswer seeds of Assam. Some part of Assam is full of Nageswer trees and the seeds of it can be had in abundance. The seeds of Nageswer have got in it very high percentage of oil and it can be used as very cheap oil with paints and also for the manufacture of soap in the soap industry. At one time the Government of Assam took the matter in hand and I don't know why the Government has given it up. The oil of Nageswer has got a very high saponification value and once we can utilise this oil for the soap industry we shall not have to look to other province for oil for the manufacture of soap. The soap industry in Assam is in the infant stage and we must look to the industry whether we can produce soap from this product of our own resources at a less cost.

I had personal discussion with the soap instructor about the Nageswer oil. He has personally made the experiments with it about the manufacture of soap from it. There remains a colouring matter in the soap made out of it and the colouring matter goes to the cloth as fast-yellow colour when the cloths are washed with it. The colouring matter of the soap is to be removed. The instructor has been able to remove the colouring matter with an oxidising agent from the oil. But to remove the same on an industrially large scale further experiments are required so that the cost may not be very high to use the same on a commercial purpose. Once the Government be successful in this experiment this natural forest produce of Assam will not be a useless thing but it will produce a very high amount, not only as forest revenue but also through soap industry. And the industry of soap will be able to compete not only in India but also outside India.

But what I think of its utility at present stage before the experiment, is that it can be used as the substitute for wood oil and also with ordinary paints for roof. This oil can be utilised as substitute for kerosene oil as some of the villagers are burning mustard oil for want of kerosene oil. This will save the Government to some extent from the trouble of kerosene oil. And much kerosene can be saved when petrol is so much needed for war purpose and this is the time to push on this oil as it is a very cheap product.

Mr. Whittaker has pointed out in his Budget speech that this Government should be up and doing for a share on excise duty on tea. I like to add here that the Government should also try for a share on the taxes of betel-nut and tobacco. This Government should submit to the Centre the case of Assam without further delay like the share of jute and at least 50 per cent. of the income should come to Assam.

Now, Sir, I like to say a few words on the expenditure side. The very first thing we are anxious about is the education of our children. But before discussing the Budget I cannot but mention here a few facts which Mr. Whittaker has already mentioned. It is really surprising that all education buildings whether for University, Secondary or Primary education have been occupied and are being occupied by the Military and also sometimes by the Government on one pretext or another. I shall mention here the case of Bharat Memorial Assamese Lower Primary School at Dhubri. It is the only Assamese Lower Primary School in the town and this Government has taken over this school for supply office. I hope that this Government will rectify themselves first and take immediate steps to release the buildings.

It is really shame on the part of the British Government and the American Allies that on the 5th year of the war they are still occupying the only nation building institutions of the Assamese people. It is a further disgrace when we find the taking over of the weaving institute at Gauhati. The Government issued a circular that no educational building will be requisitioned, sometime ago. But what is the effect. I do not know whether the Military authorities are the requisitioning authorities. If not, the Government should send a very strong protest to the British Parliament and also to the United States of America through the Centre. It is really shameful and most disgraceful on the part of a nation, who talks so high of peace and post war reconstruction of the world. Is this the way that they wish to draw the sympathy of our people? I think they are mistaken here. I hope the Government will be pleased to send the strongest protest to the British Government and to the United States of America for immediate release of all the nation building institutions. If our Allies wish to win the war against the enemies they must spend for the comfort of their armies and they have no right to occupy and destroy the cultural and the nation building institutions of a country who are helping the war effort in every possible way. We the Assamese people are surely not going to have any permanent interest in Burma and China, we can help and are helping the Allies in every possible way. This House has not forgotten about the contribution of one lac of rupees which our Hon'ble Premier made from the revenues of Assam without even consulting this House, to the British Government at a time when you possibly remember the condition of the British Isle. And now is this the return of that one lac of rupees that we paid to the British Government. I warn the British Government and the Allies that they should try to avoid creating displeasure of a country like this, as there is a limit to everything. The authority should be ashamed of what they have done and so they should try to rectify it as early as possible.

There are many things to be said about the education Budget and it will not be possible to discuss this in details within such a limited time. The only thing I like to say is that the money allotted for grant-in-aid to the Secondary Schools is very very small. These aided schools are going to die unless the Government come forward with handsome grants to these institutions, at least temporarily, during the period of the war. No teachers of these schools can now meet the bare expenses of their lives, not to speak of their families.

Then I like to say a few words about the Primary education. In the revised Budget Estimate for the year 1943-44, *i.e.*, for the current year, the grant to Local Bodies for Primary Schools is Rs.11,72,739, but in the Budget Estimate for 1944-45 the grant is

only Rs.11,01,775. It is less by Rs.71,000 than the current year's allotment. I do not know how the Government is going to give the Local Bodies 60 per cent. more grant for the increase of pay of the unfortunate Primary School teachers, and it is up to the Government to decide.

Now I like to come to Public Works Department. The District of Goalpara has always been unfortunate in this respect. We have no good roads and we were crying and howling in this floor of the House but to no effect. Mr. Amjad Ali cried and howled many a time, but no Haripani bridge came out after all. I myself mentioned in this floor of the House times without number for connecting the Dhubri-Bilashipara Road to Bongaigaon-Jogighopa Road *via* Chapor at North Salmara and then to have a steam ferry from Jogighopa to Goalpara. I have personally spoken to the Hon'ble Premier about the advantage of this road. If this road is improved there will be good road connection throughout the year from Dhubri to Shillong, the capital of the Province, *via* Goalpara town. We wanted to have road connection with the capital of our Province, but no heed was paid by the Government about it. The present war with Japan has found this road most useful for Military purpose and the authority has improved it with permanent bridges over all the big and small rivers. The great Haripani bridge has now been permanently constructed within a year which Mr. Amjad Ali could not get it done so within 5 years of his Assembly life.

But though the roads have been improved to some extent there are little facilities of transport of goods and civil population. The Goalpara-Dhubri steam ferry has been taken away by the Military authority for war purpose. The public of Goalpara brought a crude oil launch to run between Goalpara and Dhubri and that has also been taken away by the Military authorities. I do not know how the civil population can be supplied with the most essential needs of their lives. The Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara could not send salt from Dhubri town to the interiors of the District, and even to the town of Goalpara for want of transport. The public of the interior are not having salt even at Re.1 per seer. I have heard people purchasing salt at Re.1-4-0 per seer in the interior of the District. Though the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara wired to the Government of Assam to give him some transport vehicles up till now nothing has been done. It is in a most deplorable condition of our transport of foodstuffs in the District of Goalpara. No Railway booking is available without some payment by the backdoor and I need not say much about it. It is now an open secret and I hope every Member of this House is well aware of it. The District of Goalpara is totally deprived of any transport facilities for carrying civil goods.

Another word and I finish and that is about the distribution of whole-sale and retail shops for controlled articles. The Government must make it a point that at least 90 per cent. of these shops must be allotted to the local people of this Province and first and foremost preference should be given to the co-operative stores. There are less chances of these stores doing black marketing as the stores are required to give cash memo. for the articles sold. There are some difficulties about the retail shopkeepers and that is with regard to the distance of the retail shops from the wholesaler. In such cases the retail shopkeepers are to pay the cost of transport from 8 annas to Re.1 per maund and they cannot make any profit if they do not take to black-marketing. The Government should either increase the rate of selling price at such places or the Government should make provisions for the transport cost of these retail shopkeepers. Unless this is done no co-operative stores in the interior can exist as they are not in a favoured position to do black marketing and I hope Government should take immediate steps in this matter and with these few words, I resume my seat.

Khan Sahab Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN: Sir, as the time is too short I must try to speak a few points that are agitating my mind. The House must have been aware that in the land settlement policy there is one scheme which is popularly known as Colonisation Scheme. My hon. Friend Mr. Deuri brought certain unfounded allegations and charges against certain immigrant families having

Settlement of lands within the colonisation area at Pamila-ati, Mauza Jorabahi, in the District of Nowgong. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not make an honest attempt to meet these charges. Sir, as many as some 65 immigrant families were allowed settlement on payment to the extent of Rupees 650 in the year 1940, in that Pamila-ati area that was brought within the colonisation scheme even some ten years ago. That particular village is entirely low lying and is subject to annual inundation and so the immigrants did not so long care to go and take up lands in such an area. However, for scarcity of arable land subsequently, in the year 1940 as many as 65 colonists, as I have already spoken, did go there and took settlement, and started cultivation. In the mean while, some 350 Mikirs, Lalungs and Kacharis headed by the *gaonburas* came there and not only broke down the houses of the immigrant colonists but also set fire to most of them and turned the colonists out of their homesteads and holdings as well. The whole matter was reported to the police and a prolonged investigation justified submission of a charge against certain Mikir rioters and a case under section 147 had been registered. After a prolonged time for one year some of the Mikirs have been sentenced to pay heavy fines. Then, Sir, what happened to the colonists was that they were ousted from their lands. The Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong awaited the result of the pending criminal case and after the expiry of one year when the case ended in conviction, there was some action taken for restoration of those immigrant colonists in the lands out of which they had been so relentlessly ousted. The Deputy Commissioner accorded the most sympathetic treatment to those trespassers in that they were allowed to harvest the paddy crop that they raised in those lands. Sir, a particular date was fixed—I mean the 10th February—for evicting the tribal trespassers. The Deputy Commissioner with the Colonisation Officer proceeded to the site and finding that they were not quite ready to remove their belongings in a day, showed them further sympathy and allowed them again six day's time to remove their paddy and other things. Then, again, Sir, on the 16th February the Deputy Commissioner proceeded to the place with a dozen of armed police. But the trespassers having got the scent of the arrival of the police force had already decamped and left their houses closed. In circumstances like these, the Deputy Commissioner thought fit to pull down the houses and to effect the eviction. Now, Sir, my hon. Friend was most eloquent in describing the immigrant colonists as very *zoolumbaz*. Sir, the colonisation area was brought under the scheme only 10 years back and the colony's land was settled on payment of a premium by the colonists, that is to say, the land was purchased from Government. Now, Sir, is it any fault on the part of the immigrant colonists or on the part of the tribal trespassers? The Deputy Commissioner was most sympathetic towards the tribal trespassers in so far as he allowed them one year's time in waiting for the result of the criminal case and, further more, sufficient time for harvesting their paddy crop. Sir, I do not understand the logic behind the argument that the Deputy Commissioner was unsympathetic towards the tribal people. Then, Sir, he has said that the tribal people were removed from Mairabari in the Bokoni Mauza. So far as I gather, the tribal people held periodic Pattas near about Mairabari and a large number of them selling their land to the immigrant people by executing registered sale deeds, had gone far far away to the farthest extremity to get waste land on gratis. Sir, I challenge my hon. Friend Mr. Deuri and most emphatically that he has brought into this House certain allegations and charges which are not only unfounded but are most distorted, with the evident idea that he would get more reserves against the immigrants.

Then, Sir, my hon. Friend Sriyut Rabi Chandra Kachari has also brought similar allegations against the immigrants as being very *zoolumbaz*. But, Sir, can he cite any specific instance in which immigrants have been evicted as a result of institution of any case brought by his tribal people? I must challenge him also on that point. We do not get specific materials to justify the allegations. My hon. Friend has brought some unfounded allegations in the House against the immigrants as being *zoolumbaz*. Sir, there must be some limit to such allegations and charges.

Then, Sir, I have got some more grievances to be brought to the notice of the Government. In Nowgong there is a Sub-Registration office for the whole of the district and the documents presented for registration are so voluminous that two Sub-

Registrars attached to the same very registration office cannot cope with the heavy rush of works and people coming in connexion with such documents have to spend for over two or three days subsequently with great personal discomfort and unnecessary expenditure in the headquarters and in view of this I would urge Government to open three Sub-Registration offices near Dabaka, in the headquarters and another somewhere at Mairabari to relieve the people as well as for the smooth administration of the Registration Department.

Then Sir, the Sadr Circle Office has also some reputation of voluminous works. The mutation cases along with other miscellaneous cases have multiplied and that one Sub-Deputy Collector cannot cope with the work.

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

Khan Sahib Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN : Another point as to the Supply, Sir. Here also one Sub-Deputy Collector is not sufficient. I would urge the concerning authorities to allow two Sub-Deputy Collectors for the smooth administration of the circle.

Again Sir, as regards the distribution of standard cloth it is not also an easy job. I have noticed that Rupahi Hat is the biggest Hat in the district of Nowgong. The Supply Officer goes on the Hat days to sell standard cloth and Sir, he opens the standard cloth for sale in a godown of a particular gentleman who has got a shop in the Hat. Thousands of people gather together and raise clamour for standard cloth. The system of distribution of standard cloth by way of sale is a dangerous one. Is it possible for one man to push his way to the shop, Sir? I would, therefore, ask the concerning authorities to make arrangements with the Mouzadars, of course, with a Committee constituted locally for the distribution of such standard cloth, otherwise the poor people for whom these standard cloths have been meant will not get the benefit of the measure.

As regards sugar, Sir, I want to speak a few words. That some 500 bags of sugar have been condemned as unfit for human consumption. After disposing of these bags in their own way, they will very soon come here for the writing off the huge sums of money. People at large do not get sugar and thousands of maunds of sugar are being wasted like this. I would draw the pointed attention of the Government to this also. I have lots of grievances and I will ventilate those during the discussion of cut Motions. With these words I resume my seat.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Babu Sanat Kumar Ahir and then Mr Chaudhuri.

Babu SANAT KUMAR AHIR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, আছ দুদিন যাবৎ ১৯৪৪/৪৫ সালের বাজেট আলোচনা হইতেছে, কিন্তু এই আলোচনার বিশেষ কোন সাধকতা আছে বলিয়া মনে হয় না কারণ বৎসরের শেষে বাজেটের অবস্থা যে কি দাঁড়াইবে, আজ আমরা সে কথা বলিতে পারি না। তবে একথা আমি বলিতে পারি যে বাজেটের আলোচনা ও সমালোচনা যতই করুন না কেন এই বাজেটের পরিবর্তন বা পরিবর্ধনের কোন আশা ভরসা নাই। সুতরাং এসব সমালোচনা অরণ্যে রোদন ছাড়া আর কিছুই নয়। তবে যখন দেখিতেছি যে আমার মাননীয় সহকর্মী মিষ্টার মুখার্জী, মিষ্টার ছইটেকার প্রমুখ মেম্বারগণ ও সমস্ত জানিয়া গুনিয়াও বাজেট আলোচনার অংশ গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন তখন “মহাজন গতঃ তেন সঃ পত্ন্য” এই বাক্য স্মরণ করিয়া আমিও কিছু বলিবার জন্য সাহস করিয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছি।

আসামের বাজেট বাহাকে বলা হচ্ছে, সোটা আসামের বাজেট নয়, কারণ আসামের মেরুদণ্ড কৃষক ও মজুর ভাইদের দুরবস্থা দূর করিবার কোন ব্যবস্থাই এই বাজেটে করা হয় নাই। কোন দিনই দীন দুঃখী মজুরদের উপর এই গভর্ণমেন্টের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ হয় নাই। আর থাকিবেই বা কি করিয়া ভাঙ্গিয়া না বলিলেও সকলেই বুঝিতে পারিবেন আশা রাখি। এই মজুরদের রক্ত দ্বারা কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার, আসাম সরকার, সাদা কোম্পানী ও কয়েকটি আমার বর্ণের কোম্পানী বেশ ভাল ভাবেই পুষ্টিলাভ করিতেছেন। (hear, hear). কিন্তু কোন সরকারই তাহাদের জন্য ভাল কিছু করিবার অবসর বা সুযোগ পাইতেছেন না। কিন্তু যখন যে দিকে জল পড়িতেছে, সেই দিকেই ছাতা ধরিবার জন্য সব আগেই এই মজুরদের দরকার হইতেছে। ইহারা যেন সরকার ও ধনিক বনিকদের সুখ সুবিধা দিবার জন্য নিজেদের জীবন উৎসর্গ করিয়াই জন্ম গ্রহণ করিয়াছে। কাগজে কলমে I.T.A.

মজুরদের অনেক রকম সুবিধা দিবার ব্যবস্থা করেন কিন্তু সব সময় এবং সকল বাগানে তাহা ঠিকমত চালান হয় না। চা বাগানের মজুরগণ টাকায় ৮ সের চাউল পাইবার কথা। সকল বাগানে সকল মজুরেরা তাহা ফলতঃ পায় কি না মন্ত্রী মহোদয়গণ তাহার খবর রাখেন কি? অনেক বাগানেই এই ব্যবস্থা অনুসারে কাজ হয় না। Rationing যাহাতে কার্য্যকারী হয় তাহার তদ্বাবধান গভর্ণমেন্টকে করিতে হইবে। কর্মচারীগণ কি ভাবে কাজ করেন তাহার সকল সময়েই অনুসন্ধান রাখা প্রয়োজন। তাহা না হইলে মজুরগণের আর্থিক অবস্থা ক্রমশঃই খারাপ হইতে থাকিবে। আর একটি মজুর ইউনিয়ন সম্বন্ধে চা বাগানেরও অন্যান্য মালিকগণ একে বারে খড়গহস্ত—ইউনিয়নগুলি ভাঙ্গিয়া দিবার জন্য সর্ব্বত্র ঘড়ঘড় করিয়া থাকেন। গভর্ণমেন্ট এই ঘড়ঘড়ের চক্রে পড়িয়া মালিকদের পক্ষভুক্ত হইয়া পড়েন যেমন পাথারকান্দি, লক্ষাই ভেলির মালিকগণ করিতেছেন। মাননীয় রায় মহাশয় ঐ বিষয়ে বলিয়াছেন। মালিকগণ, ফেঞ্চুগঞ্জ ইউনিয়ন ভাঙ্গিয়া দিবার জন্য অনেক চেষ্টা করিতেছেন। ইউনিয়নে যোগ দেওয়ার দরুণ অনেক মজুর নির্যাতিত ও প্রহৃত হইয়াছেন। ম্যানেজার কেপেডি সাহেব রসিদ আলীকে মারিয়াছেন, প্রভাকরকে বরখাস্ত করিয়াছেন কারণ তাহার ইউনিয়ন ছাড়িতে অসম্মত হইয়াছিল। গভর্ণমেন্ট কেন এই ব্যাপারে কোন তদন্ত করেন নাই। কেবল কথায় যদি গভর্ণমেন্ট বলেন যে আমরা শ্রমিকদের জন্য সবকিছু করিতেছি, তাহাতে আমরা সন্তুষ্ট হইবনা, আমরা কৃষক শ্রমিকদের প্রতি-নিবিগণ যাহা সভার নিকট উপস্থিত করি তাহা তদন্ত করিয়া দুষ্টক তকারিগণকে যদি সাজা দেন তবে আমরা বুঝিব যে গভর্ণমেন্ট শ্রমিকদের উপকারী বন্ধু—আমরা লক্ষ লক্ষ মজুরগণ গভর্ণমেন্টকে দুহাত তুলিয়া আশীর্ব্বাদ করিব। তাহা হউক তবুও বাগানের মালিকেরা কিছু দেন, কিন্তু সরকার ইহাদের জন্য কি করিতেছেন?

Agricultural Income-tax রূপে গভর্ণমেন্টও অনেক টাকা পান। এই টাকা হইতে তাহার একটা নির্দিষ্ট অংশ চা বাগান মজুরদের উন্নতির জন্য খরচ করিতে কুণ্ঠিত কেন? আইন পাশ করিবার সময়েও একথা উঠিয়াছিল এবং তখনকার সরকার ভরসাও দিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু আজ কোথায় সেসব আসা ভরসা। সরকার ভবিষ্যতে ইহাদের দিকে একটু কৃপাদৃষ্টি দিলে ধর্ম্মে পতিত হইবেন বলিয়া মনে করিনা। তবে জানিনা বড়দের ধর্ম্ম আলাদাকি না। মানুষ আশায় বাচিয়া থাকে দেখি কি হয়। এক এক সময় মনে হয় প্রধান মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের উপদেশ অনুযায়ী ভাগ্যের উপর সব ছাড়িয়া বসিয়া থাকি; কিন্তু যখন দেখি যে তিনি নিজেই আবার চুপ করিয়া বসিয়া নাথাকিয়া পাঁচ রকম চেষ্টা করিতেছেন এবং মিষ্টার মুখার্জির কথাও মনে হয় যে তিনি বলিয়াছিলেন “যুমন্ত সিংহের মুখে হরিণ নিজে আসিয়া প্রবেশ করেণা” তখন বিপাকে পড়ি। শেষে দেখি যে ভাগ্যের উপর নির্ভর নাকরিয়া পুরুষকারের উপর নির্ভর করাই ভাল, তখন মিষ্টার মুখার্জির কথামত শিকারে বাহির হইতে ইচ্ছা হয়। ইহার উপর গত বার্ষিক সঙ্ক্ষে বাস করিতে হইলে Howl করিতে শিখিতে হইবে, তখন আজ সাহস করিয়া Howl করিতেই উঠিয়া পড়িলাম। সঙ্ক্ষে সঙ্ক্ষে কিন্তু মিষ্টার হুইটেকার যে মাঝে মাঝে দাঁত দেখাইবার কথা বলিয়াছিলেন তাহাও মনে পড়ে (Laughter) তবে দুর্ভাগ্যবশতঃ কে দাঁত দেখাইবে তাহা বুঝিতে পারি নাই। দাঁত কি সরকার দেখাইবেন না আমি দেখাইব? যদি আমাকে দেখাইতে হয় তবে নিরুপায়। কারণ সে দাঁত আমার বা যাহাদিগকে আমি represent করি তাহাদের নাই। আর যদি গভর্ণমেন্টের দেখাইবার কথা হয় তবে সানুনয়ে প্রার্থনা করি যেন অন্ততঃ আজকের জন্য আমাকে না দেখান কারণ দাঁত দেখাইবার দরকার করেনা—নামেই ভয়ে প্রাণ খাঁচা ছাড়া হইবার উপক্রম হইয়া থাকে।

দেশের লোকের সাদা রক্ত বাহির হইতেছে; সুতরাং নুতন ট্যাক্স না বসানই ভাল। Grow More Food Campaign বালাইয়া বহুটাকা ব্যয় করা হইতেছে। আমার মতে ইহা সম্পূর্ণ ব্যর্থ হইতেছে। যাহারা ইহার সফলতার দাবী করেন তাহাদের লজ্জা আছে কিনা জানিনা।

তাহারপর Civil Supply। ইহাকে বলে কাণা ছেলে। নাম পদ্যলোচন। সমস্ত Civil population আজ না খাইয়া পেটে পাথর বাঁধিয়া পড়িয়া আছে—আর এদিকে civil supply করিতেছেন মিলিটারীদের খাবার যোগাড়। অন্যদিকে civil population উলঙ্গ হইয়া হা অনু করিয়া চিৎকার করিতেছে। দেশেরলোক আমরা রাস্তায় বাহির হইলে চোর, চোর বলিয়া গালদিয়া যেন গায়ে ধাক্কা না মারে সেদিকে আমাদের বিশেষ ভাবে সজাগ হওয়া দরকার (hear, hear)।

যাহা হউক আজ আমি আর বেশী সময় লইবনা, লইবার কমতাও নাই—অজ্ঞেয় বস্তুর মধ্যে প্রবেশ নিষেধ; কারণ এবারের বাজেটের নমুনাই আলাদা। খালি মোটা চিকার ব্যাপার, ভিতরে চুকবার উপায় নাই (*hear, hear*) তবে আজীবন যাতা করিয়া আসিতেছি তাহারই পুণরাভিনয় করিয়া অর্থাৎ আর একদফা নজর ভাইদের উন্মত্তির জন্য প্রকৃত কিছু কবিতার খাৰ্চনা জানাইয়া আমার বক্তব্য শেষ করিতেছি। আনাদের যেন জগতেরলোকে বকক উকক না বলে; (*hear, hear*).

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker; Sir, I know very well that hard words do not break stones and I do not usually indulge in them—(Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee—Since when?) To-day I shall refrain from using them at all because the strategic position in this House of the enemies of the Opposition, namely, the Ministry, is in a state of complete encirclement. They have been attacked from the front, they have been attacked from the sides, they have been attacked and vigorously attacked from the rear, by their own supporters. One thing I should make clear that however much we welcome criticisms from the supporters of the Ministry against the Ministry itself we do not appreciate the way in which the tour of the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Medical is criticised from time to time by the same Members of the Ministerial party. They may have some undisclosed grievances against her, but so far as I know the Hon'ble Minister's tour is generally welcomed by the public and quite a large number of females always gather round her whenever she visits the interior of the districts. Sir, if the hon. Members of the Government Party have any particular grievances against the way in which the Medical Department is being administered, they should state clearly and squarely instead of making side references to her tours in this sinister way.

Sir, I have very little to speak on the Budget proper itself. My hon. Friend, Mr. Mookerjee, in his comprehensive speech and also my hon. Friend, Mr. Whittaker, has depicted the Budget in its true colour and dispelled the illusory hopes which the able and eloquent speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister had given rise in our minds. Sir, I shall only try to present before the House the feelings in this country in an unvarnished way. Sir, in days gone by when this country was being governed by the Badshas and Ujirs they took great care to acquaint themselves with the grievances of the people. For that purpose they used to go about in disguise. But what is the position today? If you express your grievances in an open public meeting, either that meeting will be banned or Lathi charges and shooting will be the result. If you gather together in your house and talk about the affairs of the country you will be charged with sedition and conspiracy. If you entertain in your mind any sentiment of patriotism and if nothing can be proved against you in a Court of Justice—what is the result? You will be detained as security prisoner in prison or interned in a particular locality. That is the present position. This House only affords us a place where we can say something about what we have in our mind.

Although I know that I make very poor contribution to the Budget discussion I can never resist the temptation of standing on my legs in order to say what is the real feeling of the public. Today in particular, there is one question agitating the public mind and that question is this “who is our ruler, are we still under the Englishman of Great Britain or are we under the suzerainty of the Englishman from the United States of America?” That question has been foremost in our minds today. My hon. Friend Srijut Surendranath Buragohain also spoke about this with reference to management of railway by the Americans. I would refer to one important thing and that is the brushing aside of the Union Jack and the hoisting of the Flag of the United States of America in its place. I am referring to the Emporium and the Weaving Institute at Gauhati. On that building there was a Union Jack which has been removed and an American Flag hoisted in its place. Sir, if our National Flag, if the Flag of the Indian National Congress had been hoisted on that building the hoisters would have been sent to Jail if not shot immediately. But when the Flag of the American Congress takes the place and the British Flag removed nothing can be said about it. And why? It is because

Sir, something really like transfer of power and property has taken place in the meantime? Sir, Assam has a peculiar knack of changing its masters and rulers unconsciously and without bloodshed. In the year 1826, Burma which had no title to possession over Assam, by the treaty of Yandaboo transferred Assam to British hands. Has a similar bloodless transfer taken place in the meantime? We are very faithful and loyal servants; we know how to serve our masters; we know how to imitate them and we can at once try to become faithful and loyal servants of the United States of America, provided we are given sufficient and timely notice. We want the position to be made clear.

I should like particularly to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Premier in the Department of Law and Order that he has entirely failed to preserve law and order in this Province. It may be that he has succeeded in sending some innocent Congressmen to jail, but he has not succeeded at all in checking molestation of the people of the soil. We often find that our houses are molested by soldiers with impunity and nothing can be done to punish them.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: He is helpless.

Srijut ROHINIKUMAR CHAUDHURI: But something must be done in the matter. I know very well that American soldiers or American officers cannot be touched by British Government in India. They cannot even be prosecuted or tried in the courts of justice here. Therefore, some appeal must be made to President Roosevelt by the Government of Assam to check all this. If they cannot be tried here, if they cannot be punished here, we are entirely helpless. So, I say that there should be a special deputation sent from Assam to America so that these soldiers may be restrained from molesting Indian citizens. I shall in course of time give instances which have occurred very recently. I mean instances of molestation by soldiers of the innocent Indian people. But, Sir, why do not we hear Mr. Whittaker complaining of molestation? Why we do not hear the European community complaining of molestation of Indians? This question can be answered only by those who are responsible for the molestations.

Another thing. I take this opportunity of appreciating the order by the Hon'ble Minister in-charge of Law and Order about releasing certain political prisoners whose health was really deteriorating in jail, but he has not implemented his promise about Srijut Sarveswar Barua who had been suffering from dysentery and fever. I hope he will try to help him in the matter and release him immediately. I hope he will release Dr. Hari Krishna Das, whose wife is in bed for some months now is also urgently needed.

We find in Mr. Whittaker's Budget speech that British interest is constantly working in his mind. He criticises the Assam Distillery and criticises its products. It may be said that Mr. Whittaker has better ideas about some taste of wine and liquor but I have seen certificates from Europeans, from the proprietor of the hotel in which he used to reside, viz., the Pinewood Hotel, and also some American officers who say that the Distillery products are very excellent. This Distillery was established in the teeth of opposition from European planters and officers. I know Sir, that the Europeans who had their own industry of liquor in India thought that these may suffer in future. They may say that Kellner, Spencer, and Casey and the rest of them may suffer. That may be one of the reasons why Mr. Whittaker speaks in scathing terms of the Assam Distillery, but he knows how difficult it was to get machinery for this distillery which was paid to the tune of Rs.4 lakhs to the Government of Assam. I do not encourage ordinary distillation of liquor in this province, but if for this province liquor must be intended it is better that local people make some advantage out of it. I wish to make my Friend Mr. Whittaker wiser about the quality of liquor made in this distillery by handing over a certificate which has been given from a military officer who said "I find the liquor of Assam Distillery a very good product and I might say that it is one of the best spirits in India." This officer is the head of the training school of the Fourteenth Army which is now fighting in Burma.

Sir, turning now to Jails, I want to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Jails that prisoners are suffering very much for want of proper food and clothing, not to speak of political prisoners but also ordinary prisoners are not getting the diet as prescribed by the Jail Manual. B Division prisoners who are entitled to *dhuti* and slippers have been entirely deprived of these and compelled to put on *Jangia*.

Food supply has been a difficult one on account of high rise in prices, probably, as there has been over-crowding in jails. Also, Sir, I wish to urge on the Hon'ble Minister that he should immediately adopt a policy of delivery of prisoners, as it has been adopted in the other provinces in India. Prisoners who are not guilty of offences involving moral turpitude can easily be released without fear or detriment to the safety of the general public. The Good Conduct Prisoners' Release Act has been allowed to become a dead letter and should be brought out of shelves and used.

As regards the security prisoners, I think the Hon'ble Prime Minister knows that in other provinces a body consisting of High Court Judges has been set up to review individual cases and, I think, in Bombay as many as 2,000 security prisoners have been released as there was nothing against them. No such body has been constituted in Assam and they are detained so long, without trial. I hope, Sir, the Hon'ble Prime Minister will look into this matter very carefully. And since the province is practically quiet now steps should be taken for their early release.

As regards land revenue policy, Sir, I wish only to say one thing to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge that this policy has not been liked by either party—neither by the indigenous people nor by the immigrants. It is high time that he should set up a new committee to find out a solution. Instead of carrying out this policy it is better that this whole policy should be revised so as to find out a workable principle which will satisfy all people concerned, and in the meantime, Sir, the order which has been passed by the Government of Assam, *viz.*, allowing the immigrants to settle wherever they like and telling the district officers not to disturb them should be revised and countermanded. This order had given direct encouragement to lawlessness and the immigrants have taken advantage of this and they are settling anywhere and everywhere. Will Government allow this sort of lawlessness by acquiescing to it? The immigrants are settling in the reserves and burning the houses of graziers—such things have happened in the Gauhati subdivision. I beseech the Hon'ble Revenue Minister to direct the district officers to stop this lawlessness and urgently to summon a meeting of the representatives of the various groups—it should not be confined to the Members of the Assembly but should be extended to outsiders also—and try to evolve a working principle whereby we can satisfy not only the indigenous people but also those immigrants who have really made their homes here after a long settlement.

I also draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Local Self-Government to the state of things in Gauhati. We are to pay municipal tax. If we do not pay,—now the affairs are no longer in the hands of non-official Chairman but in the hands of official Chairman—he will employ armed police and realise the tax. But what do we get in return of the tax paid? After 3 or 4 days we can get tap water. Are the road swept there? The answer will be in the negative excepting the European quarters. I am responsible for every bit of statement I make with regard to this Municipality. Is there a street light? No. Even in the private houses we are to go the whole night without light. Are the latrines cleaned everyday? The reply is No. In the former non-official Chairman regime the order was that the latrines should be cleaned everyday. Now the order is that it should be cleaned after 3 days. Even when cleaning great difficulty. they are required to give one rupee to sweeper and get the latrines cleaned. I requested the Hon'ble Minister to break his journey to Delhi at the Gauhati and see things for himself but in vain. If really Government cannot manage the Municipal affairs in a proper way they should issue a general order exempting us from paying the tax. Should the executive officers and the Deputy Commissioner find it difficult to cope with the military officers who take away the sweepers to distant places like Dimapur, they should return the Municipality to an elected body as before.

Sir, either Government must exempt the people from the payment of the taxes or they should insist on the municipality's doing things properly—either of the two things must be done and must be done quickly.

Sir, I wanted to say one word about the administration of the Public Works Department. I praise the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Public the Works Department so far as the administration of the Education Department is concerned but in the matter of Public Works Department he has proved a total failure. I can draw his attention to one instance at least of which he must have personal knowledge. The hon. Members who go to Gauhati must have seen a bridge between 13th and 14th mile of the Shillong road. There is a small span of about 21 feet. The Public Works Department made efforts to make a temporary bridge but they failed and then the military came to the rescue and constructed a temporary bridge and it was used for a few month. Towards the middle of the year 1943, a permanent bridge was constructed by a big contractor, but that permanent bridge has failed now and again the temporary bridge made by the military is being used. Who is responsible for this, Sir? Instead of calling this a Public Works Department we may call it a Public Waste Department. I will cite the instance of another bridge which is known as the Bharalu Bridge. Attempts are being made to expand it. But that attempt is going on for about 10 months. What is happening there is that they have bought a crushing machine to crush stones. Most of the days that machine does not work with the result that the bridge will never be completed and the western border of the road will remain closed for one year more. If merely the expansion of a bridge is to take one year, how do you think of fighting the Burmese or the Japanese. If this is our skill in making roads and bridges how can you fight with the enemy?

Sir, as you go along the road you will find always signboards which are upside down containing the words "Sub way on the right". If another signboard is put as "Read this signboard upside down", then alone you will read it correctly. Sir, instead of using so many signboards like that, would it not be advisable to publish it in the gazette that travellers going by this road should read signboards upside down? (*Laughter*). If you go by the Trunk Road to Nowgong, if you go to Barpeta, you will find like this. Then between North Gauhati and Barpeta you are always to go by subways. These bridges are repaired in cold weather. These are never completed during cold weather and when the rains come the road becomes impassable. Practically in going by the north trunk road all travellers are requested to go by sub-ways. At the same time, Sir, I must admire the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Public Works Department for very sympathetic attitude which he has taken towards Assamese businessmen and Assamese contractors. He has recently, I found, settled the ferries to a number of men who have taken to this line of business. But I think he should give more attention to the roads and bridges and instead of working with inferiority complex on the idea of getting contractors from outside the province and to get more efficient work, if he would try contractors from inside the province, I am sure, he will get better work done.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think this is all.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I wanted to say a few words about the Medical Department in which a meagre amount has been allotted. It is very curious to find that almost all the money has been given to insane people rather than to sane people. I mean, all the money has practically been given to the Mental Hospital and only Rs. 6,000 or so has been given to sane men. I don't know why the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Medical Department is so much more solicitous for the insane people than the sane ones. I shall wait to get some answer from the Hon'ble Minister in course of this Session.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: The Hon'ble Premier has sent words that he is busy in the Upper House and may not be able to attend this House today. So I may speak on the Budget discussion.

I have listened, Sir, for two days to the speeches that have been made by the hon. Members in criticising the Budget. I am sure, Sir, hon. Members all realis

that in a war Budget it is not possible for us to satisfy all the demands or the suggestions of the different Members from the different sections of the House. We welcome criticism—the criticism that is made to enable us to rectify mistakes or to avoid pitfall. We also welcome criticism that is constructive, that stimulates thought and promotes action.

I think the Government can modestly claim that in dealing with urgent and vital problems there has not been any negligence or inactivity or slackness on the part of the Government and they have spared no pains in dealing with emergent situations as they have arisen. More than this we do not claim. In replying to this Budget debate I shall confine myself to dealing with the main lines of the Budget criticism only. Hon. Members must not think that all the points that have been raised in course of the discussion will be ignored. As is the usual practice with the Government, Sir, all the points that have been raised will be examined by the respective departments and any steps that may be considered necessary will be taken.

As usual, my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker has made one of the most thought provoking speeches in the debate. He has pointed out and very rightly—that the appearance of a practically balanced Budget does not disclose the true financial position of the Government. Most of our increased income is due to windfalls which are not likely to survive in war period and although some expenditure will be reduced—the expenditure that is due to war measures, at the end of the war, Assam will find herself in a decidedly weaker position compared to other provinces in India. Just as, Sir, the soldiers fight in the battle field and the war profiteers make profit sitting at home, so our province is bearing all the hardship of being in the war zone while provinces remote from the war are busy strengthening their resources. They are busily setting up new industries and they are fortifying their positions for the post-war period. As it is, our's is a very undeveloped province. We have not got institutions that are considered essential for the progress and development of the province. The United Provinces has got five universities whereas we have not got a single one. We have not got any Engineering College, nor we have got any Medical or Agricultural College. We have not got even the money necessary to start an institution like those. We have not got the money to harness our rich undeveloped resources to productive use. In the past, ours have been a series of deficit Budgets. Though Assam produces petrol, Government of India make over a crore of rupees out of it. Assam produces tea and as Mr. Whittaker pointed out, the excise duty of $3\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees is being taken by the Government of India without letting us any share thereof. We, Sir, made every effort to improve our own finance. Since the inauguration of the Constitution we have introduced Agricultural Income-tax. We have imposed taxes on entertainments and sale of petrol. We have made every effort to improve our position. Still we find that we are not in a position to make our both ends meet. Government of India has occasionally given us doles—doles in the shape of reduction of slabs in the Civil Defence Budget, exemption from the payment for Assam Rifles, some assistance in the matter of our Grow More Food Campaign and things of that sort. But what we want from the Government of India is not doles but equitable share. In this connection, Sir, Mr. Whittaker has very pertinently raised the question of revision of the Niemeyer Award. Before the New Constitution was inaugurated, Sir, the condition of finances of different Provinces were examined first by the Percy Committee and by Sir Otto Niemeyer. The Percy Committee recommended for the Government of Assam a subvention of 65 lakhs of rupees which was subsequently whittled down by Sir Otto Niemeyer to 30 lakhs. In the year 1940-41, Assam got 49 lakhs of rupees as contribution from the Government of India. In the year 1943-44 it was increased to 64 lakhs—an increase of 31 per cent. The House will be interested to hear that during the same period the increase that the Provinces of the Punjab, Central Provinces, Bombay and Madras got as contribution from the Centre amounted to 333 per cent. But the distribution of percentages under the Niemeyer Award has been most unfair to Assam. We are thankful to Mr. Whittaker for giving support for the

proposal of revision of the Niemeyer Award and I am glad to find that my hon. Friend Mr. Nirendra Nath Deb and, I am sure every hon. Member of this House, shares the views of Mr. Whittaker in this matter. Mr. Whittaker has asked us to howl and if necessary to show our teeth. Though our cries has not been publicly audible we have been making persistent efforts to get better financial assistance from the Centre, and in this connection I shall be failing in my duty if I do not mention that in our efforts to get fair deal from the Government of India, the Ministry have always had a powerful support of His Excellency the Governor. All I can say now is that we shall, Sir, continue our endeavour in this direction in future also as we did in the past.

During the Budget discussion both on Saturday and today a good deal of criticism has been levelled against our land settlement policy — the land settlement policy which aims at providing more lands to the landless people in the Province and to give an impetus to the question of Grow More Food Campaign. Sir, it is not a new policy that this Government has inaugurated. The policy of colonisation scheme for development of the Province, for providing lands to the landless has been in existence for over two decades in this Province. What the present Government has done—and I think has rightly done is to put a little more vigour in the execution of that policy, to accelerate the process of land settlement in the interest of Grow More Food Campaign and to provide more land to the landless in the Province. Sir, as far back as in 1938 when the Line System Enquiry Committee submitted its report, *i. e.* after making enquiries, it was found that this problem had become very acute in the Province and they recommended therein to throw open more land for settlement to the landless. This problem of landlessness, Sir, though it existed among all the communities in the Province, was much more acute among the class of people who are known as immigrants. During the decade between 1921-31 the population of some of the immigrant Mauzas in Nowgong, Darrang and Kamrup Districts has increased from 150 to 200 per cent. without any corresponding increase in the area under cultivation. In 1940-41 when under Development Scheme applications were invited from the landless people on payment of fees of eight annas per application, in Nowgong District alone, over 40 thousand applications were received from people who had no lands and out of them 25,000 were landless immigrants. Now, Sir, this problem has become more acute during the recent years than it was some six years ago, because in recent years there has not been large extension of colonisation area. Apart from every other consideration it was an obvious duty of Government to arrange for the extension of the colonisation scheme. But that duty, Sir, became all the more important last year when due to famine, and shortage of food in our neighbouring Province Bengal, the problem of Grow More Food became a question of utmost urgency, Sir, when people are dying by their hundreds and thousands in the neighbouring Province and when million acres of land are lying fallow in Assam it would have been utmost folly on the part of Government not to exert themselves to throw open as much land as possible for cultivation. That the land should remain fallow and uncultivated rather than be cultivated by the immigrants is a proposition, Sir, which I am sure will not commend itself to any hon. Member of this House. The Government of India, as I said in my Budget speech, has been taking a particularly keen interest in the question of our land development policy, and the Central Enquiry Committee recommended that the execution of this policy should be expedited. Not content with that the Government of India have asked us to submit monthly returns as to what progress we are making in this direction, and I am sure if any slackness is found in this regard, the matter will not remain much longer in the hands of the Government of Assam.

My hon. Friend Srijut Rohini Kumur Chaudhuri referred to the case of encroachment into the professional grazing reserves by thousands of people.....

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I did not say "thousands of people," but I said that "there have been instances of encroachment".....

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: In this Province there are large areas which are kept as professional grazing reserves, which are in excess of the requirement of the graziers. I may give one instance. In Barpeta, there are 1,25,000 bighas of land for professional graziers, but there are only 4,000 buffaloes and 3,000 cows grazing there. To view the question in proper perspective, I may tell the House that in the district of Kamrup there are 11 lakhs of cattle and in the district of Sylhet there are 15 lakhs, subsisting by grazing in the village common. As regards the condition of these grazing reserves, I had occasion to visit one of these reserves during my last tour in Barpeta. There is a reserve called Theka reserve with an area of 13,000 Bighas of land and there are 135 buffaloes there. Surely, Sir, it is preposterous that when the need of the people for land is so great that such a large area should be kept exclusively for the cattle. Around this reserve there are hundreds of families of landless people who have been living in a very miserable way by encroaching upon some parts of the reserve. I went into one of the villages of these encroachers and made enquiries from about a dozen families in that village. They had come, Sir, to Assam some 25 years ago and had been living in that reserve for the last 8 years. Being encroachers, Sir, during the last 7 years their houses had been burnt three times and destroyed twice. They do not build even the ordinary huts that the common cultivators build, but live in hotels because they knew that any time their houses may be destroyed under Government orders. They return again and again to the same place risking eviction because they have nowhere else to go to. This is the miserable condition in which these encroachers are living in professional grazing reserves.

Now, Sir, the immigrants are not to be allowed to live in the tribal areas; they are not to live near the Assamese line and it will be height of absurdity if we are to accept the plea that they are not to be allowed to live near the cattles of the Nepali graziers. The Grow More Food Campaign will be a mockery when large portions of lands are thus left uncultivated and fallow. (*Hear, hear.*)

My hon. Friend Srijut Rabi Chandra Kachari has made a very eloquent appeal for the protection of the tribal people. I can assure him that we fully realise that the tribal people are backward and need protection and we are determined to give them every protection and to save them from molestation from all quarters. That has been the bed-rock of our policy all along.

Then, Sir, having taken all these facts into consideration, Government have decided that those areas of professional grazing reserves which are in excess of the requirement of the graziers should be thrown open for settlement. I do not see any reasonable person can complain and say anything against the policy of the Government.

Now, Sir, about the other aspects of the Budget discussion my hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee has depicted a very doleful picture of the economic condition of the people of the Province. He went so far as to say that while in Bengal people died of starvation for failure of food, here in Assam people are dying for the insufficiency of the same. I am sure, Sir, the House will agree with me that this is rather a over-drawn picture, and exaggerated picture of the situation. In support of this contention Mr. Mookerjee cited the case of Baniyachong. We do recognise that there has been distress in Baniyachong. But, Sir, Baniyachong is not typical of Assam. It is an exception. The distress in Baniyachong is due less to economic cause than to the epidemic diseases.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What Maulana Sahib said this morning?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Mr. Mookerjee attributed callousness to the Government for not taking all the steps that were necessary for preventing the distress in Baniyachong. During the last session there was a full dressed debate on the distress in Baniyachong. After the session was over the Hon'ble Premier and the Medical Minister visited the locality and took all steps that were needed to relieve the situation. I would inform the House of the further steps that have been taken with regard to the situation in Baniyachong. At present 8 centres are working under the Public Health Sub-Assistant Surgeons in distributing quinine at Baniyachong. In addition three Medical Department Sub-Assistant Surgeons—one at the dispensary and one each at Northern and Southern areas—are treating cases with complications of malaria or other diseases. Besides these, a Medical Unit consisting of

one doctor and three assistants of the Bengal Civil Protection Committee is treating malaria cases with complications there. Eight Epidemic Assistants and three Compounders are also working there. The Sub-Assistant Surgeon of the Assistant Director of Public Health's Laboratory at Sylhet with the Laboratory Assistant was temporarily withdrawn from Sylhet to Baniyachong with Field Laboratory for identification and dissection of anopheline mosquitoes. The Assam Medical Research Society also undertook a preliminary malaria survey of Baniyachong. As decided in the Conference held on the 7th December 1943, one Assistant Surgeon of the Medical Department has been posted to Habiganj to supervise the work of the Medical and Public Health Department staff employed in connection with malaria epidemic and careful distribution of anti-malarial drugs there. As I said, Sir, in my Budget speech, that an emergency hospital is going to be organised with 50 beds.

Mr. Mookerjee in his Budget speech ascribed the economic plight of the Province to inflation and lack of transport facilities. As regards inflation, this is a matter which is not within the control of the Government of Assam. The Government of Assam has been co-operating with the Government of India in matter of checking the inflation. All our construction programme has been reduced to a minimum and we have inaugurated campaign for encouragement of savings among the people and persuading them to invest in Defence Savings Certificates, National Savings Certificates, etc. A Special Officer has been appointed, particularly as I said in my reply to questions this morning, to encourage and organise the sale of National Savings Certificates to people both in the rural and urban areas. I think the hon. Members of the House will be doing an useful service if they use their influence in trying to encourage the habit of saving among the people and inducing them to save their money by depositing in the Banks or Co-operative Societies and by buying Defence Savings Certificates.

On the question of transport there has been a good deal of complaints. Many hon. Members have spoken on this and have expressed a genuine grievance of the public in this matter. Government also share the feeling of the public in this matter. Sir, for many years past, the Government of India has neglected the question of rail transport in the Province of Assam. Assam being a far off Province her case has been neglected throughout and we are now paying the penalty. One single track metre gauge line is made to serve the interest of the entire Province. What was, Sir, barely adequate during pre-war period has proved utterly inadequate under the stress of war conditions. With the enemy at the gates of Assam, the military requirements must necessarily have priority of consideration and civil supplies comes later. The increase in the number of wagons, even if they are available, is not the real remedy of the situation. For there must be facilities of marshalling yards in stations, for handling the wagons. There must be double track for quicker movements of those wagons. We shall have to face these difficulties being in the war zone as there is no speedy remedy for this. But, Sir, in the matter of road transport, the Government of Assam has not been negligent or inactive. A large sum, a sum of Rs.88 lacs, has been spent for organising the Assam Transport. It is true that this transport has been busy during the past months in doing military works, and works for the Assam Trunk Road. But these things are going to change from now. In future the Assam Transport will bear an increasingly larger share in this movement of civil supplies. Having regard to the difficulties in travelling by rail, it has been decided to arrange and organise passenger motor routes which will work under the supervision of a senior Government Official. We hope the steps that we have been taking may lead to an improvement in the transport of civil supplies. As, Sir, the Hon'ble Premier is now present in the House he will deal with the question of supply. I need not say anything in this matter. I shall reply only to criticisms relating to other departments. The Agricultural Department has been denounced by several speakers as inefficient and it has been stated that the Grow More Food Campaign has not been a success. I would only refer to what the Agricultural Department has claimed to have achieved in the years from 1939-40 to 1943-44 through its efforts. The increase of area under rice is 1.9 per cent. and our rice production by 26 per cent. or 4,64,000. Increase of area under pulses is 1,49,000 acres. Increase of area under

sugar-cane cultivation is 66,000 acres. Area under vegetable and potato is 1,74,000 acres and provision of small irrigation schemes will lead to an increased production of about 58 tons of paddy or 36,867 of rice during this period.

My Hon. Friends Messrs. Akshay Kumar Das, and Bipin Behari Das have raised the question of giving aid in the matter of education to Schedule caste people. They have complained that scholarships have been provided for the plains tribal and nothing has been done for the Scheduled Castes.

Sir, the following scholarships are generally awarded particularly to the students of the Scheduled Castes—17 scholarships for Primary Schools, 6 for Middle Vernacular Schools, 11 for Middle English Schools and 10 for Matriculation Standard. (Maulavi Abdul Bari Choudhury—what about the immigrants?) Immigrants come under the category of Muslim.

Then Babu Akshay Kumar Das has complained about the assistance to the Harijan hostel at Sylhet. An annual recurring grant of Rs. 64 was provided for from the year 1939-40 which was raised to Rs. 136 in the year 1942-43. An increased recurring grant of Rs. 344 was made in addition to the grant of Rs. 136 with effect from the 1st March, 1943, in order to enable the institution to get a recurring assistance at the rate of Rs. 40 per mensem.

As regards Civil Defence, the only criticism that has been made is that the A.R.P. officers do nothing more than to move about the city in motor cars. Sir, A.R.P. Service is a protective as well as a preventive measure and the personnels are being trained for an emergency. Until the emergency arises it will be premature to say whether the people we have trained are quite competent for the task for which they have been trained. As they have a large number of staff to supervise scattered throughout the town naturally they would move about. I do not think that these can be matters for complaint. Sir I have nothing more to say on the Budget discussion and the Hon'ble Premier will try to speak on points relating to Supply.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, earlier in the day I have mentioned to you that I will reply only to questions arising about the Supply Department. I am told that while I was preoccupied in the Legislative Council, certain hon. Members have been pleased to put very categorical and castigating remarks against my handling of the administration of the Department of Law and Order. Therefore, although I realise that the hour is very late, that we have already overstepped the usual 4 P.M. limit by 55 minutes, I am constrained to take up that matter first before I reply to other criticisms.

It is surprising that the remarks should come from one who for five long years was thought to be my lieutenant and colleague and who took me to be his leader. No doubt such remarks would come from one who has strayed from my fold; but I hoped, out of courtesy he should have expressed those remarks in my presence for I am compelled to reply on notes supplied to me by my colleagues. If I have failed to satisfy that particular hon. Member, I hope that I have been able to satisfy others with the figures that I laid this morning before the House in answer to a question made by my hon. Friend, Maulavi Mabarak Ali, that about 60 per cent. of the people who were detained as security prisoners have been released by me. I am told that particular reference was made about the case of our Friend, Srijit Sarveswar Barua. For the edification of this House, I can say that order for his release, but of home internment, was passed by me about 10 days ago. Some hon. Members, I am told, want the release of Dr. Hari Krishna Das who was the former President of the Assam Branch of the Indian National Congress. I am sorry to say that I have not been able to release him, but I think it will please some hon. Members when I say that his daughter who was also a security prisoner has been released by me about a month ago. I have been constantly reviewing the cases of the security prisoners and I find that we are not in a position to release all of them—whether they are Members of this House or Members of the public, who have been confined behind Jail bars. I have been reviewing their cases but what can I do when my policy of releasing these unfortunate detainees is frustrated by the party that backs them. Acts of sabotage both in Sibsagar and Nowgong districts

had been non-existent when some of the miscreants and malcontents were detained ; but as soon as I started releasing such people from prison bar, acts of sabotage have again reappeared and during the last fortnight cases of burning of Railway station and burning of some Government offices have been reported. If I find that there are more such occurrences, I will be constrained not only to stop all releases, but to put back to Jail those whom I have reasons to suspect have started these acts of barbarism.

I am told that it has been suggested by some hon. Members that the question of reviewing the cases of the security prisoners should be handed over to a Committee as has been done in Bombay. Press reports are mostly misleading. I do not know what has happened in Bombay even if we take that suggestion at its face value. Hon. Members must remember that Bombay has got an Executive Government, i.e., Bombay is now under Section 93 Administration. Therefore, it is right and proper that the Governor of that Province has delegated the reviewing of these cases to a Committee. But here, rightly or wrongly, there is a Constitutional Government—a Government run under the Constitution. There are members of the public, chosen representatives of different communities in the Cabinet and I think every hon. Member ought to be satisfied with the decision of these popular representatives of the country. Instances, I am told, have been reported to the House that Government has not been able to stop stray cases of molestation of the public by military personnel. It is correct that unfortunately such occurrences happen where the military are involved, but the Government has made every endeavour to stop such troubles. I have been told that an accusation was laid against some people of the American Army. We had represented the matter to the Officer-commanding the American Army and they have now posted their own police who have been co-operating with the Civil Police and the British Military Police and there has been a great improvement in the position thereafter. It is deplorable that such occurrences have happened, but I am rather thankful that constituted as the Province is where we have got soldiery from every part of the Empire and Allies that occurrences are not more. It speaks volume of the discipline of the main body of soldiery that is now living in Assam.

I will now come to the Supply question, and I will begin by saying that it shows a very healthy sign that the Members of this House have been taking such keen interest. The burning question of the day is the question of food supply to the Province. In this respect we have had very long discussions in the past and I do not want to repeat the statement that I already made in detail but I will try to lay three matters before the House for their considered judgment, in respect of the criticisms both informed and ill-informed that has been levelled against administration of this department. The principal point which I am not tired of repeating is that the requirements of the people of Assam comes first in my mind and if there be any surplus I want that it should be utilised to the best advantage of our people. The way of our price control scheme inaugurated by me with the advice of the Members who sat with me in the Food Conference in August last, is working and it clearly proves that we are a surplus Province and that if our rice situation is properly administered, the position of our cultivators who form about 95 per cent. of our population will be better by the policy adopted by this Government. It is an axiomatic truth of economics that if there be a big surplus in the country which the producers cannot dispose of, the price of these articles will be forced down. Our principal produce is paddy or rice. If there is a surplus and we do not dispose of it then the result will be that price of rice and paddy will go down. It is a matter which has seriously interested many who have considered this situation in its true perspective; the cultivators have to pay three times the pre-war price for articles of their daily necessity. It will be economically unsound to force down the price of rice and paddy to less than three times the price in pre-war days. I have many times said that the price in pre-war times was roundabout Rs. 5 and

now it is Rs.15 per maund. In my judgment and after long and mature deliberation and considering every factor, I have come to the unhesitating conclusion in the present circumstances that the controlled price of rice ought not to go below Rs.12-8-0 to Rs.13. I have been apprised from certain quarters that in certain areas the present price of rice has come down to Rs.12-8-0 whereas the Government maximum price is Rs.15-8-0. Government should immediately proclaim a bottom price or the minimum price at which the cultivators should be allowed to sell. I am constantly watching the trend of price and if I find that we are reaching the danger limit, I will be the first person to fix such bottom price or minimum price for rice and paddy.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: It is Rs.8 or Rs.9 in our part. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: My report was that in various parts of the Surma Valley, especially, in Habiganj, the lowest price is Rs.12, in other places the price is Rs.12-8-0 to Rs.13.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: I purchased at Rs.9 per maund at Sunamganj.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMED SAADULLA: I will immediately start an enquiry, if the price of rice has gone down to Rs.9. I am taking note of the information supplied by Mr. Abdul Bari and I will take immediate action of wiring the Subdivisional Officer tomorrow and if he says that the price there is less than Rs.10. I will at once fix a bottom price for that Subdivision. It may be that Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury who has three different roles embodied in him, who is a leading pleader, leader of the National War Front and also the Chirman of the Local Board, might have got it at a very cheap price, but I am afraid, I have heard some conversation between two representatives from Sunamganj. I have heard Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury stating that the price in his Subdivision is Rs.12. Anyway this information given to me by Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury will engage my serious attention and I will take every step to verify it and if it is found correct, a suitable remedy will be adopted.

The procurement comes next after production. For production we have got the Grow More Food campaign about which much has been spoken and much has been seen by me. There is no doubt that there has been a sufficient increase in production in the country, for although the ceiling price fixed by Government is about Rs.15-8. This commodity can be had in the market at about Rs.12-8-0 to Rs.13. This clearly shows that there is an abundance of the commodity in the Province and the cultivator is willing to sell it. If there was a scarcity of rice, the cultivators would not have brought it to the market for selling.

The next question is, as regards procurement. The policy of Government has been that the maximum marketable surplus should be procured by the Government for the purpose of meeting the demands of the higher authorities who have placed, in the year 1944, their demand at 100 thousand tons for Assam to provide out of her surplus.

Then again we have deficit areas within the Province the population of which has to be fed from the surplus areas. From 1942 a Company has been operating in the Assam Valley. Higher authorities have forced us to engage procurement agencies in the Surma Valley as well. While we were deciding to have one reputed syndicate of rice traders for the Surma Valley, it was brought home to me by Members who have taken great interest over food problem both in the House as well as outside—Members who had tabled censure motions to discuss the food situation in the November Session—that conditions in Cachar and Karimganj differed very materially from conditions in the other parts of the Sylhet district. I therefore, divided the agency into two and those experienced rice traders of Cachar and Karimganj were allowed to join together and procure whatever they can without disturbing the economic condition of those parts. So far as the rice of the rest of Sylhet was concerned, we had a Hindu gentleman who was recommended by the Muslim Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet for the purpose of

procurement of Boro crop in 1943 for Government ; but I thought that if those gentlemen who wanted to criticise me that I have denuded the country-side of every available grain of paddy and rice are interested with this Government agent, they will be able to keep a check upon the over-buying tendency of that gentleman. I, therefore, asked this particular merchant whether he will incorporate in the syndicate such Members of the Assembly who had taken trouble to think over the matter and who thought that the Government had gone to the widest limit of procurement and who would be able to act as a brake upon him. I have no hesitation in stating that the Members who were loudest, such as Maulavi Abdur Rahman and Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury have been good enough to lend their services to this syndicate and joined this. It is for this purpose and not for helping my party men—but although they are my party Members they tabled censure motions against myself—that I thought that if these gentlemen who were irresponsible critics, be in the Surma Valley agency they would not buy beyond certain limit.....

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : If this be the case, Sir, the number of such Motions will increase.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAA DULLA : Do please.

My Friend, Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri, by jumping up has not improved his position. He wants to cut my throat every day. He had cut the very Ministry's throat a few years ago. Even then, I gave him at his request, the agency for Assam's imported food. So I am helping not only my own friends but I am helping the present Leader of Opposition who is politically my bitterest opponent. So, Sir, if I have erred in asking these two gentlemen, the Members of the Legislature who interested themselves in this procurement, to join the syndicate, I have done with the best of motive and not with a spirit of party support.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI : What about Maulavi Naziruddin Ahmed ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I do not know. I know only about these two gentlemen who came to me with Mr. Dutt in Shillong and if they have taken any more, I do not know. Mr. Dutt was on previous procurement agency for Boro crop.

Then it has been alleged from various quarters that the presence of these gentlemen will give undue weight to this syndicate and they will be able to procure rice at a cheaper price than the market ; but I have heard criticism of a rival character. I am told that one hon. Member of this House have charged this syndicate that they bought at a cheaper rate and submitted a bill at a higher rate to Government. I have heard this criticism from other quarters as well. So I better make mention of it. We were forced to start procurement agencies in the Surma Valley where there was no procurement agency before, by the higher authority, *viz.*, the Central Government and we were asked to procure as much as possible immediately for we are to supply to the neighbouring Province of Bengal some 22 thousand tons of rice. Originally they asked for 28 thousand tons but after a great deal of correspondence and negotiation, it has been brought down to 22 thousand tons of rice. We gave the two syndicates immediate permission to buy in December last as much as they could. The hon. Members know the price that was ruling in December last. This particular syndicate submitted their bill for certain quantities of rice which they bought at about Rs.19 per maund at that time. That was bought before they entered into agreement with the Government. They were given a *carte blanche*. No term was settled and in their bill submitted in January, they showed that 50,000 maunds was bought between 19 and 20 rupees. After due scrutiny by the Supply Department and after a prolonged discussion between Mr. Dutt who I know to be the Managing Proprietor or the Managing Director of this Syndicate, myself and Mr. Marar, the Supply Secretary, having gone through every single item, we had to allow them Rs.19 and odd for some thirty thousand maunds of rice bought in December last, but since then we have told them definitely that they are to buy at a price lower than the controlled price, if they are to continue and since then they are buying according to Government instructions.

One hon. Member who knows full well the details and responsibilities of a Minister, has been good enough, I am told, to say that some Hon'ble Ministers of this House have got under-hand dealing or share in this purchasing agencies. I had had the same report from another quarter and I made detailed enquiries. One Hon'ble Minister who was mentioned, denied having any share or business in this syndicate; the other admits that he is there because it is their joint family business although he has never interested himself, his brothers run it.

If a Minister is prevented in having a share in any company run by others then there cannot be any Ministry in any part of the world. I am perfectly sure that even the most honest and discreet Minister cannot but have some shares in any company which is operating in the Province. Well, I myself have got no share. I own a little tea garden. I have got a little bit of property and houses. If anybody says "Well, you are a Minister, you own houses and property and you have power over the people and so rack-rent them. You give very little wages to your labourers in your garden". Well, then I cannot become a Minister. If that is the idea of the hon. Members, it is a great mistake. I have, as I said, with the best of my intention appointed agents to help the best interest of the people, whose benefit is at heart of hon. Members, if we are to be guided by their previous pronouncements and protestations. I have, in reply to a certain query by one of the hon. Members here, stated privately to that hon. Member and I will state publicly before the House also that if either of these Syndicates are found to have deviated an inch from the instructions laid down by the Supply Department, I will at once cancel their licence although the agreement runs for the whole year.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I mentioned about Srijut Sarveswar Barua.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I passed the orders about ten or fifteen days ago and I definitely remember that.

Hon. Members have fallen foul of our distribution arrangements. First is production, next is procurement and the third is distribution. We are short of inspecting staff; but the dealers and traders are expected to be honest and reliable. If these people, our agents, are indulging in mal-practices I am very sorry. I have not got the proper staff to keep a constant watch over them. But what is the good of multiplying officers, for according to another hon. Member, every officer in the Supply Department is taking a bit of bribe. I am told, the words used by him are "ভীষণ ঘুষ খোর"; somebody says that whoever goes to Lanka becomes a Rabana. If I increase the number of officers, there will be more mouths to feed. Therefore I have been content with a small staff of 75 Sub-Inspectors of Supply Department. Their duty is to watch and see.....

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: An Intelligence Department should better be started, Sir.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am glad for the suggestion but my Friend was one of those who voted against the Intelligence Branch.

My Friend, Srijut Rabi Chandra Kachari, has complained that the tribal people have not been given due share for permits for trading in rice and paddy. He is correct there because I have had the same complaint from Goalpara District as well. The unfortunate part of it, is that the tribal people are admittedly backward. They were not real traders before. Seeing other people thriving on rice trade they want also to reap rich harvest by means of trade; but they started very late and in the meantime the Government of India ordered not to issue more permits or to grant more licences to small traders, for these traders will compete with the Government agents of the Province and the price of the commodities will go high up. Even then I have asked the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara to select certain experienced traders amongst the tribal community and to grant licences to them for trade. I will issue the same instructions to the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang in order to meet the case presented by Mr. Rabi Chandra Kachari.

In order to minimise the complaints and the criticisms received from the public, with the best of intentions Government started Food Committees but by perversity of circumstances I am told that in various places, Food Committees have not been functioning. I am issuing a circular to each Deputy Commissioner and Subdivisional Officer to call meetings of the Food Committees after the Session of the Assembly—because most of the Members are in the Legislature—and to get their advice as regards equitable and proper distribution of the very depleted stock of commodities that is now being issued (*cheers*).

I have met almost all the criticisms that have been levelled against the Supply Department but I must close with one reply to my Friend, Mr. Mookerjee, who started the Budget debate. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee who is a keen observer of facts as well as figures failed to observe that my mission to Baniyachang was not that of sermonising but that of supplying the essential needs of the stricken people there. I may tell him that although I could not get woollen blankets to meet the rigours of a severe winter, I distributed to the needy people of Baniyachang about Rs.5,000 worth of standard cloth and when Their Excellencies the Viceroy and the Vicerine came here the first request I made to them was not for my personal aggrandisement, but I beseeched them to extend their helping hands for giving the sick and destitutes of Assam sufficient winter cloths, *i.e.*, blankets and also sufficient tinned milk as ordinary milk was not available. I thank Their Excellencies heartily. Through their influence, we got about ten thousand pieces of Army rejected blankets. Fifteen hundred pieces of which I have distributed free to the people of Baniyachang and I have ordered to sell double that quantity at half the cost to those who can pay. In place of expressing any gratitude for this Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee states that I went there to sermonise. I admit that I had to do a little bit of sermonising. The unfortunate part of it is that the sermon which was made for a particular community was not there. I find that the absentee landlords who suck the blood of these poor people by way of realising rents have not done anything to improve the lot of the tenants. I made a scathing criticism of the most insanitary condition prevailing in that part of Baniyachang. My Friend was very rightly saying that socialism does not prevail so far as possession of land is concerned there. The entire area of Baniyachang is divided between four Zamindars, two of which are representatives within this House.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: The Hon'ble Premier has been wrongly informed.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I said, Sir, my sermon was made to those who are landlords of the place and who should have spent a part of their income for the benefit of the people from whom they realise a huge amount of rent. It is unfortunate that none of them was present here to hear my sermon. Within two minutes, I will give you, Sir, the gist of my sermon. It was a rainy day and I had to go on an elephant riding through out Baniyachang and when from the centre of the village where the Baniyachang Barabazar is located, I passed and within a hundred yards of the Barabazar there was a tremendous bad smell coming out and I noticed the elephant probably was shocked by the bad smell and the beast did not want to proceed that way and the Mahut had to use his instrument to drive his animal to go forward. I found that within 3 cubits of a big reservoir of water where householders were washing their brass cooking and eating utensils, there was a big carcass of a cattle half portion of which had already been eaten by jackals and vultures, but the top portion including its horns was still in tact and the portion of that decomposed body was lying on a sloping bank exuding poison within 3 cubits of the water reservoir from which the people were taking water for drinking and washing their utensils. I passed down the water channel and found this reservoir was about 30 yards wide and was full of water hyacinth, and about 200 yards long. Towards the other end—southern end—I perceived another stench, but I could not locate as to wherefrom it came. The Hon'ble Medical Minister who was on the same elephant said to me using handkerchief on her nose that there was a decomposed calf right inside the water. The Mahut goaded the

elephant to bring me near and I found that the decomposed body was in the water at least for fortnight. I then took the relief workers, inhabitants and also the landlords there to task for the fact that though they were enlightened and should have militated against these insanitary habits and that the people were told that they should not throw their animal carcass near or right into the water from which they draw for household uses. If I am guilty of delivering the sermon to these people, I would like to be hundred times guilty for delivering sermons for the betterment of the humanity in those areas.

The people told us that there were no labourers to reap the crop that was standing there. I went to the north, south and east of the village and everywhere I found that the crop was reaped to the last grain. It was only one particular landlord, whose name was Babu Hari Krishna Maharatna, who is a millionaire and who could sell 30,000 maunds of paddy in one day, that his crop was not harvested, as his people were stricken with malaria and so could not cut the crop. But those who were able bodied wanted to help the owners in cutting and gathering the harvest provided they were given 1/3rd of the crop as remuneration. I met some young children about 10 or 11 years in age who were true pictures of being malaria stricken in front of the Inspection Bungalow. I put one of them some questions and his reply was characteristic. When I wanted to pay him some money, he replied, "What shall I do with money". I asked him, "Have you got enough rice and paddy in your house"? "Yes" was the reply to "who cut the crop". He said that he had no father or mother but a brother was there who cut crop with help of *kamlas*. I asked what remuneration the *kamla* got for cutting crops. He said that they got 1/3rd of the crop harvested. I also heard from some people there that it was the custom in Baniyachang in this year that those who helped in reaping the crop were given 1/3rd of the crop harvested. But as the multimillionaire would not like to part with 1/3rd of his crop in the shape of remuneration for those who would reap his crop, he did not get any labourers to cut his crop.

Government started giving doles and I went personally to each relief centre to see in different areas to whom the doles were given. From a round of the relief centres, I found rice was given to as many as 1,300 families of the locality. By the time when I was there the only man who took the trouble of going through the village and who was making house to house survey was my Friend, Comrade Karuna Sindhu Roy, and the first thing that I heard from him at Baniyachang was that, according to the survey made by the workers of Comrade Karuna Sindhu Roy, the total number of death was from all sources 7,000 and not 15,000 which was reported by my Friend Mr. Mookerjee (Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee I never said that, I said 10,000). As Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy made a house to house survey through his workers, he told me that the total number of death in the village was 7,000 and I took his figure and not of Mr. Mookerjee's. Now the men who took the trouble of touring the village of Baniyachang and inspecting its people is now found guilty of sermonising instead of being applauded by one who should have been there but did not visit his Baniyachang Zamindary in that year till December 11th, 1943.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 A. M., on Tuesday, the 7th March 1944.

SHILLONG :

The 5th April, 1944,

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.

APPENDIX

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:

Sir, I beg to lay the following amendments to the Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940, on the table:—

1. In the Fourth Schedule (1) *insert* within parenthesis the words "excepting North Lakhimpur subdivision" after 'Lakhimpur' against 'Upper Assam Region' ;
- (2) *insert* "North Lakhimpur" as entry No.6 against 'Lower Assam Region'.

[Home Department Notification No. HMV.98/42/6, dated the 11th August 1942]

1. *Insert* the following as rule 76A:—

"76A. Carriage of mails in stage carriages:—

(a) The Regional Transport Authority while granting a stage carriage permit on a particular route or area may prescribe as one of the conditions of the permit that the holder shall, whether an individual, firm or an Association, if required, carry mails at such rates as the Authority granting the permit may fix in consultation with the Postal Authorities concerned. In the event of any disagreement, however, in regard to the fixation of rates, the matter shall be referred to the Provincial Transport Authority whose decision shall be binding and final.

(b) The holder of the permit, securing the mail contract, shall obtain permission from the Regional Transport Authority to adjust the timings of his services to those required by the Postal Authorities to the extent necessary for the carriage of the mails and in the event of the Regional Transport Authority finding any difficulty in agreeing to such timings, a suitable set of timings satisfactory to all concerned shall be fixed by the Regional Transport Authority and the Postal Authorities in conjunction and if a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, the case shall be referred to the Provincial Transport Authority which shall decide the matter and this decision shall be binding and final."

2. *Insert* the following as condition 11A in Form P. St. P:—

"11A. Whether mails shall be carried in the vehicle and if so, on what terms."

[Home Department Notification No. HMV.39/42/21, dated the 12th August 1942 as amended by Notification No. HMV 39/42/26, dated the 9th January 1943]

3. *Add* the following after the first sentence of sub-rule (a) of rule 89:—

"Of the two members so appointed by the Chairman, one shall be an official and the other a non-official".

[Home Department Notification No. HMV.50/42/13, dated the 15th February 1943]

4. After "Garo Hills.....AST 1....." in sub-rule (a) of Rule 41 of the Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, *insert* the following as a new item:—

Assam Transport Vehicle (in any district of Assam).....ASX 1.....

[Home Department Notification No. HMV.132/43/6, dated the 14th October 1943]

5. After Rule 6 in the Chapter II of the Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940 *insert* the following as a new rule:—

6A. The licensing authority, if he is satisfied that the applicant previously held a licence and was by reason of his absence out of India on service in army units abroad prevented from obtaining or renewing a licence in accordance with the Act on the expiry of his previous licence, may exempt him from paying either in part or in full all or any of the fees payable for grant or renewal of a licence or fees for tests in that connection.

After clause (c) of the Rule 12 in the Chapter II of the Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940 *insert* the following as a new clause:—

(d) No fee shall be charged for the test if the applicant previously held a licence granted or renewed under any provision of law which was in force in British India at the time it was granted or last renewed, to drive a vehicle of the class to which the application refers and was prevented, by reason of absence out of India on service connected with the present war, from obtaining or renewing a licence in accordance with the provisions of the Act, on the expiry of the previous licence.

Amendment to Rule 33 of the Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940 :—

Substitute a 'comma' for the word 'or' between the words 'Police Force' and 'Fire Brigade' occurring in the first and second line and for the words 'when licences to drive Police or Fire Brigade motor vehicles are issued to them' *substitute* the words 'Salvage and A. R. P. Services or the Assam Transport Organisation when licences are issued to them to drive motor vehicles belonging to the respective organisations'.

[Home Department Notification No.HMV.14/43/12, dated the 6th December 1943]

6. *Insert* the following as rule 194(A) :—

"194A. The signal to stop a Motor Vehicle may be given by any Police officer, both by day or night,

(i) in the case of vehicles coming from in front of the Police officer, by raising his hand above the shoulder, the palm of the hand open and facing the on-coming vehicle,

(ii) in the case of vehicles coming from behind the Police officer, by raising the arm to the level of the shoulder, the arm being kept straight and the palm open,

(iii) in either case, by blowing short blasts on a whistle."

[Home Department Notification No. HMV.155/43/8, dated the 11th December 1943]

7. (i) *Insert* the following after the word "permit" where it first occurs in Rule 86 :—

"or any temporary permit".

(ii) *Add* the following at the end of sub-rule (e) of rule 86 by inserting a 'comma' after the words "Part B" :—

"and the fee for a duplicate temporary permit issued in accordance with this rule shall be Re.1."

[Home Department Notification No.HMV. 155/43/9, dated the 11th December 1943]

